SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT PRACTICES IN A SELECTED REGION IN THE STATE OF TEXAS BASED ON ACCREDITATION REPORTS

DISSERTATION

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

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BY

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This qualitative study identified school environment practices in designated school districts in a selected region in the state of Texas based on an accreditation visit from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in the school year 1988-1989 and identified specific elements of positive school environment that were valued by TEA.

The conclusions were as follows:

1) Demographic Data: The two strong districts were more diverse, had higher TEAMS scores and spent more money per student. Smaller pupil-to-teacher ratio did not have an effect on school effectiveness.

2) Instructional Leadership: The districts that met the criteria of the indicators in instructional leadership had strong leaders that were visible and who had high expectations for all students.

3) School Climate: School districts that had high expectations for students and believed that all children could learn met the criteria of the indicators for school climate. Lack of teachers' ownership in studying test scores and setting goals resulted in lack of commitment by the faculty and a citation from the visiting team.
4) Teacher Behaviors/High Expectations: Schools with beautiful exterior appearances did not guarantee faculty within these buildings to have high expectations for students.

5) Measurement: Disaggregation of test scores in order to diagnose a student's strengths and weaknesses were important indicators of school effectiveness.

6) Instructional Focus: The indicators for instructional focus were based on clear and measurable objectives. When teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders were involved in the planning process and documents were available not only to teachers and administrators but to the community at large, the districts were commended.

7) Texas Education Agency: The Texas Education Agency did an outstanding job in effective schools research in preparing criteria for the accreditation process. It appeared that the members of the accreditation team were qualified, objective, knowledgeable, and unbiased during their visits.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Providing an effective school environment in which positive personal interactions, meaningful curricula, and appropriate instructional methods are central has been a major goal in public schools throughout the history of American education (Jones, 1986). The Texas Education Agency defines school environment in terms of instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus.

Traditionally, corporal punishment was used to maintain a quiet or orderly classroom which was felt by educators of the era to be synonymous with good teaching and learning (Van Dyke, 1984). Today, emphasis has shifted in the schools to producing the type of environment in which students are excited and serious about learning. This reshaping of the school environment, where students intrinsically behave in a positive manner, has not been an easy task to accomplish (Coppedge & Exendine, 1987).

A wide range of research indicated a broad consensus on school environment. Studies in this area have been conducted by Sizer (1984), Goodlad (1984), and the U.S. Department of Education(1986). They call for creating a stimulating environment for all students by more active student involvement, genuine concern about the curriculum, and a deep respect for the learning potential that students possess.
Quantitative studies on school environment have been conducted since the 1960's utilizing a broad range of research techniques. A multitude of variables, methodologies, theories, and models have been used, resulting in a not easily defined body of research (Anderson, 1982). In addition, descriptions of school environment do not tell school administrators what to do or what not to do to improve environment (Keefe, Kelly, & Miller, 1985).

School environment research is the stepchild of earlier work on organizational climate in both business and university contexts and to later work on classroom climate. School environment research owes much in theory, instrumentation, and methodology to this earlier research (Anderson, 1982). What variables work together to create school climate has been debated. Although most researchers agree that outcomes stem from the combined characteristics of interacting variables, the difficulty comes in choosing the variables that best explain environment (Tornatzky, Brookover, Hathaway, Miller, & Passalacqua, 1980). Anderson (1982) indicated that, "The difficulties of measurement, variable selection and control, and statistical analyses are so overwhelming that some researchers have given up the search for school climate as a holistic entity" (p. 371).

Despite the new emphasis on qualitative research, we do not yet know all that we might wish to know about how to assess and improve school environment (Coleman, 1983). A qualitative research approach which investigates school environment practices may be beneficial to educators. If
this is true, then, the research results could be used to reshape schools and classrooms to produce the type of environment in which teachers can teach and students can learn.

This research looked at Texas indicators for school environment using a qualitative approach. The data was collected from designated school districts in a selected region in the state of Texas.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify school environment practices in designated school districts in a selected region in the state of Texas based on an accreditation visit from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in the school year 1988-1989 and to identify specific elements of positive school environment that were valued by TEA.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were answered as a result of this study:

1. What were the findings of the evaluation of designated school districts in a selected region in the state of Texas in the areas of instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus?

2. What were the commonalities between the designated districts in a selected region in the state of Texas in the areas of instructional
leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus?

3. How diverse were the designated school districts in a selected region in the state of Texas in their practices in the areas of instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus?

4. What specific elements were the accreditation teams using to evaluate instructional leadership, school climate, and teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus in the school districts being analyzed?

**Significance of the Study**

Since the mid-1970's, a considerable body of quantitative research about school climate has developed. A broad range of research techniques has focused on different aspects of school life (Anderson, 1982). This focus has been on single climate dimensions (such as satisfaction) or a particular audience, such as teachers, which makes it a less than adequate approach to the design and implementation of school environments which are committed to the welfare of all participants (Kelly, 1981). The proposed research provided a comparative investigative study of the school environment practices of schools in a selected region in the state of Texas according to Visiting Team Reports which is more comprehensive than previous research. This study will provide information for all school districts in the state of Texas to help them become
aware of what TEA Visiting Teams are looking for in the area of school environment.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms will have restricted meaning and are thus defined for this study:

1. School environment: Instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus as outlined in the TEA accreditation reports.

2. Instructional leadership: The campus administrator who communicates the mission of the school to staff, parents, community, and students.

3. School climate: An atmosphere where teaching and learning are rewarded through a consistent system of norms, attitudes, and beliefs based on the policies and practices in the school.

4. Teacher behavior/high expectations: An atmosphere in which the staff believes and demonstrates that it is possible for all students to attain mastery of basic skills.

5. Measurement: Multiple assessment methods used to improve individual student performance and the instructional program.

6. Instructional focus: A collaborative planning process designed to improve student performance.
7. **TEA:** Composed of the State Board of Education, State Board for Vocational Education, and the State Department of Education and carries out the educational functions assigned by the legislature.

8. **Effective schools correlates:** A term, based on numerous effective school studies and used by TEA in the accreditation process at the campus level which include instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement and instructional focus. These correlates are on a checklist to be used as criteria to reflect conditions observed at the campus level.

**Limitations**

Data was gathered through examination of TEA accreditation reports in the areas of school environment. This study provided detailed descriptions of school environment practices in designated school districts in a selected region in the state of Texas and identified specific elements of positive school environment that are valued by TEA.

Generalizations drawn from individual school district reports to other settings are inappropriate because of the qualitative nature of the study. However, the material gathered to identify elements of positive school environment can be generalized to other school districts throughout the state of Texas because accreditation team members are selected from all geographical areas of Texas.
To reduce bias in this research, discretion was exercised in the examination of the reports. Triangulation was used, through interviews with member(s) of each committee, to eliminate bias.

Assumptions

The major assumption underlying this study is:

The Visiting Team did a thorough, unbiased evaluation at each school district in a selected region in the state of Texas.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature review presents information describing environment in schools. It begins with a historical perspective of the methods used in schools, especially discipline, which created a quiet environment and continues with current trends used in controlling the classroom. A description of present day school environments and research in school environment in the public schools are the final sections in the review of related literature.

Historical Perspective

Early School Environment

Since the colonial days, the public schools in America have used corporal punishment as a means to maintain classroom control and student discipline (Van Dyke, 1984). An applicant for a teaching post who promised to flog the boys generously often won the committee's favor (Furnas, 1969). Even today, punishment is much more frequently employed than reward (Topping, 1986).

The ferule was the most likely rod of correction. Stiff ropes, cowhides, and even cat-o-nine tails were not uncommon (Johnson, 1963). Discipline for all sizes of children were based on blows. Lashes were given to boys and girls
found playing together; for failing to bow at the entrance of a stranger to the classroom; for calling each other names; for scuffling (Van Dyke, 1984).

Other methods, though not quite as physical, were somewhat cruel. Children sometimes were forced to wear dunce caps or labels hanging around the neck with such lettering as "Lying Ananias," or "Idle Boy" (Johnson, 1963).

Severe punishment for even minor infractions was well accepted practice along the east coast for much of the half-century after the American Revolution. As settlers moved to the west, teachers brought with them a heritage that included the use of corporal punishment (Van Dyke, 1984).

Current Trends

With the advent of new educational philosophies, since the 1800's, there has been a gradual softening in rather harsh traditional approaches to discipline. During recent decades, important court decisions have also modified the way in which children are disciplined (Van Dyke, 1989).

According to numerous opinions polls, the biggest problem facing public schools today is discipline (Jones & Tanner, 1981). Gallup polls which survey the attitude of the American public toward education consistently report that the public ranks student discipline as a major concern (Gallup & Clark, 1987).

The public perception regarding the magnitude of the problem has grown to the point where there is widespread belief that conditions in the schools are worse now than they have ever been. There is little concrete evidence to show
that disciplinary problems are significantly different or worse than a decade or so ago (Baer, Goodall, & Brown, 1983).

Attitudes concerning the use of corporal punishment in the schools were reflected in the state legislation accompanying colonial settlement (Van Dyke, 1984). New Jersey (1867) was the only state for more than a century that banned paddling. Massachusetts (1972) and Maine (1976) passed similar legislation to ban paddling (Ball, 1989).

The National PTA Board of Directors, in 1978, after much debate recommended that state congresses appoint task forces to study and find alternatives to corporal punishment. In 1985, the National PTA convention delegates adopted a resolution specifically opposing corporal punishment in schools (Ball, 1989).

Keeshan (1988) stated that corporal punishment is forbidden in the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, and Sweden. In the United States it is still legal to strike a child.

Many feel that the threat of corporal punishment serves as a deterrent without which teachers would be defenseless (Keeshan, 1988). Others, often rationalize that they were beaten in the classroom of their youth and ask others to just look at the good that this corporal punishment did them.

Keeshan (1988) found a multitude of cases that documented the use of paddles, many with holes drilled in them, or of music batons, books, fists, and
feet to administer corporal punishment. His report concluded that the use of these materials is the same as legitimizing child abuse.

Many schools districts have captured headlines by formulating strict discipline codes. The Board of Education in New York, after Mayor Koch in 1981 appointed a special committee to develop ways to combat an increase in school violence, established a policy requiring every school in the city to have a comprehensive disciplinary code. These codes listed what the schools considered to be misbehavior and what punishment teachers and administrators could administer (Duke, 1986). Principals, parent groups and, in some cases, students were used to develop these codes.

A mayor-appointed committee in Boston recommended comprehensive efforts to reduce fear, violence, and disruption in local schools. This prompted Boston to take action and adopt standards of behavior for all schools, stiff penalties for serious offenses such as use of weapons, and the use of adult safety monitors (Duke, 1986).

Richmond, Virginia developed one of the most comprehensive system-wide discipline codes. The Richmond School Board approved a standard code for all schools, unlike some other school systems where local schools were left with the task of generating school discipline plans (Duke, 1986).

Many school systems stop short of imposing a common code on all local schools as has Richmond, Virginia. Educational change studies and recent findings from school effectiveness studies strongly suggest that new policies
and programs, when adapted to the needs of the local school, stand the best chance of being successfully implemented (Duke, 1986).

Duke (1986) concluded that schools who have discipline plans may not share a common conception of what constitutes misconduct in a given area. He found in several cases, disrespect is broadened to encompass profanity and insolence. In other instances, not following teacher or staff directions is regarded as failure. Tone, style, and grammar vary as well from one school discipline plan to another.

Brown and Payne (1988) found in their study of 219 teachers, that corporal punishment in their opinion declined in the last 10-12 years. As the teacher age increases, there were slight increases in the percentage who thought that less paddling is done. Teacher surveys still indicate that approximately 75 percent of practicing teachers favor its use.

School officials, in recent years, have taken great care when defining suspension and expulsion. The constitutionality of denying a student access to schooling as a punishment has been challenged in the courts. Because the student's constitutional right to an education is jeopardized, procedures related to suspension and expulsion may be very complex. In long-term suspension, some states require special review boards to consider all cases. In other states, the local school board must grant a hearing to students threatened with suspension. When the effectiveness of the school program is threatened, suspension and expulsion are extreme means of dealing with the problem.
Nevertheless, the practice of suspending a pupil has provided no evidence that any long-term improvement results (Duke, 1986).

Many teachers are effective instructors and effective disciplinarians. A strong relationship between disciplinary problems and a teacher's knowledge and use of effective management skills has been revealed in recent research findings (Crane, 1988). Studies show that effective teachers create these positive environments for learning by using management skills to organize time, space, materials, auxiliary personnel, and students. These teachers are also the most popular with students. Crane (1988) stated that, "The key to the success of these teachers is that they are effective teachers, first, which make them effective disciplinarians." (p. 128).

**School Environment**

Schools are often described by educators and non-educators in terms of environment or climate. A school, for example, might be defined as a "warm, friendly place" or as a "cold uncaring place"; as supportive and productive, or as manipulative and disorganized (Stenson, 1985).

It is also apparent that some schools emphasize learning. This fact is communicated to students. Other schools fail to convey such a commitment (Keefe, Kelly, Miller, 1985).

The Texas Education Agency in Austin, Texas describes school climate as:
A positive school climate goes beyond safety and orderliness. School climate is an atmosphere where teaching and learning are emphasized and rewarded. A consistent system of norms, attitudes, and beliefs form the foundation for the policies and practices in the school.

Like people, schools have personalities. Schools affect people in different ways. In some schools, there is a spirit of harmony because the faculty and students work together. In others, hostile cliques occur without productive goals.

When you walk into any school or classroom the warm or cold feeling you get is "school climate". Stenson (1985) described school climate as "the total of the forces to which the individual responds in the school environment" (p. 54). Similarly, Nwankwo (1979) referred to climate as "the general we-group sub-culture or interactive life of the school" (p. 268).

Every school and every classroom has a "climate". Coleman (1983) maintained that climate is a vital element in school effectiveness and an alterable variable largely under the influence of the principal and staff.

In a nontechnical sense, Coppedge and Exendine (1987) described climate as "the prevailing conditions in the classroom" (p. 103). They contend that what one wants is an environment that maximizes learning by integrating all students into a stimulating and scholarly atmosphere of active learning reinforced by more intrinsic than extrinsic reward/motivation techniques.
Stenson (1985) noted that a warm, positive environment contributes greatly to the productivity of an institution.

**School Environment Research**

**Public Schools**

For over a decade, educators, in an effort to improve student behavior and enhance learning have attempted to create school environments in which positive personal interactions, meaningful curricula, and appropriate instructional methods are central (Jones, 1986). Since the mid-1960's there has been a considerable body of research findings about school environment developed.

Halpin and Croft (1963) are the recognized pioneers in the field of school climate. Their initial effort was confined to the study of a sample of elementary schools drawn from areas geographically representative of continental USA. The instrument they constructed, the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire, was used to depict the organizational climate of an elementary school. Their Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire categorized school climate into six areas along a continuum: closed, paternal, familiar, controlled, autonomous, and open. They found that the open climate was most desirable; the least desirable was closed climate.

Halpin and Croft (1963) described open climate as an organization that is energetic, lively, and moving toward its goals. Satisfaction for the group members' social needs are also provided. The main characteristic of the open climate is the authenticity that occurs among the behavior of its members. A
closed climate was characterized by a high degree of apathy on the part of the members of the organization. The organization appeared to stagnant because the members are not meeting their social needs nor are they experiencing the satisfaction that comes from task achievement.

Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ousten, and Smith (1979) conducted a longitudinal study of secondary schools in Great Britain. The focus of their research was to identify specific factors that promote a positive or negative climate within the school. They concluded that the school does make a difference in student behavior and achievement. High levels of corporal punishment and frequent disciplinary interventions led to worse student behavior. Praise for work in the classroom and frequent public praise for good work or behavior at general assemblies or other meetings was associated with better behavior. Schools and classrooms that were well decorated with plants, posters, and pictures were also associated with better student behavior.

Stenson's (1985) analysis of a five-year district-wide school climate program found a high correlation between student and staff perceptions of the school's climate and perceptions of the quality and support of the school's leadership. Principals were found to be the key to quality environment in the schools. The Safe School Study, conducted by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (1978), clearly indicated that the schools with the fewest discipline problems had the strongest administrators, especially the principal.
Brookover and Lezotte, 1977; Lezotte, 1980; Kelly, 1980 findings showed that strong leadership by the principal is an important factor in improving school climate. If a principal has been in the building for three years or longer, more than half of what happens in a building, for better or for worse, can be directly traced to the actions or inaction of the building principal (Kelly, 1980).

Stenson's (1985) research concluded that environment improvement shows positive results when students are directed toward responsible and humane behavior, allowed to make shared decisions which will affect their lives, and are helped to understand the meaning of pride in one's school. Moreover, it was the students who determined the environment of the schools.

Moos (1979) maintained that the developmental effects of one environment will cancel the developmental effects of the other environment if the environments in which the individuals functions are incongruent in expectations. Moreover, when differing environments held similar expectations for the individual, the combined developmental impact is measurable and significant. Whenever possible, the school must honor the expectations the home holds for the student (Brandt, 1979).

Brookover and Lezotte (1977) studied a number of school environments with high and low levels of student productivity. They concluded that schools with high levels of student outcomes have faculties who accept the basic objectives of the school, state high expectations for students and then help students meet those expectations, and accept accountability for achieving
stated goals. Lezotte (1980) noted schools with low levels of student productivity are characterized by "complacency and acceptance of things as they are: no one 'rocks the boat,' and there is an apparent unwillingness to attend to problems which might upset the calm or the good staff relations" (pp. 51-52).

Brookover and Lezotte (1979) contend that high-achieving schools are characterized by high evaluation expectations, academic time allocation, principal leadership, accountability, satisfied teachers, and parent interest. Corresponding findings were accounted by Epstein and McPartland (1976). Their account verified that environment is related to student behavior, background, personality, aspirations, achievement, and to teacher evaluations.

Phi Delta Kappa's (1980) case histories, observations, interviews, and questionnaires with 8 high achieving urban elementary schools concluded that high achieving schools have principal leadership, high staff expectations, and commitment. In addition good interpersonal relationships, academic time allocations, parent involvement, financial support, and good discipline/rules were also a factor.

Kimpson and Sonnabend's (1975) investigations using staff questionnaires on all teachers (n=1134) in a stratified random sample of 20 secondary school concluded that environment is related to staff characteristics, with women, principals, older staff, more experienced staff, and more educated
staff holding more positive views. In addition, teachers are more positive at innovative schools.

Kalis' (1980) findings showed a steady increase in negative feelings and perceptions of the school environment with the increase of teaching experience. Murnane and Phillips' (1977) research indicated that attitudes teachers bring to their jobs could be reflected in the teachers' perception of the school environment. Schools that students assessed as being more satisfying had teachers with a more positive view of the workplace (Goodlad, 1984).

**Summary**

Recent research on school environment has utilized a broad range of research techniques. The research has produced both a broad consensus of findings and precise and detailed descriptions of school environment such as, the importance of strong and supportive leadership, high expectations for both students and teachers, student accountability for achieving stated goals, and parent involvement. However, educators still know relative little in absolute terms.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Research Approach

A qualitative case study was selected for this research. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) reported that most researchers choose a case study for their first project. They recommended, "Have a successful first experience and then move on, if you choose, to the more complex" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 58-59).

The researcher's primary goal in qualitative research is "to add knowledge, not to pass judgement on a setting" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 42). The study's worth is judged by the degree to which it generates theory, description, or understanding.

The four types of data most often associated with qualitative research are: participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, artifact collection, and researcher introspection (Eisenhart, 1988). "When ethnography is underway, all four methods are often employed together. Each is useful for providing a different perspective on the topic of interest" (p. 106).

Participant observation is the best known representative of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). The five categories of participant
observation commonly used in qualitative research as listed by Spradley (1980) are: nonparticipation, passive participation, moderate participation, active participation, and complete participation. The degree of participation and observation the researcher chooses to do is dictated by each research setting.

Denizen (1978) lists three forms of interviews: the scheduled standardized interview, the nonscheduled standardized interview, and the nonstandardized interview. In addition, "each type of interview answers particular types of problems and ... each may be most appropriate for certain types of studies" (Denizen, 1978, p. 116). Denizen believes that in virtually every case, each type of interview allows the researcher to get a clearer understanding of the participants interpretation of a particular situation.

Artifact collection consists of written and graphic materials related to the topic (Eisenhart, 1988). Goetz and LeCompte (1984) also included materials collected from the classroom in this category.

In data collection, the researcher's fieldnotes also play an important role. Fieldnotes are comprised of detailed information of the setting and happenings that occur during an observation and researcher introspection or reflection (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Reflection is an important part of the data collection process as it helps to remind the researcher of speculations, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices.

Triangulation, sometimes called corroboration, plays an important role in qualitative research (Stainback & Stainback, 1988). They state, "The aim is not
to determine the truth about some social phenomenon or cancel out bias in any one research method or data source. Rather the purpose of triangulation is to increase one's understanding of whatever is being investigated” (p. 71).

This study used the accreditation report of each of the school districts in a selected region in the state of Texas that were evaluated in 1988-1989, interviews with member(s) of each accreditation team and the researcher's analysis of each accreditation report to provide triangulation.

A qualitative approach was chosen for this research topic for the following reasons:

1. The object of this study was to identify school environment practices in a selected region in the state of Texas based on accreditation visits from the Texas Education Agency in the school year 1988-1989 and to identify specific elements of positive school environment that were valued by TEA.

2. A case study was a proper model because of the detailed information collected by the accreditation team.

3. Since data included interviews with member(s) of each accreditation team from TEA and an analysis of accreditation reports, the qualitative methods of analysis was required.

4. Due to the single region of this study, it was inappropriate to make generalizations from the research findings. However the material gathered to identify elements of positive school environment can
be generalized to other school districts throughout the state of Texas because accreditation team members are selected from all geographical areas of Texas.

5. Since data was collected and analyzed using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), statement of a hypothesis was inappropriate.

POPULATION

The fifteen subjects of this study were designated school districts in a selected region located in Texas. The fifteen school districts were the only districts from this selected region visited by an accreditation team from the Texas Education Agency during the 1988-1989 school year. According to TAC 97.1, "The purpose of state accreditation is to assure that every school district in the state maintains certain levels of quality in its operations and makes constant efforts toward improvement..."

The area of campus performance is one part of the accreditation report. Campus performance includes: 1) Instructional Leadership, 2) School Climate, 3) Teacher Behavior/High Expectations, 4) Measurement, 5) Instructional Focus. Since these areas describe school environment as a whole, this section was pulled for each school district that was visited by an accreditation team for the 1988-1989 school year.
Procedures for Collection of Data

This study was conducted using data from the Texas Education Agency in Austin, Texas. Permission was obtained by the agency to view, assess, and copy accreditation reports. The Assistant Commissioner for Accreditation was told that the researcher was interested in comparing the school environment practices of school districts in a selected region in the state of Texas. Only those districts that were visited by an accreditation team during the 1988-1989 school year were studied.

A pilot study was conducted in December, 1989 using twenty randomly selected school districts in the state of Texas, excluding the selected region. As a result of reading each report, school environment was chosen as the focus of study.

The researcher traveled to the Texas Education Agency and pulled the fifteen school districts’ accreditation reports. Photo copies were made in the areas of: Instructional Leadership, School Climate, and Teacher Behavior/High Expectations, Measurement, and Instructional Focus. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of the member(s) of each accreditation team were recorded. The researcher returned with the materials and analyzed the data collected looking for key issues, recurrent statements, or activities in the data that became categories of focus.

Taped interviews with member(s) of each accreditation team were done and transcribed after the data was analyzed. The interviews generated data
about their observations of the school districts during the accreditation visit. Through the use of interviews with member(s) of each accreditation team, the use of the accreditation report data, and inspection of such data by the researcher, triangulation provided a check for internal validity.

Data Analysis

The constant comparison method was used to analyze the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). The data analysis occurred in two phases. The earliest phase began immediately with the first contact and continued through the data collection period. The second phase began when all data was collected.

In the first phase, the content of each of the five areas of study was analyzed to determine units of analysis. Once categories began to appear in each area, the data was compared and sorted so that relationships were identified. This cycle of constant comparison was repeated throughout the data collection period. This same type of repetitive process was used to analyze the members' interviews and also on any written material other than the accreditation reports pertinent to the study.

After all of the data was collected, the second phase began. First the data on individual districts were compared for similarities and differences. All other data was then added so comparisons could be made to identify the environment practices of school districts in a selected region in the state of Texas.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected on school environment practices in designated school districts in the state of Texas has been compiled from examination of visiting team reports and interviews from accreditation team members. The subjects, fifteen school districts located in Texas, were the only districts from this selected region visited by an accreditation team from the Texas Education Agency during the 1988-1989 school year.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section contains general comments from various accreditation team members on the interworkings of the accreditation process. The next section includes reports of each of the fifteen school districts (A through O). Each report consists of demographic data of one school district, a summary of prior accreditation visits, data collected from the visiting reports in areas of instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus, and interviews with member(s) of each accreditation team.

General Comments from Accreditation Team Members

Accreditation team members during the 1988-1989 school year were professional TEA staff and elementary principals. All of the interviews, therefore, are either of professional TEA staff or elementary school principals from across
the 20 regional educational service center area. The chairperson of each team during these visits was a professional from TEA. This was the first year that professionals outside the Texas Education Agency served on accreditation teams. Before participation in the accreditation review process, those selected as participants (other than TEA professionals) attended and successfully completed an introductory two-day training workshop. Participation was voluntary and was funded through sponsorship of the local school district.

The following general comments which related to all districts were made during interviews by members of the accreditation team. The names of all members have been changed to protect their identity:

1. Chairperson: "I feel real comfortable with what's in the reports because we go to war with each other if someone changes something. Here's the way it goes: The chairperson of the visit writes the report and he has team members that turn in campus reports to him/her. Not only do they raise hell with the district chair if they don't put in there what they want in there...cause we all take turns being district chairperson and we are all equal and we all think what we think is important...If the district leader doesn't put in what the campus leader says and what they put in their report, then we get in each others face about it."

2. Chairperson: "Sometimes we get a lot of eyewash from schools. You can get away with some of it, not all of it."
3. Chairperson: "A lot of the comments you will find in the report, particularly the correlates, are generic statements because we were new to how to write those things. As we finally evolved through the process they got more comprehensive."

4. Chairperson: "You never know if you facilitate change from these visits but at least you get a chance to say something."

5. Chairperson: "There were times that if I wasn't sure I could defend something, then I would not put it in the report. As the chair, it was my neck that was out there. And I made it very clear to the team that they reported something to me and I would make decisions whether or what went into the report.

   I also know that if I don't include it and it really is happening, then we will either get a complaint and go back or three years from now we are going to back up there anyway.

   I was real guarded when writing reports and didn't want to get challenged and lose. The things that I put in reports I can defend, without exception. Without exception, I can defend ... I've never had any appeals to tell you the truth. I always sat with administration and school boards and went through the whole thing and tried to shoot straight with them about some things that I knew was happening. Most everything that comes up lands in the report somewhere."
6. Member: "During these visits, I always tried to compare my district to these districts and what it would be like if we had all the money in the world."

7. Chairperson: "We can't report on anything that we can't back up with a comment or an interview. We just don't go on feelings. We have to have examples for what we are saying."

8. Chairperson: "We, by necessity, have to get it on paper within a week after we get back or we are lost."

9. Chairperson: "We have no authority to say that you need to hire a female superintendent. We can say that you need to consider hiring more female administrators. That's the way many times it was handled."

10. Chairperson: "I'm pretty sure that what's in there is the way it was. We didn't have anything that we really couldn't address."

School District A

Demographic Data

School District A was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District A had an average daily attendance of under 3,000 students. Of the total student population, 85% were white and 15.0% were Hispanic. No other student ethnicity was represented in this school district. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.
The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District A was 100% White. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. In addition, all the teachers in School District A were White.

Female teachers comprise 85% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 15%. School District A did not have any female administrators.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: (a) 3rd-grade students were well below the statewide average of 69%, (b) 5th-grade students were below the statewide average of 72%, and (c) 7th-grade students were a few percentage points above the statewide average of 73%. No data were available for 9th-grade students and 11th-grade students.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District A received an accreditation visit during the 1986-1987 school year. Prior to that visit, the district had been placed on Accredited, Warned status as a result of the monitoring visit of 1984. Based on the findings of the 1986-1987 school year visit, the status of School District A was raised to Accredited.
The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

Since the superintendent of School District A was the only administrator in the district, he was the instructional leader. He effectively communicated the mission of the school in an appropriate manner; understood and supported the instructional program, and appeared to be creative, supportive, and dedicated to the mission of the school. He was sensitive to the needs, both personal and scholastic, of the district's students.

Members of the staff indicated that the superintendent was very visible and provided excellent support. He had a working knowledge of curriculum and instruction, and he had demonstrated his leadership abilities.

School Climate

A positive school climate was evident throughout School District A. Facilities, arrangements, and colors communicated warmth and an inviting atmosphere. The climate was responsive and innovative, and provided a student support system. Open communication between the administration and all staff was evident.

The accreditation team observed that students were eager and very attentive during class time. Teachers and students were observed using time effectively. Halls cleared quickly between classes, and teachers started classes immediately after the tardy bell sounded. Students and staff appeared cheerful and happy with school conditions.
Much one-on-one, individualized attention was observed throughout the accreditation visit. Teachers were noted using effective re-teaching strategies for those students not initially mastering objectives.

Adequate health services were provided to students. A Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) was on call during the school day to provide first aid for emergencies.

The high school was in violation of the Texas Hazard Communication Act by not providing both permanent showers and eyewash facilities to be used in the event of accidental chemical spills in the science laboratory. Other than the high school, appropriate safety equipment was found to be present throughout school District A.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) worked cooperatively with the board of trustees, administrators, and teachers to support the instructional program. Meetings were well attended by both parents and teachers, and the PTO was actively involved in the planning process of the district.

The PTO sponsored various fund-raisers throughout the year. Profits from the fund-raisers were distributed to the classroom teachers to purchase additional supplies and materials.

The physical environment in the schools of School District A provided appropriate space for effective instruction. The facilities were designed to meet the educational needs of students and provide a positive environment for teaching and learning.
Immediate and long-range maintenance and repairs were performed systematically. Visual inspection of the school environment left no doubt that daily custodial care was being provided. The attractiveness and cleanliness spoke well for the pride and dedication of the custodial staff. The accreditation team complimented the district as a whole, the custodial staff, and the students for providing and maintaining a pleasant instructional environment.

**Teacher Behavior/High Expectations**

The staff of School District A displayed attitudes indicating they sincerely believed that all students can and will learn. These attitudes were supported by observations of teachers providing personal concern for students who obviously had not mastered specific objectives being taught during the lesson cycle. The accreditation team observed many styles of reteaching activities during the visit.

According to the District Performance Overview section, Hispanic and low-income students performed far below the regional and state averages at some grade levels. Strategies in School District A were not developed to improve the academic performance of these two special populations of students.

The district employed qualified personnel, assigned them properly, and encouraged their professional growth. The district was commended for providing separate classrooms and separate classroom teachers for Grades K-4. Teachers were properly prepared for their assignments, and the district
operated a staff development program that brought about educational improvement.

**Measurement**

Feedback on student academic progress was frequently obtained. Multiple assessment methods such as teacher-made tests, samples of students' work, Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS), and Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) were used to improve the instructional program.

School District A used the Annual Performance Report (APR), the TEAMS, and the CTBS to report to the public the programs and services that needed improvement and those of high quality that should be maintained.

The accreditation team recommended that test data be desegregated by grade level, ethnicity, and gender. That information should then be used by staff members to focus on learning improvement.

Team members were concerned about the lack of consistency among teachers in awarding grades on re-tests over essential elements. For all students to be graded equally, teachers should develop and follow one acceptable system.

**Instructional Focus**

School officials had clearly communicated to the staff that the school's mission and focus were to provide students with the academic skills necessary to prepare them for the next level of schooling. The instructional goals had
been formally stated and communicated to parents, students, and members of the community through district and campus plans.

School District A involved all segments of the school community in the planning process. The faculty met both formally and informally with the superintendent to provide input in the goal-setting process. The faculty had also met with the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) and the superintendent to establish priorities for the school year.

The district met minimum accreditation standards with reference to course offerings at the junior high school level. These course offerings were very limited, allowing students the opportunity to enroll in one unit of physical education, reading, and reading improvement on an elective basis. In order to have a well-rounded program at the junior high level, the accreditation team recommended expanding the curriculum to include courses in the fine arts, additional technology classes, pre-vocational courses, and other elective courses that are of interest to the pupils.

Curriculum documents were available at each level of instruction for each course taught. However, interviews with teachers revealed a variety of uses of the documents. Several teachers were using the teacher edition of the textbook as their primary tool in planning daily lessons, with the curriculum documents being used as a resource.

Curriculum documents should be the driving force of the entire instructional program. Textbooks should be used as a resource to support the
curriculum objectives defined in the documents. The accreditation team recommended that staff development activities with reference to the proper use of curriculum documents should be provided.

School District A's instructional procedures and conditions supported effective teaching and learning. Procedures were in place for identification, assessment, and placement of students. The district offered special programs in the areas of special education and compensatory education, both regular and migrant. The district offered an English as a second language (ESL) during the 1987-1988 school year; however, for the 1988-1989 school year no limited English proficient students were identified.

School District A lacked learning centers at the primary level. Since styles of learning vary between individual students, the accreditation team encouraged teachers to develop learning centers as soon as possible. The accreditation team felt that staff development would benefit teachers to guide them in the proper use of effective instructional strategies.

Secondary students in certain physical education classes were penalized by reducing their grade for nonparticipation in physical education classes (usually for not suiting out or for illness). This practice is in conflict with 19 Texas Administrative Code 75.170 (b), which requires grades to be based on academic achievement or other academically related requirements.

Interviews with teachers and review of lesson plans by team members indicated that secondary science classes were not being taught by the
laboratory method. To be in full compliance with 19 Texas Administrative Code Section 75.142, science instruction must be laboratory-oriented at least 40 percent of the instructional time in all secondary science classes.

Efforts were being made to provide a gifted and talented program for elementary pupils. The program was a cooperative effort among three neighboring school districts to be conducted during the summer for six weeks. The accreditation team commendated and encouraged the districts for providing this unique method of meeting the educational needs of their students.

The guidance program in School District A was the responsibility of the instructional leader, with appropriate assistance from the classroom teachers. The services of local ministers and law enforcement officers were solicited to provide additional assistance during crisis situations.

School District A provided adequate supplies and materials for use by students and teachers. Specialized equipment had been provided for science and computer courses, and other subjects requiring them; and the district systematically acquired, maintained, and replaced instructional materials and equipment that were appropriate for its instructional program.

School District A operated a planned resource center supervised by a certified librarian one day per week and by a full-time library aide. The program had been upgraded by budgeting additional funds for books, magazines, and audiovisual materials. This resource center was found to be the academic hub
of the instructional program and the accreditation team encouraged the district to continue the upgrading process.

**Interview from Accreditation Team Members**

**Interview**

I: = Interviewer  
C: = Chairperson  
RC: = Researcher's Comments

RC: After several attempts to reach Mr. Morgan, he finally returned my call. I explained to him the purpose of my research and that I was trying to generate data about his observations during the visit. I also explained that I would like for him to focus his comments in the areas of instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus when discussing the district. I also said that any additional information about the accreditation process would be helpful.

I: I understand that you were the chairperson during the accreditation visit for School District A. What was your general reaction to the campuses that you visited?

C: There were some serious problems with this school district and we worked with them for about three years and finally got their accreditation status to Full, Accredited. They are a very conservative community. They try hard to have schools. We tried to get them to send their junior
high over to a neighboring district so the children could be provided with better facilities. They were not keen about this. The previous superintendent took a position like that and probably cost him his job. There is just one administrator.

I: How can he find time to also be in charge of the guidance program too?

C: This is typical in small schools. You get into what guidance programs really are. There are all kinds of ways to provide guidance. It doesn't say you have to have a certified guidance counselor. It just says you have to have a guidance program. That's pretty typical for schools with small enrollments. The principal will take the responsibility for whatever paperwork and test interpretation that has to happen. Most of the actual counseling is happening with the classroom teacher.

Overall, the correlates were in place. They were violating the Hazardous Communication Act with regards to safety equipment in science labs.

I: I've noticed that many school districts have violated that act.

C: That's something that kind of caught them with their pants down and they weren't ready for it. That superintendent has to do all he has to do and be principal and evaluate teachers and drive a school bus. As a result, in small districts, they sometimes fall behind on the new rules.

RC: He appeared very confident that the information contained in this report was a true reflection of School District A.
School District B

Demographic Data

School District B was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District B had an average daily attendance of under 3,000 students. Of the total student population, 95% were White and 5% were Hispanic. No other student ethnicity was represented in this district. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District B was 98% White and 2% American Indian. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. The ethnicity of the district's teachers consisted of 98% White and 2% American Indian.

Female teachers comprise 80% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 20%. School District B had no female administrators.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: (a) 3rd-grade students were very near the statewide average of 69%, (b) 5th-grade students were equal to the statewide average of 73%, (c) 9th-grade students' scores dropped a few
percentage points below the statewide average of 58%, and (d) 11th-grade scores were a few percentage points above the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District B received an accreditation visit during the 1984-1985 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of School District B was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the Accredited status was reaffirmed.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

All principals in the elementary, junior high and high school settings were described by the faculty as visible, communicative, involved, and supportive of the instructional program. All principals and the assistant superintendent for instruction had been involved in a well known foundation Principal Improvement Program. This foundation had an impact on principals' approaches to their task.

The accreditation team encouraged the high school principal to complete the courses he lacks for a Mid-Management Administrator's Certificate.

School Climate

The accreditation team found the campuses to be clean and pleasant in appearance. Colorful displays on the walls of the schools made an attractive setting for learning and teaching.

Indications of a positive climate were in the small class sizes except for the elementary kindergarten physical education class, which had over 100
students in one section. The accreditation team felt that this large class size
makes it difficult for teachers to monitor mastery of the essential elements by all
students and may cause supervision problems. Teacher-to-student ratios in
many classes were 1-to-15.

Positive self-image development was promoted throughout the schools.
Students were rewarded for academic efforts and accomplishments. Teachers
used a periodical to promote a desirable climate. In order to assist in the
transition of students from elementary to middle school, an advisory period was
an integral part of the sixth-grade curriculum.

Primary teachers planned together regarding instructional strategies and
student expectations. The accreditation team felt that this procedure is a good
practice and ensures an alignment of curriculum between grade levels. No
other grade-level planning was evident in School District B.

School District B shared a nurse with other school districts in a
cooperative agreement. The accreditation team found that discussions with
school personnel indicated that during screening procedures at other schools,
the nurse was absent from School District B for four to five weeks. The
accreditation team also found that the high school had no clinic; however, clinic
facilities were in place at other campuses.

The accreditation team noted that measures promoting safety need to be
improved at the junior high school. Chemicals that are inappropriate for
science at this level were stored at the junior high. Stored chemicals were
arranged in alphabetical order instead of according to volatility or other properties. The chemical storage area was not provided with forced-air ventilation. No goggles, shower, fire extinguisher, or locking chemical cabinet were available.

Parents supported the schools through such activities as serving as full-time volunteers to provide clerical help to teachers. The schools benefitted from community-derived donations. Local business establishments contributed to awards for students who had good attendance records. Generated funds, from community support, were spent on consumable instructional resource materials.

Physical facilities were clean, well maintained, and appropriate in design for the educational programs they house. The accreditation team expressed a concern that the high school homemaking classroom is being inappropriately used for scoliosis, vision, and hearing screening. In addition, School District A needs continuing action regarding the asbestos hazards in the schools.

Teacher Behavior/High Expectations

Teachers in School District B believed that all students learn when provided with proper motivation and encouragement. The district promoted high expectations by posting many positive statements and slogans in prominent locations throughout the school.

School District B employed qualified and competent personnel, assigned them properly, and encouraged their professional growth. The administration
was encouraged to provide training for ESL teachers who were on emergency permits.

**Measurement**

Feedback on student academic progress through the use of test data was used by district personnel to more effectively plan instruction. The district staff continually monitored student performance by analyzing data from the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), Curriculum Assessment Cooperative (CAC), and the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS).

**Instructional Focus**

Student test data were used during the development of campus goals. Implications for instructional planning were therefore a part of the formal measurement of student performance.

Extensive disaggregation of test data according to student characteristics should continue. Disaggregation of test data on the TEAMS test currently considers ethnicity, degree of poverty, language limitations, and program differences such as Chapter 1, special education, and migrant education. The school district leadership should promote further disaggregation of data by student characteristics that may be quickly identified in the classroom. These characteristics may include seating position, the number of parents in the home, whether or not the student is a latch-key child or if the student rides the bus or works after school.
Instructional strategies are publicized and campus goals posted. The mission statement for the campuses were also clearly posted in prominent locations. Campus goals were measurable, realistic, and clear.

The curriculum was well balanced and met student needs. Sufficient time was provided for courses.

The middle school lacked evidence of course offerings. The middle school principal should maintain evidence of these course offerings so that there can be no question as to whether or not a course has been offered to students.

School District B had made adaptations to the curriculum to meet the needs of special populations students. An at-risk program promoted student-teacher interaction during a nonacademic period each day. This positive interaction opportunity for students and teachers had helped keep the district's dropout rate low.

The accreditation team had a strong concern regarding identification of special education students at the kindergarten level. The reason for the concern is that no objective, nationally norm-referenced test had been given to these students nor is one appropriate for this age group. Placement in special education for this level was based on teacher opinion.

Curriculum documents were in use at the elementary level and were well designed for use in planning lessons. The team noted problems with the curriculum guides at the secondary level. Curriculum documents for biology,
health, keyboarding, physical science, and Texas history did not include minimal components with a clearly identified sequence of presentation for objectives to be taught.

Instructional arrangements and conditions supported effective teaching and learning. Students appeared to be placed properly and identified appropriately. The accreditation team has taken exception to the special education placement in kindergarten mentioned earlier.

School District B had many enriching curricular experiences including science project demonstrations and advanced mathematics courses. District administrators were applying for Agency approval of the honors program.

The district guidance plan was detailed with several guidance activities for each grade and developmental level. These guidance activities included listening to students, self-concept development activities, and crisis intervention by the counselor. The district lacked counseling activities such as group activities that would raise the total number of students with whom the counselor has direct contact.

The district's instructional program was supported with adequate instructional resources. Supplemental materials for language arts, mathematics, sciences, social studies, and vocational programs were sufficient in number.

The three libraries in School District B were true media resource centers. The libraries were colorful and inviting. A certified librarian and two aides provided personal assistance to teachers and students at the three district
libraries. Libraries were open before and after school. The certified professional librarian rotated her time among all three libraries.

Interview from Accreditation Team Members

Interview

I: = Interviewer

C: = Chairperson

RC: = Researcher's Comments

RC: Mr. Armstrong was very nice. His short term memory was lacking though, and by the time we got to this, his third and last school, his comments were very direct and to the point. He assured me that what was in the reports was a true representation of School District B.

I: What were the strengths and weaknesses that you can recall about School District B?

C: I did well that year...I drew some really good schools. They had an instructional superintendent that was partially funded by "a well known foundation"

I: I did notice that in the report. Why is this important?

C: For a district to pursue those kinds of fundings, they are on top of things--they had to say what they wanted the instructional superintendent for. This district had good facilities and planning.

I: You stated that the class sizes were small, which indicates a positive climate. How so?
C: Smaller class size, to a point, research says (around 18) will affect instruction.

I: Are we really getting a realistic picture of this district from the report?

C: If I wrote it, it's true.

RC: I thanked him for his time and for the additional information about the accreditation process.

**School District C**

**Demographic Data**

School District C was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District C had an average daily attendance of over 30,000 students. Of the total student population, 80% were White, 4% were Hispanic, 10% were Black, 5.7% were Asian, and 0.3% were American Indian. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District C was 96% White, 0.7% Hispanic, 3% Black, 0.1% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian. The ethnicity of the district's teachers consisted of 96% White, 0.6% Hispanic, 3% Black, 0.1% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.
Female teachers comprise 85% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 15%. School District C had 30% female administrators and 70% male administrators.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: (a) 3rd-grade students were extremely high when compared to the statewide average of 69%, (b) 5th-grade students scored extremely high when compared to the statewide average of 72%, (c) 7th-grade students also had high scores when compared to the statewide average of 73%, (d) 9th-grade student scores were well above the statewide average of 58%, and (e) 11th-grade students scored well above the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District C received an accreditation visit during the 1983-1984 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of School District C was Accredited. Based on the finding of the 1984 visit, the Accredited status was maintained.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

Most campus principals were recognized by the faculty as effective instructional leaders. Specifically, principals were involved in the overall instructional process relative to planning, curriculum, monitoring, and evaluation
of teachers and programs. Principals participated in selecting personnel for
their own and other campuses. They also interpreted and communicated
student test data to faculty and parents.

School District C had a training academy for administrators organized
into eight domains of leadership, including such areas as school climate,
instructional management, and school/community relations. The content and
skill covered in these training domains supported effective schools research,
and encompassed state requirements such as The Texas Teacher Appraisal
System (TTAS), its subsequent updates, effective teaching practices, and skills
in presenting conference programs. In their training plan the district also
emphasized school-based management and the changing demographics of the
district.

Campus mission statements were developed by committees of parents
and teachers during school-based management retreats. On most campuses
the mission statement was communicated to parents, students and staff
through memoranda, newsletters, bulletin boards, and closed circuit television.
The accreditation team suggested that all principals should make a concerted
effort to communicate the school mission and academic focus.

The principals were described by their faculties as creative, innovative,
energetic, and accessible. They had high expectations of students and staff
and were committed to the participatory management process. Most principals
delegated appropriate responsibilities to grade level or subject area chairpersons.

The TTAS measured the strengths and weaknesses of teachers. Weaknesses identified through this process were addressed in post-observation and summative conferences. Some principals indicated that they conducted a conference after each teacher observation. The professional growth plan was also used as a tool for improvement.

Most principals conducted campus in-service and modeled innovative practices for both beginning and experienced teachers. They ensured that teachers who were new to the district had the appropriate support from their peers.

Principals actively encouraged neighborhood involvement and support from area businesses. Private and public entities contributed to projects and programs at the various schools. Each campus plan included goals to increase community involvement.

According to teachers and administrators at several schools, the principal's absence from the campus had sometimes created a leadership deficiency. The accreditation team recognized the many reasons for outstanding principals to be away from their campuses; however, frequent absences from the campus may dilute the effectiveness of their instructional leadership. The central administrative team and area superintendent may need
to improve efforts to protect each principal's role as an on-site instructional leader.

**School Climate**

The school climate on campuses throughout School District C was positive, enthusiastic, and inviting. Teaching and learning were emphasized and rewarded. This atmosphere was achieved through the integration of a complex set of attitudes, systematic expectations, professional practices, and team efforts. It is evident to the accreditation team that the principals set this tone in School District C.

The buildings were clean, cheerful, and conducive to learning. The team noted several areas that needed renovation, but were aware that they had been addressed by a bond program. Funds from this bond issue will be used to improve specialized equipment and environments in several instructional areas.

Bright classrooms and hallways contained a wealth of instructional and cultural displays that foster a creative atmosphere. A positive school climate was also enhanced by positive attitudes that emanated from enthusiastic, collegial teaching staffs and the collaboration between the staffs and their communities in reaching school goals. This parent and teacher collaboration resulted in a climate of success. Parent volunteers were observed assisting many campus operations. Volunteers served as classroom assistants, tutors, library and media center assistants, and resource persons. At the time of the accreditation visit, training programs for volunteers were being developed.
Teachers in this district believed that it was their responsibility to teach all children. The classrooms displayed ample evidence of good teaching, student recognition, and community support. Teachers and principals were continually seeking innovative ways of teaching and learning for all students. Principals displayed strong leadership qualities and caring attitudes toward students and staff.

Clear rules, policies, and expectations were in place and consistently enforced by adults. In the schools, a strong emphasis had been placed on proper, expected, and acceptable behavior. Guidelines for acceptable behavior were clear and visible in classrooms. High expectations for student behavior from staff members and parents contributed to orderly campuses.

The discipline management plan of the district had been very effective. Teachers reported in interviews that they had excellent support from their building administrators, but that few students needed discipline beyond the classroom level.

Students and teachers were rewarded and recognized for academic efforts and accomplishments in a variety of ways. This recognition depicted the quality of district and campus-level efforts to create a positive climate for teaching and learning.

Fire drills were conducted regularly. Safety procedures were taught and followed in the vocational and science classrooms district-wide. One junior high did have dust problems in an industrial technology classroom. It was
recommended that the district install additional ventilation. Although chemicals in the secondary school science department were stored properly, the district needed to find a safe way to dispose of old, unstable chemicals.

Teacher Behavior/High Expectations

Behaviors and attitudes in the schools were characterized by high expectations of students and teachers. Staff members were fully committed to causing students to learn at the highest level and to conduct themselves as good citizens. Teachers used questioning techniques, one-to-one instruction, computer instruction, silent reading, and gifted and talented strategies as vehicles to ensure quality learning opportunities for all students. Students were the focus of staff time and effort.

High expectations of students were demonstrated by the many enrichment programs offered on campuses. All these enrichment programs and activities were directly related to curriculum objectives.

It was evident to the accreditation team that parents were expected to participate in their children's education. Goals, policies, classroom rules, and student progress were reported to the community through school profile data sheets, school newsletters, conferences, and group meetings.

Teachers and administrators were thoroughly aware of the value of high expectations of students, and they demonstrated positive overt behaviors toward all students, regardless of personal biases. On all campuses, emphasis
had been placed on the district's commitment to all children and their
development into successful lifelong learners through excellence in education.

An academy conducted seminars for teachers. Each year an advisory
committee then submitted recommendations based on TTAS findings and
informal needs assessment. Seminars were planned to align activities with the
specific domains of the TTAS. Teachers indicated that they viewed staff
development opportunities positively. The majority indicated that sufficient
opportunities for relevant staff development were available. Teachers were
required to attend seminars that included Principals of Effective Teaching and
Learning, computer literacy, and experimental science training.

The accreditation team found that several teachers were teaching outside
their preferred teaching areas. Staff development opportunities for the
additional preparation area were limited or not offered and when training for the
additional area had been conducted, teachers were unable to attend for various
reasons. The accreditation team encouraged the district to make a special
effort to work with these teachers so they will be better prepared and more
confident about their assignments.

Measurement

School District C had developed a comprehensive, district-wide testing
program that generated information about individual student progress for
parents and school personnel. Test data were also used to evaluate
educational programs.
TEAMS was administered in October of each year. Three types of norm-referenced tests were also administered, as follows: Kindergarten - Metropolitan Readiness Test, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), and Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP). The Cognitive Abilities Test (COGAT) and the Differential Aptitude Test (DAT) were aptitudes tests administered by the district. High school students took the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT). An additional criterion-referenced test, monitors mastery of the district's curriculum objectives in designated subjects each six weeks.

Parents and students were informed about the testing program through district publications, the school calendar, campus handbooks, and newsletters. The dates of testing were planned and scheduled in advance. The district's research and evaluation department had the capacity to generate data for use in program planning and evaluation for student placement. In addition, mastery reports and the ITBS, TAP, TEAMS, COGAT, and DAT reports were especially useful in planning at the campus level. Pupil attendance, contact hours, and other data were also included in these reports. Generally, teachers in School District C used assessment data to measure student progress and to make instructional decisions. Teachers of students in Grades 4-6 expressed concerns to the team about over reliance on Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test results as the basis for placement in the gifted and talented program. Few disadvantaged students scored well on the IQ test because of their lack of
experience. The team recommended that the gifted and talented identification and placement processes be reviewed district-wide so that more disadvantaged students may benefit from the enriched gifted and talented program.

An at-risk candidate review report included each student’s name, number, and advisor. It also listed those students receiving special programs and services, free or reduced price meals, late entry, age, retention information, TEAMS non-mastery, ITBS and TAP low scores, administrator recommendations, subject or course failures, remediation, and excessive absences.

**Instructional Focus**

Instructional focus permeated the campuses. The schools had clear statements of purpose, and goals that were communicated and supported by staff, students, and parents.

Teachers were involved in the development of their campus mission statement and goals. Through their actions and interviews with the accreditation team, they demonstrated that both are being followed. The campus plans reflected the philosophy that all students can and will learn. Staff members offered an educational environment rich in opportunity for all children to become responsible, life-long learners.

Plans were based on needs identified at the campus level. Campus plans also were developed by incorporating the district’s goals, objectives, and mission statement. The accreditation team reviewed campus plans and found
them to be in varying stages of development. Some plans included goals, objectives, timelines for accomplishment of objectives, personnel responsible, and a method of evaluation. Other plans only included a mission statement, goals, and objectives that denoted the beginning of campus level planning.

Instructional strategies and materials were adapted to a variety of student learning styles. Learning support, reinforcing writing skills, and higher-level thinking skills were incorporated into the curriculum. Special instructional programs for individual students were integrated into the regular classroom instruction and curriculum. Instructional assignments in the classroom and independent practice related to the daily lesson and followed an appropriate sequence. Teachers were knowledgeable about instructional priorities and were observed to be conducting instruction accordingly.

The written curriculum was coordinated between grades and within grades and guided the instructional focus on all campuses. The curriculum was well-balanced, offering an exceptional number and variety of courses to challenge students academically and prepare them to be successful, life-long learners. The curriculum guides were quality documents that included a correlation of instructional materials, recommended units of study, classroom activities, and descriptions of assessment techniques. The team did note that two courses did not have curriculum documents. Some social studies guides were also incomplete.
The accreditation team observed district wide that subjects and courses received sufficient instructional time. The team also observed that an exceptional array of courses, exceeding state requirements were offered. The team noted in looking at student pre-registration cards and course description guides that course titles were not always the same as those listed as approved courses in Title 19, Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 75, State Board of Education Rules for Curriculum. The team recommended that all approved course titles correspond to essential elements required for each course's content.

Elementary teachers on most campuses did not seem to understand that physical education instruction delivered by them should be specifically related to the district's curriculum guide and to the state-required essential elements. In addition, the individual schools did not have written plans detailing how the essential elements in physical education will be addressed in Grades K-6. The accreditation team suggested that elementary principals and instructional support staff should assure that physical education instruction by regular classroom teachers focuses on objectives correlated with the physical education essential elements.

The team received frequent reports about the changing student population. They suggested that as the student population changes, the administration may wish to consider expanding vocational course offerings to properly prepare all students for successful employment.
The accreditation team observed that reteaching was an integral part of instruction district wide. Procedures for awarding grades after reteaching had not yet been developed; therefore, the team recommended that the district develop consistent policies and procedures for grading retests.

Through information gained from interviews and observations, the accreditation team ascertained that a comprehensive tutorial program was coordinated with classroom instruction and used to improve student achievement. During the evenings, certified teachers were paid to provide academic coaching for students who needed additional assistance in English. Remedial non-credit courses to address TEAMS test objectives, for those who had not mastered, were also offered.

School District C offered an excellent developmental guidance program for Grades K-12 that included the essential elements. This plan was written by committees and is based on academic and personal needs. All elementary schools had full-time counselors. Counselors were heavily involved in the classroom and small group developmental guidance activities throughout the year; they served as the standardized test coordinators and interpreters of data. Counselors provided meaningful orientation activities for new students and for students entering junior high school. The counselors conducted one-on-one crisis intervention sessions, as necessary.
At the secondary level, the counselors spent at least one day per month in the classroom. Ninety percent of their time was spent on direct student services.

School nurses in School District C also served as classroom resources when time allowed, teaching prevention of communicable diseases and prevention of school-age pregnancies. The current ratio of nurses to students was 1 to 1,500; the ratio recommended by the state was 1 to 1,000.

School District C had a systematic procedure for acquiring, maintaining, and replacing instructional materials and equipment. These procedures included minimum equipment standards, baseline course costs, and maintenance cycles. The recently passed bond package included a very ambitious and aggressive commitment to instructional technology and computer-assisted instruction by allocating money to add and upgrade equipment and computer laboratories. Substantial funds were also committed to secondary science laboratory renovation and modification of elementary science laboratories.

The district operated and supported suitable library media programs and services on almost every campus. Many programs and resource collections exceeded minimum standards; all but one met state requirements. Less than desirable conditions were observed at a few other campuses. Some schools lacked systematic procedures for weeding worn, outdated books and obsolete materials from the collection, especially in the areas of science, technology, and
geography. The library book collections must contain books current and relevant to the programs and curriculum delivered on each campus.

The rapid cultural changes occurring in the community presented a positive challenge for teachers to reach and teach all students. Staff development should include sessions on how to design multicultural programs to acclimate staff members to the diverse cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of the many ethnic subpopulations who reside with the district. Additional staff development activities should be conducted to address the frustration and low expectations of student achievement that some staff members expressed.

**Interviews from Accreditation Team Members**

**Interview One**

I: = Interviewer

M: = Member

RC: = Researcher's Comments

RC: I reached Ms. Foster at her elementary school, where she was principal. I explained to her the purpose of my research and that my focus was on the effective school correlates and that I wanted to get her general reactions to the three schools that she visited. I explained that I was trying to get a more global view of the teams' observations, other than what was written in the reports.
M: I really felt that School District C had done an excellent job in servicing their teachers on the correlates. There were a few schools, because they were going through a transition, as far as their student population was concerned, that probably lacked some high expectations for those kids. What they needed to do was to in-service those teachers and principals about diverse cultures more...expecting the same out of those children as they had the children in the previous years. Other than that, I thought School District C was excellent in all of the areas.

I: So, you felt that they were excellent in all of the areas. Did you ever see the report that was written on School District C?

M: No, I didn't.

I: You did mention some things that were written up in the final report as far as the diverse population and them undergoing a change...I am also interviewing the chairs of the accreditation visit. From an elementary principal's standpoint and member, what you are saying will be helpful. Anything else that you can think about School District C will be helpful...

RC: She seemed surprised at my first statement.

M: As far as climate, it's real hard to compete with School District C because they have the support personnel to help principals do a good job.

RC: We both agreed that they have the money to buy anything.
Interview Two

I: = Interviewer
M: = Member
RC = Researcher's Comments

RC: I did not have any difficulty reaching Ms. Stevens. I refreshed her memory about the letter that she had received and about the purpose of my research. I also stressed that I was interested in a global overview of her observations in the areas of instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus when she visited the campuses of School District C. I mentioned that I would also like to know her feelings about some strengths and weaknesses of School District C.

M: That's touchy.

RC: At that point, we both laughed.

I: At least your name won't be used, as I stated in my letter. I am trying to make sure that what was written in the report was really what people saw and not necessarily what someone wanted to put in a report.

RC: There was a long pause and I made the suggestion that we start with instructional leadership.

M: I thought it was very good from the top down. They seemed to be very organized at the administration building in making certain that appropriate staff development is implemented and programmed. As a
matter of fact, they are so well organized, there is no problem as far as
the principals and the teachers knowing what the priority is and exactly
what they need to do.

I: Did you find any areas in instructional leadership on the campus level
that might be a weakness?

M: No.

I: How about school climate?

M: I thought the school climate was pretty high for the most part. I don't
necessarily think they addressed the small population of minorities that
were there.

I: That's a very good point. You are the second person that has said that.
That observation was also written up in the report.

I: Other than that in school climate, did you find the rules, policies, and
expectations in place?

M: They were in place.

I: Teacher behavior/high expectations?

M: I definitely think teacher behavior exemplified high expectations in all of
the schools as well as the district. They must be very particular about
who they hire with regards to that area.

I: Can you think of anything in the areas of measurement or instructional
focus that might have been a strength or weakness?
M: As I said, everything came from the administration building so everything was very well documented. They took care of everything and made certain campuses had everything they needed.

I: Can you recall anything else?

M: The resources were outstanding. They had a lot of community and parent support and they didn't want for anything. Excellent computer programs...

RC: I found Ms. Stevens to be very easy to talk to and helpful. The information that she provided was interesting and helpful.

**School District D**

**Demographic Data**

School District D was evaluated during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District D had an average daily attendance of under 3,000 students. Of the total student population 90% were White, 1% were Hispanic, and 9% were Black. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District D was 97% White and 3% Black. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. The ethnicity of the district's teachers consisted of 97% White and 3% Black.
Female teachers comprise 75% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 25%. There were no female administrators in School District D.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: (a) 3rd-grade students were exceptionally higher than the statewide average of 69%, (b) 5th-grade students were extremely high when compared to statewide average of 75% (c) 7th-grade students were exceptionally higher than the statewide average of 75%, (d) 9th-grade students scored well above the statewide average of 58%, and (e) 11th-grade student scored well above the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District D received an accreditation visit during the 1983-1984 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of School District D was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the Accredited status was reaffirmed.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

School District D had emphasized the effective schools correlates as evidenced by its use of the district mission statement, needs assessment, test scores, and campus- and grade-level meetings. Their mission was to prepare learners to live and work in a changing future.
Principals actively monitored lesson plans with comments for improvement, and they provided monthly instructional curriculum discussions. They frequently visited the classrooms and were visible to teachers and students. The principals were viewed by their staffs as the instructional leaders.

School Climate

Appropriate behavior in School District D was consistently reinforced. Students were well behaved and eager to participate in school activities. A positive atmosphere and a familial relationship based upon mutual respect existed among staff members. A team spirit existed among teachers of all grade levels. Students were recognized for achievement in a local newspaper. The superintendent kept a scrapbook depicting school activities and accomplishments.

School-wide and in classrooms, rights and responsibilities were posted and implemented. Teachers made every effort to ensure that all students were successful and mastered the essential elements.

Class sizes were appropriate--some had fewer than 20 students. As a result, teachers used a variety of instructional techniques to provide opportunities for reteaching and enrichment.

Physical facilities at the elementary school were not adequate. A problem in communication existed because of the scattered classroom facilities. There was no telephone or intercom system between the office and classrooms for notifying students and teachers in case of emergencies. During fire drills, an
aide knocked on the doors of the portable classrooms. Despite the overcrowded and scattered arrangement of the buildings, the elementary school was clean and conducive to learning.

Fire, tornado, and other emergency drills were conducted regularly. The district had established policies and procedures for promoting student safety, with one exception. The high school science laboratory did not have all required safety equipment. This deficiency was in violation of the Texas Hazard Communication Act. The agriculture shop area and its equipment needed to be cleaned and better organized to alleviate risks to students and teachers. In addition, the team observed that facilities had not been adapted so that they were accessible to handicapped people.

The district provided health services to students through the county cooperative. The nurse is employed by the cooperative in the school district one day a week. The team was concerned that the district did not provide adequate facilities for the health clinic. The nurse's office and storage were in a small area adjacent to the stage. One cot was located by a wall in the auditorium, and medical supplies were stored in the teachers' lounge. Space should be provided to house a permanent clinic with hot and cold running water and a dressing area. The team also recommended that the nurse's time in the district be extended to better care for student needs.

The community was actively involved in school functions. Parent volunteers were active. Civic groups were also very active. Citizens were
regularly informed of district, campus, and classroom activities through the local newspaper. A major goal of the district was to broaden community support.

**Teacher Behavior/High Expectations**

District-wide emphasis was placed on the belief that "all children can learn." Teachers and administrators provided feedback to parents through report cards and progress reports. Teachers and administrators enforced policies and classroom rules consistently.

A commitment to time-on-task was observed as teachers went through their daily schedules. Emphasis was placed on high expectations for all students. TEAMS test scores were commended by the accreditation team.

The personnel in School District D were qualified and competent. Staff development was conducted as required during the days before school started. Teachers had attended effective schools research workshops. All teachers were encouraged to attend workshops.

**Measurement**

The accreditation team concluded that School District D staff members were doing an outstanding job using student achievement results to plan and adapt instruction. Local and nationally validated tests were administered, and test data was used to modify programs and services. Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) and Science Research Associates (SRA) test scores were analyzed. The district used the Annual Performance
Report (APR) to evaluate the performance on each campus by comparing the percentage of students mastering the basic skills as measured on the TEAMS.

The elementary and junior high school staffs reviewed test results by grade level. All objectives that were below average were identified. Instructional needs were then prioritized to develop specific instructional goals that focused on the TEAMS objectives. Test data were desegregated to more accurately define differing student needs.

Performance data were evaluated for their relevance to effective schools research. All teachers were informed about the test results, which were compiled by the counselors, provided to principals, and shared with the teachers and other appropriate persons. The data was also reported to parents and the community through the Annual Performance Report and the local newspaper.

**Instructional Focus**

The district was in the process of developing specific instructional goals focused on test objectives and scores. At the time of the accreditation visit, teacher, administrator, and parent committees were developing goals and a school mission statement.

Time on task was evident, and excellent, objective-base lesson plans with objectives showed careful planning. Gradebooks listed skill areas with properly recorded documentation of student mastery.
The district's curriculum met student needs and fulfilled state requirements. Plans for curriculum development included adding Spanish classes at the junior high and expanding the honors program at the high school. The elementary school implemented the developmental phase of the gifted and talented program as part of the gifted and talented cooperative with an education service center.

The district's curriculum documents were locally developed and adapted. They consisted of a listing of the essential elements and some instructional objectives.

Instructional procedures and conditions in School District D supported effective teaching and learning. The teachers stated that continuity and coordination existed between and among grade levels. Procedures for identification, assessment, and placement of students were in place. Teachers acknowledged continuity in monitoring student achievement and failure. Teachers documented mastery and reteaching.

The team noted that teachers were using a variety of methods to determine the final grade after reteaching for mastery of essential elements. Even though grading procedures are the responsibility of the local school district, the accreditation team felt that students should be graded equitably and consistently.

The district had a policy for promotion, retention, and remediation. The accreditation team was concerned that tutorials are only offered after school.
The team felt that the district should offer tutorials during the school day, because students most in need of tutoring frequently cannot or will not attend after school.

Discipline management procedures were included in the student handbooks. Parents must sign that they have read the student handbook.

The accreditation team believed that one reason for high test scores was the fact that planning occurred across grade levels. The accreditation team observed ample evidence of practical lesson planning by teachers. Some teachers at the elementary level had common planning periods, and they planned together.

The district developed and adopted a guidance plan for Grades K-12. The counselor, who was available three-fourths of the school day, provided an array of excellent student services. The accreditation team suggested that the district consider increasing the counselor's time of service to better meet the needs of the district's students. The team also recommended that the counselor explore the possibility of linking by computer with the regional education service center for precareer counseling and information services.

Textbooks were adopted with teacher input and with attention given to their consistency with instructional objectives. Adequate instructional supplies and equipment appropriate for instruction were observed.

Although appropriate materials were provided in most academic courses, the team expressed concerns in several areas. The science program needed
electronic balances. The agriculture shop needed updated equipment such as computers. More computers were needed in the computer laboratory and science classrooms.

The accreditation team was concerned that because a study hall was conducted in a secondary library, teachers and students were deterred from using the library. The libraries in School District D were unsupervised part of the day. More current books correlated with curriculum objectives were needed, especially in the areas of science and technology. The district lacked a systematic policy and procedures for weeding the collections of worn and outdated books and materials, and replacing them.

Interview from Accreditation Team Members

Interview

I: = Interviewer
M: = Member
RC: = Researcher's Comments

RC: Ms. Thompson is a principal at an elementary school. I reached her at home and she was very willing to share observations about her accreditation visits as they related to the effective schools correlates.

M: They had a new superintendent. I was so impressed with him. He was just really getting on top of things.
They also had an elementary principal that was just amazing. Every teacher I visited in that school really had high expectations and really had pride. The climate and the up-to-dateness was amazing.

It was amazing how much in-service education that school district provided. They were having staff development even though they were much smaller than the other schools I visited. They were tiny.

They had their elementary packed in an old building. Some of the things we had to write them up for were just physical facilities. They had no clinic and no library. Their library was in the gym.

I: Did you say that their library was in the gym?

M: The library and the nurse's office were both in the gym. Those poor little district's cannot help it ... Money is the deal.

That superintendent ... Talk about climate ... He took us to a community meeting. He was really getting that community so involved. You could see he was doing this by getting involved himself. It was impressive. I felt that the district was really getting it together. The elementary program was tops and the superintendent was tops.

I did not visit any high school programs but I sat in on the final report. I think there was a real good sense of climate and a sense of community pride pulling together. There was a real good sense of looking at research and trying to develop their staff.
I did meet a local doctor at the community meeting who was real upset that the district had never consolidated with another local district. I just heard from him. That community would never agree to consolidate even though they had such a money problem.

I: What did you observe in the area of teacher behavior/high expectations?

M: In the elementary, it was just excellent. I saw some excellent, excellent elementary teachers. When we talked to them, you could tell that they cared so much. They had brought in quite a few new people. I don't know how they were so lucky to get them. Some of them were young. They had an age balance. It was real impressive.

School District E

Demographic Data

School District E was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District E had an average daily attendance of under 3,000 students. Of the total student population, 96% were White, 1% were Hispanic, 2.6% were Black, 0.3% were Asian, and 0.1% were American Indian. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District E was 100% White. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year
was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. In addition, all of the teachers in School District E were White.

Female teachers comprise 75% of the district's teaching force. Males made up 25%. There were no female administrators in School District E.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: 3rd-grade students a few percentage points above the statewide average of 69%; 5th-grade students were above the statewide average of 72%; 7th-grade students were a few percentage points above the statewide average of 73%; 9th-grade students were below the statewide average of 58%; 11th-grade students were below the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District E received an accreditation visit during the 1983-1984 school year. Prior to that visit, the district's status was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the Accredited status was reaffirmed.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

Teacher interviews on each campus determined that the principal was viewed as the instructional leader. Although a mission statement was in place, some teachers could not verbalize either the statement or the goals. The team
suggested that each principal emphasize the goals for the respective faculties and patrons.

A district committee composed of administrators, teachers, and community members developed a mission statement with goals and objectives. Teachers who had been involved with the district committee, however, could tell the accreditation team about the mission and goals for the district. The team suggested that a campus mission statement be developed and posted in each building.

A handbook for students and teachers was provided for students on each campus. These handbooks detailed expectations relating to policies and student behavior. The team suggested that the high school principal incorporate additional methods, such as personalized newsletters, community presentations, and memorandums, to communicate these expectations to the community. According to faculty comments, the principals at the elementary and middle schools made an effort to maintain a positive climate for both students and faculty; and they were supportive of their discipline measures. Although many positive comments were made at the high school, the team determined that the faculty wanted the principal to (a) be more visible in the halls and in their classrooms (b) be more communicative regarding policies and procedures and (c) be more supportive of discipline procedures.
School Climate

The environment of each campus was safe, orderly, clean, and conducive to learning. The team observed evidence of daily maintenance. Each campus was well designed for programs offered on the campus.

An annual awards program provided incentives to students and faculty. Students were rewarded for academic achievement through the honor rolls, journalism competition, and literary contests. The local newspaper provided commendable news coverage of school events and awards.

Teachers enforced the discipline plan for the district consistently by various methods. Teachers' strategies showed creativity and a positive approach to discipline.

The district's efforts to promote and maintain positive relationships within the schools and community were noteworthy. The superintendent had improved communications to the community. However, comments of parents to the team indicated that additional communication efforts need to be made by the high school principal regarding recently implemented discipline procedures.

The team noted that the secondary teachers were making an effort to increase interdepartmental planning. There was also a plan to increase student, parent, and teacher participation in all activities. More intramural activities for students were being scheduled.

A part-time nurse provided health services for the district on Monday and Tuesday of each week. No clinic facilities were available at the middle or high
school. The team was concerned that teachers at the elementary school were dispensing medication when the nurse was unavailable.

The district scheduled fire drills on a regular basis. Safety information regarding procedures to be followed in case of fires, tornadoes, and other emergencies was posted in classrooms and was stated in student handbooks. The accreditation team noted that several potentially hazardous conditions affecting student safety needed to be corrected.

Teacher Behavior/High Expectations

The district employed qualified and competent personnel. Teachers were prepared for their assignments. Staff development was appropriately provided to all teachers and was based on (a) findings from the district's Annual Performance Report (b) teachers appraisals and (c) needs determined by TEAMS results. The team recommended that the district provide additional opportunities for appropriate training of teachers who were assigned to teach courses outside their fields of preparation.

Teacher interviews indicated that most teachers believed their students could master basic skills. Although some teachers' statements did indicate higher level and faster mastery for some students, most of them had diligently worked to bring their students' test scores to a higher level during the 1988-1989 school year. The team observed students on task throughout the visit. Teachers were involved in group and individual student activities.
Most teachers indicated that they were responsible for all students learning. However, an attitude of low expectations was conveyed by negative comments that were made to the team about some possible transfer students. The team urges the district to include the issue of high expectations for all students in its in-service programs.

**Measurement**

On each campus, TEAMS and the Comprehensive Assessment Program (C.A.P.) tests published by American Testronics were analyzed and studied by the principals and teachers.

**Instructional Focus**

In School District E, planning began at the campus level. Each campus plan included an objective to improve student achievement. Teachers were developing instructional strategies to accomplish this objective. The team encouraged the district to reinforce these efforts by focusing decisions regarding budget and resource allocations on instructional needs.

Although the board members did not actively participate in the planning process, each principal presented a campus plan to the board for its approval. The team suggested that board members be included in planning future activities in their roles as members of campus committees.

Data from TEAMS and (C.A.P.) tests published by American Testronics were analyzed and used to set goals for academic achievement. At the
elementary school, goals addressed writing needs and at the middle school, they addressed spelling.

The team noted that few students were enrolled in special education programs at the elementary and middle schools. At the high school, the teacher interviewed knew the needs of her students. The students' individual educational plans included strategies to remediate these needs. Regular classroom teachers were also involved in planning for these students.

The well-balanced curriculum met student needs and most requirements specified in Title 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 75 and House Bill 72. Sufficient time was provided, and approved course offerings were available at the elementary and high schools. A review of the middle school curriculum, however, indicated that art was not offered to students in Grades 6-8 as required by 19 TAC, Section 75.142. The accreditation team did encourage the district to continually explore opportunities to offer advanced academic courses through cooperative endeavors, correspondence, or telecommunications. The district should also explore offering enrichment activities and courses that give students a broader view of opportunities available to them beyond the locality in which they live.

The district's curriculum documents followed a scope and sequence of objectives provided by a local education service center. However, very few completed curriculum documents were noted by the team. Most documents included only a list of objectives coded to essential elements. The curriculum
documents were lacking time lines for accomplishment and specific activities and persons responsible.

An assessment system to determine mastery of objectives was evident. Resources and activities were not coded to objectives, although the English teacher at the middle school had a more complete guide. Therefore, most teachers found it necessary to develop extensive lessons plans; and others used their textbooks as guides. The accreditation team recommended that staff members add resources and activities to the existing scope and sequence of objectives in the curriculum documents.

Most instructional procedures and conditions in School District E supported effective teaching and learning. However, documentation of essential elements and grading procedures varied in practice across the district and even among teachers in the same building. A review of the grading practices of teachers indicated that most of them at the middle school documented mastery consistently, but some teachers on other campuses did not.

Physical education teachers at both the middle and high schools deducted points from student grades for not dressing in prescribed clothing. The accreditation team reminded School District E that student grades will be based on academic criteria only.

Some teachers in the district did not reteach for mastery.

Inconsistencies in methods to document mastery were also noted on each
campus. The Agency publication, Documenting Mastery, should be used as a guide to determine consistent documentation.

Tutorials were scheduled after school. Some teachers stated that they conducted additional tutorials before school as needed. Some parents voiced concern that often the students who were in most need of tutorials were not required to attend the sessions.

The team noted that a concerted effort to improve discipline at the campus level had been made. Rules had been consistently enforced as outlined in the district plan and campus handbooks. Because some parents voiced concerns about past discipline practices at the high school, the team suggested that the district inform parents about the current discipline program and procedures by distributing handbooks and holding meetings for parents.

At the high school, the science teacher's lesson plans showed that less than 40 percent of the instructional time had been spent in laboratory or field activities. When questioned by the accreditation team member, the teacher said that he did not have sufficient material and equipment to conduct laboratory instruction. Title 19 TAC, Sections 75.142 (b) (6) and 75.142 (c) (1) (C) require 40 percent laboratory instruction in science courses.

Overall, the district supplied adequate materials and instructional equipment to support instructional programs. Teachers helped select appropriate equipment and supplies, which were widely available.
The district employed an aide to teach library skills at the elementary level but discontinued that position because of a funding cut. One librarian currently served all campuses, and the elementary library was unattended part of the day. A weeding policy was developed at the elementary school, yet many books currently on the shelves were outdated and inappropriate. Although the library facilities at the high and middle school were spacious and appropriate for teaching and learning, these facilities should be used more efficiently and effectively.

The requirement of 10 books to one student was minimally met; however, books were neither current nor relevant to the schools' programs. The district library budget was insufficient for many areas, particularly for audiovisual materials and reference books.

Interview from Accreditation Team Members

Interview

I: = Interviewer

C: = Chairperson

RC: = Researcher's Comments

RC: Dr. Montes works for the Texas Education Agency in the Division of Accreditation. She served as the chairperson during the accreditation visit to School District E.

RC: I explained to her my dissertation topic and that my focus was on the campus observations using the five effective schools correlates used by
TEA during their visit. I also pointed out that I was trying to generate additional data based on her observations during the visit and this in turn would provide triangulation for the study.

I: What was your general reaction to School District E?
C: We found the climate at School District E somewhat lacking.

I: I wonder what that could have been attributed to?
C: I don't know. We really didn't analyze it...that's not our job. We just reported what we saw.

I: Are there any specifics that you can recall about the climate?
C: They may have had a little problem with discipline. They were working on that at the time. But, I think they were unhappy about some discipline practices in the past and that may have contributed to it.

I: What about in the area of teacher behavior/high expectations?
C: At the time of our visit there was an issue up there that clouded their perceptions. At that point, we had to go back and redo our report because a merger of a nearby district did not take place. That influenced what we wrote because they were expecting the kids from that local district to be much lower and afraid that they would pull down their test scores. We kept hearing comments like that and in truth the kids from that local district had very high scores and it would not have made a bit of difference in their test scores. They did not make the merger. So, that's no longer relevant.
RC: We did not discuss the areas of measurement and instructional focus because Dr. Montes said that those areas were pretty cut and dry.

**School District F**

**Demographic Data**

School District F was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District F had an average daily attendance of under 6,000 students. Of the total student population, 63% were White, 8% were Hispanic, 28% were Black, and 1% were Asian. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District F was 96% White and 4% Black. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. The ethnicity of the district's teachers consisted of 96% White and 4% Black.

Female teachers comprise 80% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 20%. Females made up 35% of the district's school administrators. School District F had 65% male administrators.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math,
reading, and writing) of the test were: 3rd-grade students were well above the statewide average of 60%; 5th-grade students were a few percentage points above the statewide average of 72%; 7th-grade students were a few percentage points above the statewide average of 73%; 9th-grade students were even with the statewide average of 58%; 11th-grade students were well above the statewide average of 72%.

**Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits**

School District F received an accreditation visit during the 1984-1984 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of the district was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the Accredited status was reaffirmed.

**The Visiting Team Report**

**Instructional Leadership**

The instructional leader effectively communicated the mission of the school to the staff, parents, community, and students. The school mission statement and district goal were developed with the cooperation of board members, administration, teachers, and parents. All decisions supported the school's mission, which was based on the effective schools correlates.

Leadership styles varied from campus to campus; but overall, principals were recognized as the instructional leaders. At some campuses, much of the instructional leadership was delegated to the curriculum coordinator, department head, or team leaders; yet it was clear that each principal was assuming responsibility for her/his instructional leadership.
At the elementary schools, the curriculum coordinators were responsible for working with teachers and other staff at two campuses with instruction and curriculum issues. They were also designated as second appraisers at the remaining two elementary campuses. This arrangement was working well. The curriculum coordinators were an asset to the instructional program at the elementary level.

Although their styles of management and supervision varied, the principals were very knowledgeable about instruction and curriculum issues appropriate to their particular schools. Staff development activities were based upon teacher input, the appraisal process, and the need for training in implementing new programs. They were sensitive to the needs of the staff and were committed to providing a quality education for the students.

School Climate

With the exception of the high school, a very positive climate was evident on all campuses in the district. The climate was warm, responsive, and provided a student support system. Teachers had a collegial relationship with each other. Open communication between the administration and staff was evident.

At the high school, the team noted low staff morale. Some teachers felt that communication and understanding between the administration and staff were lacking. The principal was well aware of the problem. Some proactive
measures were taken, but much remains to be done toward improving the morale of the staff.

All schools exhibited pleasant, clean, and safe environments. Inspection of the facilities left no doubt that daily custodial care was being provided. The condition of facilities showed that long-range maintenance and repairs have been performed systematically. Even the older schools were well maintained and provided a pleasant environment for students and staff. The physical environment provided appropriate space for effective instruction and other district functions. The facilities were designed to meet the educational needs of students and provide a positive environment for teaching and learning. State-of-the-art equipment was found in appropriate areas. Displays of student work were found in the halls and classrooms of every campus. Students were friendly and seemed happy to be at school.

Adequate health services were being provided. Registered nurses (RNs) employed by the district provided health services to every campus in the district on at least a part-time basis. When the RN was not available, the principal's secretary administered health services. In emergency situations, the RN was always on call and could be on any campus within minutes.

Appropriate safety equipment was present throughout the district. Standard precautions were observed with special attention given to laboratories and shops. Students were taught the proper use of potentially dangerous materials and equipment before using them.
There was evidence that school district personnel and the board of trustees worked harmoniously with the community in producing positive learning outcomes. Volunteers worked with school nurses, librarians, and provided general clerical help in the office. Every school in the district had a Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) that provided enrichment programs for students and parents. Members helped organized fund-raising activities, provided clerical help in the classroom, provided needed instructional materials through donations, and sponsored activities that the schools otherwise would not be able to provide. In addition, a public relations department in the school district was responsible for communication with the general public.

**Teacher Behavior/High Expectations**

School District F employed qualified and competent personnel, assigned them properly, and encouraged their professional growth. All prospective employees were rigorously screened before being submitted to the principals for final interviews and eventual employment.

The district had implemented a learning styles program to assist teachers and students in achieving maximum potential. Staff development activities were conducted on a district wide basis to advise teachers how the students' "sensory channels" affect learning. Teachers now recognize that some students learn most easily by seeing, others by hearing, and still others by doing.

The teachers of School District F believed all students can master basic skills as a result of effective instruction. This attitude was evidenced by
displayed goal statements, positive attitudes of teachers, and the ability of students to state the skill to be learned during a given activity.

Hallways cleared quickly between classes, and students were noted exhibiting on-task behavior during class. High expectations for teaching and learning were observed as important to the staff and students.

Measurement

The accreditation team learned that feedback or student progress was frequently obtained in School District F. Multiple assessment methods, such as teacher-made tests, samples of students' work, criterion- and norm-referenced tests were used to determine district wide goals and objectives. Evidence of this feedback included the TEAMS and Science Research Associates (SRA) results, which indicate an overall upward movement of achievement. Results from both the American College Tests (ACT) and Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) showed an improvement over test scores of the previous year.

Instructional Focus

All subject areas were scheduled to meet state time requirements. A wide array of elective courses were offered for the students' interest and benefit. The district had developed its curriculum guides with the help of personnel from the regional education service center. Curriculum guides placed all of the essential elements to be included in lessons during the year and suggested activities for presentation.
The planning process involved both immediate and long-range goals. Immediate goals dealt primarily with student performance on SRA tests and TEAMs, while long-range goals related to the total school environment including curriculum, testing, technology, and the assessment of programs and practices currently being used.

The accreditation team found that campus plans with specific goals and objectives were in place at each campus. Teachers and parents were involved in the developmental process, and teachers were not only aware of the school goals but also actively supported the goals through instruction in their particular academic disciplines. The accreditation team did recommend that campus plans be improved by stating all goals/objectives in more realistic, measurable terms so that progress could be accurately assessed at the end of each school year.

The lesson plans of all teachers incorporated the content of the guides as well as the expected cognitive levels of planned activities. Many teachers had been scheduled for a common planning period; and, according to teachers interviewed, much of that time was spent in a coordinated planning effort.

At the recommendation of a committee of teachers, a new concept--peer coaching--had been implemented by School District F to assist in improving the quality of instruction on all campuses. Peer coaching had been introduced on all campuses and involved teachers observing other teachers and themselves and learning from the strengths and weaknesses in the presentations. The
program identified master teachers throughout the district and allowed first-year and other level teachers to observe a master teacher in the classroom.

Many materials and manipulatives were used by the staff, demonstrating that the budget supported instruction. Instructional planning throughout the district followed the lesson cycle. Consideration was also given to state mandates and current trends in education. Computers and other educational technology equipment had been delivered to all schools.

Students in special programs were provided instructional content presented in the regular classroom. The special education program was closely coordinated with the regular program. Special education students were mainstreamed in fine arts, physical education, and science. The team noted that lunch was served to special education students during the time regular students were being served, with no evidence of physical or social isolation.

The diverse instructional needs of students were met and adapted to content presentation through grouping and multisensory presentations. The district applied commendable procedures for early prevention of school failure through use of diagnostic tests, training of staff in testing, implementation of a transitional first grade, and emphasis on reteaching of content. Reportedly, students were placed at levels of instruction where they could reasonably be expected to experience success. Students were allowed to change groups at the end of each six-week reporting period if the change would more precisely
meet their instructional needs. The high success of students was observable in the instructional focus of the district.

School District F provided adaptive physical education for physically and mentally handicapped students. Even though the instructor was not available on a daily basis at every campus, the regular instructor adapted instruction to meet the students' needs during the time the adaptive instructor was not there.

School District F was well ahead of the Texas legislature's mandate that requires school districts to identify and serve gifted students in Grades K-12 by the 1990-1991 school year. As part of the district's efforts to properly serve these students, the district provided excellent staff development programs for teachers to teach these classes.

All students who were enrolled in Grades 7-12 honors classes were identified as gifted and talented, even though the staff recognized that not all of them were gifted. At the elementary level, though the district's ability grouping process, extremely high percentages of students were reported as gifted. The team discussed these arrangements with the assistant superintendent for instruction and the director of curriculum. The team was assured that gifted students were identified within the honors group of students, and their instruction was differentiated according to their individual abilities and needs.

The science program in elementary and the intermediate grades was outstanding. The district provided science manipulatives and portable demonstration laboratory stations. Elementary schools and intermediate
schools were providing students with hands-on experiences at every grade level. Interviews with science teachers and a review of the teachers' daily lesson plans left no doubt that students were involved in laboratory experience more than the required 40 percent of the instructional time throughout the school year.

Interviews with teachers at the high school and a review of lessons left no doubt that science courses were not being taught by the laboratory method as mandated by 19 TAC, Section 75.142 (c) (1) (C). Science equipment and materials were in short supply, thus seriously hampering teacher efforts to effectively deliver instruction as mandated. The science laboratories were in a poor state of repair and needed to be totally renovated. Additionally, the laboratories were not in compliance with the safety equipment requirements of the Texas Hazard Communication Act.

At the secondary level, the district provided a project for at-risk and dyslexic students. This pull-out program concentrated on language arts skills and reading during a two-hour time block. The district had not only met the requirements of the law with reference to programs for dyslexic students, but had also exceeded state requirements by extending the programs into the upper elementary and secondary grade levels. Nevertheless, the superintendent requested technical assistance to upgrade the district's dyslexia programs.
The district's guidance program was noteworthy and met the needs of all students, including those in special education and other special programs. The team was pleased to find full-time certified counselors at every campus in the district. According to interviews with the counselors and administration, individual and group counseling services addressed both academic and personal student needs. At the time of the visit, the counselors were spending more than 75 percent of their time in direct interaction with students.

The district operated a planned program for library media services. The program was under the direct supervision of certified librarians, who assisted students in developing skills to locate, evaluate, synthesize, and use information in solving problems. Resources of the library media centers were available throughout the day, and an effective library program was achieved through the cooperative efforts of the library media specialists, administrators, teachers, and students. There was a media library center at each campus. Each library was adequately supplied with volumes of materials and met or exceeded minimum state requirements as to the number of volumes per student. The team was especially pleased to find high school special education students serving as aides in some elementary schools.

**Interview from Accreditation Team Members**

**Interview**

I: = Interviewer

C: = Chairperson
RC: = Researcher's Comments

RC: I explained the purpose of my research to Mr. Morgan earlier in our conversation.

I: Did you chair the accreditation visit to this district?

C: Yes. We had a lot of problems with that district. The kids performed well. It's pretty much a solid, middle-class, anglo community. They do some neat things over there.

The high school principal was real weak. There were some discipline problems, instructional problems, and staff problems.

They had a real variety of people talking to us about the district's abilities to deal with dyslexia kids. As we worked through it, we found that the district was doing far beyond what's required by law providing training for teachers and things of that nature and supplies and materials. They were also pumping millions of dollars into a technology program to setup a network between campuses.

With the exception of the high school principal, the instructional leadership was, I think, outstanding. The instructional focus was outstanding, with the exception of the high school. The school climate, with the exception of the high school, was as would expect to find.

We also had a bit of a problem at the junior high school with reference to climate. There were some overcrowding conditions. They were also using a program that was a multisensory learning system
where they were experimenting at the junior high with some different learning styles. Which, if you didn't know what they were doing, it would seem like there might be complete chaos. But that was not really the case. It's just that some kids learn in different ways.

Overall, we felt that they had a good school district. They did have, as I said, have a terrific problem with the dyslexia issue there and that went on after we left. We sent another team back up there to meet with a group of parents and the superintendent. As I said, the district was going way beyond what was mandated.

I: I noticed at one particular school, there was a problem with staff morale.

C: It's indicated under school climate about that particular principal issue. We had calls from teachers at the hotel who wanted to talk with us and then changed their minds and wouldn't come and wouldn't give us names.

I: As a teacher, I can identify with them.

C: Well, I can too. But still, if folks don't talk to you and we gave them the opportunity to come to us during the evening where they would not be intimidated. They lacked confidence in us keeping the conference confidential. I really think that's why they chose not to come forward.

We talked to the superintendent about the problem and his position was that this principal had been with him one year. That high school has had a history of principals being short term and not being
able to deal with staff. He was determined that he's going to give this fella a chance to pull it together and get supporting staff and that's what he was lacking. It can happen, because I've been in schools and classrooms where the teaching core dictated to administration how to operate the schools.

I: I've been in schools of this nature.

C: I think what they were trying to do was to get the administration back to administrators and classroom teachers back into the classroom. I think the problem was two fold.

School District G

Demographic Data

School District G was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District G had an average daily attendance of under 4,000 students. Of the total student population 80% were White, 5% Hispanic, 13% Black, and 2% Other (Asian and American Indian). The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District G was 98.4% White, 0.8% Hispanic, and 0.8% Black. The state's professional during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2%
Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. The ethnicity of the district's teachers consisted of 98.4% White, 0.8% Hispanic, and 0.8% Black.

Female teachers comprise 85% of the teaching core. Males made up 15%. School District G had 41% female administrators and 59% male administrators.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: 3rd-grade students scores were well above the statewide average of 69%; 5th-grade students were above the statewide average of 72%; 7th-grade students were even with the statewide average of 73%; 9th-grade scores were well above the statewide average of 58%; 11th-grade students scored a few percentage points below the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District G received an accreditation visit during the 1983-1984 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of School District G was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the Accredited status was reaffirmed.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

The accreditation team was pleased to find that quality instructional leadership was being provided by all the district's principals. They effectively
communicated the mission of the school. Although their styles of management
and supervision varied, they were found to be very knowledgeable about
instruction and curriculum issues appropriate to their particular schools. They
were also sensitive to the needs of the staff.

School Climate

A very positive school climate was evident on campuses throughout the
district. The schools exhibited pleasant, clean, and safe environments. The
climate was warm and responsive, and provided a student support system.
Teachers enjoyed a collegial relationships with each other. Open
communication between administration and staff was evident.

Citizens of the community were regularly kept informed about the district,
campus, and classroom activities through the local newspaper. The active
Parent-Teacher Association supported book fairs, provides volunteer workers,
and performs various other activities at each campus.

The team was pleased to find assertive discipline procedures being used
throughout the district. Teachers were observed using positive reinforcement
as well as negative consequences. These were excellent practices and added
to a positive school climate.

Adequate health services were being provided by the district. The district
employed a cadre of registered nurses and nurses' aides who provided health
services that met the needs of all students in the district.
The district was violating the Texas Hazard Communication Act by not providing both permanent showers and eyewash facilities in the science laboratories. With the exception of the science laboratories, appropriate safety equipment was found to be present throughout the district. Students were taught the proper use of potentially dangerous materials and equipment before using them.

The physical environment provided appropriate space for effective instruction and other district functions. The facilities were designed to meet the educational needs of students and provide a positive environment for teaching and learning. Inspection of the facilities left no doubt that daily custodial care and long-range maintenance and repairs had been performed systematically. The attractiveness and cleanliness of the district's facilities spoke well for the pride and dedication of the maintenance and custodial staff.

**Teacher Behavior/High Expectations**

The accreditation team noted that staff throughout School District G exhibited high expectations for themselves and students. All students were actively involved in learning. As a result, the team noted that very little time was wasted and few disruptions of learning activities occurred. Teachers were observed asking questions of students and providing activities that required student involvement and cooperation. They used a variety of proven instructional techniques and innovative approaches that have reasonable expectations of success.
The district employed qualified and competent personnel, assigned them properly, and encouraged their professional growth. The district operated a staff development program based on needs assessment that brought about educational improvements.

The ability grouping process provided opportunities for all students to work toward successful performance in the core curriculum areas. Teachers, administrators, and parents were pleased and totally supported the program. The continuous progress procedure allowed for high expectations and maximum success.

Evidence of effective coordination between special program and regular program teachers was found throughout the district. Teachers at each campus visited appeared to be close-knit teams of professionals with a sincere interest in achievement of their pupils. The accreditation team was especially pleased to find high teacher morale and enthusiasm. It was apparent to the team that the district's teachers believed all children can and will learn.

**Measurement**

Multiple assessment methods, such as teacher-made tests, samples of students' work, and criterion- and norm-referenced tests were used to obtain feedback on student academic progress. Examples of this feedback included the TEAMS and Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) results, which indicated an overall improvement in student learning.
Instructional Focus

The entire planning process of School District G was noteworthy. The impetus for planning originated in the office of the superintendent and received strong support from the administrative team. Before plans were finalized, the district received input from the community, board members, central office staff, principals, and teachers. The Annual Performance Report (APR) was also one of the primary tools in setting goals and objectives for the ensuing school year.

Each campus in School District G had plans that complemented and supported district goals, yet they were campus specific to student needs. Without exception, teachers were aware of the goals for their particular campus, and many were involved in the goal-setting process. Interviews and observations clearly indicated a focus of instruction that was relayed from board members to staff throughout the schools and into the classrooms.

The district had developed its curriculum guides with the help of personnel from a regional education service center. The guides were adapted to meet the needs of the district through the efforts of committees of teachers, principals, curriculum directors, program directors, and other central office administrators. Major revisions were made on a yearly basis according to recommendation by district staff or changes in the Texas Education Agency guidelines.

The curriculum guide development process had been complemented by staff development on how to properly use the guides throughout the district.
The team concluded that the curriculum documents were adapted to meet the needs of the student of School District G.

It was noteworthy that the district had chosen to include the tutorial program within the school day at the high school. Since the program was operated during the regular school day, the district may mandate the attendance of pupils who were not successfully performing in the classroom. The accreditation team encouraged the principals of all other schools in the district to consider holding tutorial sessions during the regular school day.

School District G had a quality science program. The 40 percent laboratory science requirement was being met at the secondary schools.

The district had an effective guidance program. Certified counselors were employed at all schools. According to the counselors interviewed, services were provided on individual and group bases. Counselors were spending approximately 75 percent of their time in direct interaction with students, and their workload dealt primarily with finding solutions to student problems. The district was making a sincere effort to serve the needs of all students.

Necessary funding was approved to provide excellent supplies and materials to be used by the students and teachers. Specialized equipment was provided for science and computer courses, and other subjects requiring them; and the district systematically acquired, maintained, and replaced instructional materials and equipment that were appropriate for its instructional program.
The district operated a planned program for library media services. The program was under the direct supervision of certified librarians, who assisted students in developing skills to locate, evaluate, synthesize, and use information in solving problems.

Resources of the library media centers were available throughout the day, and an effective library program was achieved through the cooperative efforts of the library media specialist, administrators, teachers, and students. Each library, with the exception of the high school, was adequately supplied with materials that met or exceeded the number of volumes per student required by the state. There was a library media center at each campus.

Interviews from Accreditation Team Members

Interview One

I: = Interviewer

C: = Chairperson

RC: = Researcher's Comments

RC: Mr. Morgan continued the interview, focusing on the effective school correlates used by TEA to evaluate the campuses.

I: What were some strong or weak points in the school district related to the effective school correlates?

C: Again this was a good school district and we are talking about correlates. Instructional leadership, district wide was pretty good. Probably just between us girls, the principal at the high school needed some help. He
did not have quite the handle on instruction that we hoped to have found. A new principal at an elementary school was doing a fantastic job. She had a real handle on instruction and the kids.

This particular school district did not have a targeted campus and therefore we wrote a generic statement covering the entire district. So when you've got five or six principals and one is a little weak, I've never targeted that in the formal manner. I've sat down with my secretary and said that you need to do this or that with this guy when typing the report.

Interview Two

I: = Interviewer
M: = Member
RC: = Researcher's Comments

RC: As an elementary principal, Ms. Foster visited three schools during the 1988-1989 school year. This was our final discussion during the interview.

M: They did a super job of having all the correlates in place. For a small school district, they really had focus and a lot of really strong people and knowledge in directing the schools. I don't really know who provided them with all of the knowledge.

I: So, in your opinion, they had all of the correlates in place?

M: I was real impressed with their school district.
School District H

Demographic Data

School District H was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District H had an average daily attendance of under 6,000 students. Of the total student population, 80% were White, 5% were Hispanic, 14% Black, and 1% Other (Asian and American Indian). The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 4.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional in School District H was 97% White, 1% Hispanic, 1% Black, 0.5% Asian, and 0.5% American Indian. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. The ethnicity of the district's teachers consisted of 97% White, 1% Hispanic, 1% Black, 0.5% Asian, and 0.5% American Indian.

Female teachers comprise 85% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 15%. School District H had 65% male administrators and 35% female administrators.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: 3rd-grade scores were extremely high
when compared to the statewide average of 69%; 5th-grade scores were well above the statewide average of 72%; 7th-grade students scored well above the statewide average 73%; 9th-grade scores were also well above the statewide average of 58%; 11th-grade students scored several percentage points above the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District H received an accreditation visit during the 1983-1984 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of the district was Accredited. Based on the finding of the 1984 visit, the Accredited status was reaffirmed.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

The school mission was written by the administration after goals were developed by members of the school board, instructional staff, and community. The mission was articulated to students, teachers, and parens, and other members of the community through the district's newsletter and contact with the staff. The mission statement and goals were posted in the classrooms.

The instructional program at School District H were supervised and monitored by the principals. Teachers reported that the principals reviewed lesson plans, visited classrooms, and gave verbal and written feedback to teachers regarding their instructional effectiveness. Principals monitored classrooms and lesson plans, making sure that writing skills were addressed in every subject area.
Principals' high expectation for faculty and students were clear. Principals promoted positive school climate through communication and collaboration among the staff. Administrative decisions enhanced expectations for high student achievement.

Classroom observations and the teacher appraisal process were used to improve the quality of instruction. Principals had postconference interviews to review the appraisal results and to improve instructional quality.

**School Climate**

The climate on campuses was one of safety, cleanliness, and orderliness. During the monitoring visit, students were friendly and helpful to the accreditation team. A positive feeling permeated the schools.

Grade-level teachers planned together regularly. Teachers also believed that it was their responsibility to teach all children.

Students were rewarded for academic efforts and accomplishments in a variety of ways, including positive comments on classwork and reading aloud in class. Students' work was displayed throughout the building. The district was commended for their program honoring high academic achievers. Teachers also mailed cards to parents informing them of exemplary academic performance by their children.

Professional staff stated that teachers were rewarded for academic efforts. They received recognition in the district newsletter and personal notes from the administration.
Observations and interviews revealed that instructional arrangements supported effective teaching and learning. The team commended the district for its small class sizes.

The principal and teachers used a variety of assertive strategies to manage discipline. Discipline management procedures were included in the student handbook.

The district had an excellent health services plan. The needs of all students were being met by trained full-time nurses and/or nurses aides, who did all required screening and recordkeeping. The well-maintained clinics had running water, cots, and locking cabinets. The team noted that the health clinic at the high school, with an enrollment of over 1,800 students, had only one cot.

Interviews and observations indicated that the district had established proper guidelines and procedures to promote student safety. Students participated in regularly scheduled drills on fire escape and tornado alert procedures.

Standard safety precautions were observed throughout the district, with special attention given to science laboratories and shops. The team noted that a wooden, instead of fireproof, cabinet being used as a storage unit for flammable chemicals.

The Parent-Teacher (PTO) had a membership of over 3,000. Volunteers assisted students and teachers in the classroom and library, and on overnight
field and athletic trips. Individuals and businesses frequently contributed needed equipment to the school.

A special organization for senior citizens encouraged the community's older adults to visit the schools and become involved in student activities. These citizens were served meals at the area campuses.

The team observed several excellent publications and processes that informed citizens of district, campus, and classroom activities. Particularly noteworthy were such publications as school newspapers and annual school yearbooks. Some of the processes used to inform citizens of activities at School District H included three-week progress reports to parents and an open-door policy for the public and staff.

The facilities received proper maintenance. School buildings were very neat, clean, and comfortable. Students' work was displayed throughout the buildings.

Teacher Behavior/High Expectations

The team observed that the staff believed and demonstrated that all students can attain mastery of basic skills by having high expectations and clear goals for student achievement. Teachers emphasized success and potential through positive, overt behaviors such as praise and encouragement.

During interviews, the team noticed that the teachers knew the academic deficiencies of each student. Teachers had implemented excellent instructional techniques to properly fulfill the requirements of the curriculum.
Communication between special and regular program teachers in School District H was excellent. Grade-level teachers planned together regularly. The faculty members were team oriented.

In-service programs and instructional faculty meetings offered teachers information on how to improve test scores. Workshops also delivered information on indicators contributing to exceptional quality points in the Texas Teacher Appraisal System (TTAS).

School District H employed qualified and competent personnel, assigned them properly, and encouraged their professional growth. The team concluded that the consistently low teacher turnover rate had contributed to the continuity of the district's instructional programs and thus to the district's high students achievement.

Measurement

The district used the Science Research Associates (SRA) and TEAMS tests to measure the learning growth of its students. The results of these tests, which were reviewed by grade level, were used to modify programs and to implement services. Below average norms were identified. Instructional needs were ranked and addressed in the district and campus plans. The district also used the Annual Performance Report (APR) to identify and report information to the public concerning the programs and services.
Instructional Focus

The district had developed specific instructional goals based on the available test data. Students, teacher, administrators, and parents were involved in developing the campus and district goals.

The team commended the district for developing a working curriculum. The format of the curriculum document followed acceptable outlines, including sequenced essential elements, resources, and activities. The staff, in addition to determining academic needs, was actively engaged in determining the developmental, emotional and academic needs of students. The written curriculum documents, having been locally adapted, provided instructional focus for courses and subjects.

Instructional procedures and conditions in School District H supported effective teaching and learning. Teachers met regularly throughout the school year to discuss strategies for increasing students' TEAMS scores and completing subject matter.

The team observed ample evidence of practical planning by teachers. Lesson plans documented that science teachers were conducting laboratory/field activities for 40 percent of the instructional time.

The counselor's role in School District H was to help students cope with academic and personal needs such as peer pressure, decision making, study skills, and career-related areas. The counselor also administered TEAMS tests.
Approximately 50 percent of the senior class took the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). To provide additional assistance to college-bound students, the district provided the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and SAT practice for computer software. Because of their high scores on the 1988-1989 PSAT, several students were designated as finalists in the National Merit Scholar competition.

The faculty used the district's system for acquiring, maintaining, and replacing instructional materials and equipment. Using teacher input, textbooks were adopted; and attention was given to their consistency with instructional objectives.

The team found a multitude of materials, teaching kits, mathematics manipulatives, art supplies, and other teaching materials needed to effectively teach toward mastery of the essential elements. Teachers were allocated budgets, with the amounts of money depending upon subject matter and grade level.

The district's libraries were staffed by full-time certified librarians and aides. The librarians integrated library skills into literature appreciation lessons. The libraries were open all day, and were conducive to learning. The team commended the district and parents for the exceptional quality of library personnel and for the importance placed on reading and library services.
Interview from Accreditation Team Members

Interview

I:= Interviewer

M:= Member

RC:= Researcher's Comments

RC: Throughout the interview, Ms. Thompson continued to be very knowledgeable about the three school districts that she had visited.

I: How did you feel about School District H?

M: I felt really very, very good. In fact, I just noticed in the newspaper that two or three of their schools were recently released by TEA as schools that were exemplary and nominated to apply for that award. It was real exciting for me because I had helped monitor one of the schools and I had taken a tour of the other two. I just couldn't have said more about those schools, they were just wonderful.

I visited three schools during that visit. One of them was better than the others. I wouldn't say the others were weak. In fact, as a whole, I learned a lot from the district. It seemed like to me that they were really getting it together.

I: Real progressive?

M: Oh, yes. One of the schools had a real old building. In fact, it was nominated for the TEA award. It was just amazing how the district had renovated and added to and kept up and beautified that old school. It
was probably one of the first buildings in the district. The old school and the new school were connected. There was very good climate and high expectations in that building. There also was a lot of togetherness and a lot of joint scheduling.

I also visited a brand new school. It had a lot of excitement about it and team planning. The one thing I remembered in that whole district was our recommendation that library and computer time needed to be scheduled so all children could take advantage of the programs. But that was about the only thing I can think of...

There was another school that was not quite as organized. There was another school, that was a middle school, that I just didn't feel had the knowledge base from the instructional leadership point of view. As a whole, I think the school district was good. I was impressed with the superintendent. I was impressed with the coordinators. I was impressed with how the district felt. This school district was a healthy place to be.

I: How long did the accreditation team stay in this district?

M: We stayed here one week.

I: What determines the length of time?

M: The size of the district and the number of people going to monitor. Sometimes in real large districts, TEA sends a preliminary team to study all the documents in the districts. They really knew what they were
doing. Then, they schedule the team at the schools. I think this saves them a lot of time. Whereas, when we went into some of those small districts, it was just the pits. Some of the teachers and principals did not have it pulled together.

School District I

Demographic Data

School District I was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District I had an average daily attendance of under 3,000. Of the total student population, 100% were White. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5 White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6 Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District I was 100% White. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. In addition, all the teachers in School District I were White.

Female teachers comprise 65% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 35%. All of the district's administrators were male.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: 3rd-grade students were below the
statewide average of 69%; 5th-grade students were well above the statewide average of 72%; 7th-grade students were below the statewide average of 73%; 9th-grade students were above the statewide average of 58%; 11th-grade students scored well above the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District I received an accreditation visit during the 1984-1985 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of School District I was accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the Accredited status was reaffirmed.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

The elementary principal served this campus for two hours each afternoon. He was serving an internship at a local university. The elementary staff was comprised of seven classroom teachers, one resource teacher, one remedial teacher/librarian, two aides, and one part-time counselor. They served 100 students in the elementary school.

Teachers cited administrative staff for support in disciplinary and instructional techniques. The principal provided materials and assistance to the teachers. The principal was also knowledgeable about instruction. Discipline problems were processed through the discipline management plan, and positive reinforcement was evident on each campus.

Acceptable communication was evident between administration and faculty; however the communication systems should be more consistent in
allowing information to flow from the administrative organization to the schools and from the schools to the administration. More time for openly sharing and expressing ideas to fully coordinate instructional objectives should be provided for teachers and staff. The principal should direct this kind of sharing activity toward the development of the campus plan. Good cooperation and communication was very evident among the teachers and staff.

**School Climate**

Classrooms were attractively decorated with students' work, and bulletin boards were decorated with teacher-made materials. Class size was appropriate for the district's classrooms. The small number of students in each class exemplified quality student to teacher ratios.

Hallways reflected student achievement with displays of work completed by the students, and students demonstrated involvement and pride in their academic achievement. The buildings were clean, neat, and orderly. A safe environment for the students was evident in the district.

Students behaved in an exceptional manner. All were neat, clean, mannerly, and friendly. Most of the students acknowledged the team members with a smile and greeting. Students were on task and working quietly with minimum supervision during the visit in Grades K-6. The discipline management system was successful and commendable in its implementation. Teachers were innovative in rewarding well-behaved students and reinforcing desired behavior with positive techniques.
Teachers were friendly, positive, and knowledgeable about their subject matter and the instructional needs of their students. The team noted that teachers were working extra hours and spending some of their own money for the development of instructional aids.

The team had a concern about the lack of a recognized Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) in the district. No PTO organization or formal group of parental volunteers for the school was reported by the team. Although parents were involved in the school, their participation would be improved by a formal, organized support group of parents.

A nurse, whose responsibilities were shared with another district, was on campus once per week. She shared an office, which served as a clinic, with the counselor and high school librarian. The small office was located adjacent to the library. It had no isolation area for a sick child and the nurse's office lacked the required facilities such as hot and cold running water, lavatory, and water closet. Also, the team found no room for a cot and a screen in the office. The nurse's office and clinic were in violation of the standards for health services.

Appropriate safety precautions were not always observed throughout the district. The team observed a large bottle of hydrochloric acid on the top shelf of a bookcase by the door in the vocational agriculture shop. Also, the team reported a table saw without an appropriate safety guard. Garbage, old pipes, and other clutter were observed in the rear area of the shop. The chemicals in
the high school science department were stored in an organized, efficient manner. They were stored by families, and pertinent information was placed on the containers. The team, however, was concerned about the lack of required safety features in the science laboratory. The chemistry laboratory had no safety shower.

Interviews and observations indicated that students were given information for appropriate emergency procedures on a regular basis for fires and tornadoes. Records were kept on the time and dates of the drills.

**Teacher Behavior/High Expectations**

The positive attitudes of the teachers, which were evident during the visit, needed to be extended to the basic expectation that all students in the school can learn. Teachers should have higher expectations for students who are not easily taught as other students or students who do not learn the material after the first lesson. The principal should reinforce this kind of high expectation for all children.

**Measurement**

The district used the Annual Performance Report (APR) to identify and report information to the public concerning programs and services in School District I. The district used the APR to evaluate student performance by comparing the percentage of students mastering the basic skills as measured on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) tests. Statewide averages were listed at the targeted grade levels for the mathematics,
reading, and writing batteries. The percentile rankings for reading, mathematics and language arts of the Science Research Associated (SRA) achievement tests were listed for all grade levels.

Test data and analysis were not fully used to determine needs assessment for instructional improvement. Disaggregation of test scores was not provided to all appropriate staff members.

Grade book entries were inconsistent in areas of reteaching and retesting. Inconsistencies were present in grade books, which documented the mastery of essential elements. The team observed no specific criteria used to denote mastery in the gradebooks.

Instructional Focus

Curriculum guides should be the driving force for planning lessons. Some teachers used the guides as a resource of activities to enhance the adopted textbooks. Other teachers demonstrated exceptional use of curriculum documents.

The team noted that a scope and sequence of objectives was lacking in the curriculum documents. Scope and sequence is important because it assures that essential elements are presented in the appropriate order. Scope and sequence also assures that all essential elements and instructional objectives are taught before the student completed the course and/or grade.
The team recommended the integration of higher level thinking skills with the local objectives in each curriculum guide. The team also recommended that the curriculum guides be periodically scheduled for revision and improvement.

Large inordinate numbers of students, which were noted as over 17 percent of the total student population, were placed in the Special Education program. The accepted norms for placement percentages range from 2 to 10 percent. The current number is significantly higher than the accepted norms for special education placement.

The district had developed and adopted a guidance plan for Grades K-12. A part-time guidance counselor was available to implement the plan. The team recommended that the district review the plan to compare its guidance services to the Principles, Standards, and Procedures for Accreditation of Texas School District. The team noted that the guidance plan did not include measurable goals as well as specific objectives and activities. In addition, the counselor had limited contact with students. This limited contact was due to the fact that the counselor served as the district's second appraiser.

The team observed deficiencies in the district's library services program. The district did not have the services of a certified librarian. The secondary library was supervised only two periods per day by a classroom teacher. The elementary library was being used as a remedial reading resource classroom, and the library was only accessible to students for one hour from 2:10 to 3:10 p.m. during the day. The libraries needed standard quality library operating
practices. The library needed an acceptable circulation system, which tracked the circulation of books and materials with written records. The libraries lacked systematic policies and procedures for weeding-out work, outdated, and obsolete books and materials. Libraries must meet the 10 books per student ratio, and these books must be current and relevant to the needs of students. To create a functional and usable learning resource center, the library must be an integral part of the total school program with instructional objectives that were correlated to the district's total instructional program.

**Interview from Accreditation Team Members**

**Interview**

I: = Interviewer  
C: = Chairperson  
RC: = Researcher's Comments

I: Was the visiting team report a true picture of this district?  

C: I don't pull any punches. I wrote it. If something is pretty stringently critiqued, it's true. Given the fact that we are there only two days, there's a lot we can't see. But just on the basis of the absence of the principal, I don't care if they got 40 kids, the instructional leadership is absent.

The lack of an organized parent group denotes a weakness in terms of effectiveness by using parents. It's a bedroom community and many travel to other cities to work and they probably are worn out when they get home.
They had pretty good facilities, if my memory doesn't fail me too badly. This means they try to build some buildings, which is what parents understand more than anything else.

I: Did you include everything in the report that the team observed?
C: Yes, unless there was something I just couldn't prove or get a handle on. Usually, we can find things that indicate a feeling we have. If you pursue it, you find something.

RC: Mr. Armstrong appeared confident that all the information written in the report about School District I was based on fact.

**School District J**

**Demographic Data**

School District J was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District J had an average daily attendance of under 4,000 students. Of the total student population, 52% were White, 7% Hispanic, 40% Black, and 1% Other (Asian and American Indian). The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.0% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District J was 75% White and 25% Black. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and
0.1% American Indian. The ethnicity of the district's teachers consisted of 80% White and 20% Black.

Female teachers comprise 80% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 20%. School District J had 70% male administrators and 25% female administrators.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 School year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: 3rd-grade students scored extremely high when compared to the statewide average of 69%; 5th-grade students were well below the statewide average of 72%; 7th-grade students scored extremely high when compared to the statewide average of 73%; 9th-grade scores were well above the statewide average of 58%; 11th-grade students were a few percentage points below the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District J received an accreditation visit during the 1983-1984 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of School District J was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the Accredited status was reaffirmed.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership
A collegial relationship and partnership existed among district and campus level administrators. Each campus principal had made a concerted effort to improve and maintain a positive climate.

Committees of teachers and administrators met in committees to set goals and develop objectives and activities based on the correlates of effective schools. Each campus plan had a goal relating to climate. Teachers, students, and volunteers verified that many of the activities stated in the plan were occurring as planned. A faculty advisory committee met monthly to discuss faculty concerns.

Mission statements and slogans were posted throughout the schools. They also appeared on bumper stickers, buttons, awards, and community communications.

Each instructional leader encouraged faculty attendance at workshops. The principals modeled effective teaching practices for teachers as necessary.

The team commended the instructional leader on each campus for involving students and teachers in the preparation of the campus plans and the campus interview guides. The faculty provided pertinent and detailed information. Students provided exceptional illustrations for these documents.

School Climate.

The school climate was positive and conducive to learning. Staff and students were recognized for achievement. The faculty and administrators used creative and unusual activities to keep the teacher and staff morale at a high
level. Teachers worked together for common goals. Classroom rules and consequences of behavior were posted in every classroom.

The discipline management plan provided viable approaches to student suspension or expulsion. Consultations, after school detentions, and in-school suspension class preceded placement in an alternative placement center. This center conducted effective approaches to correcting student misbehavior. Students spent their time working on assignments under the supervision of a mentor. It was reported by district personnel that the possibilities of students dropping out because of expulsion have been reduced by offering this alternative. In some schools, the assistant principal was responsible for discipline. The team recommended that this responsibility be shared with the principal. Additionally, the part-time counselor was unable to make a significant contribution to the needs of the students. A full-time counselor would have enhanced the school climate.

Large class sizes on some campuses were a concern to the team. Some physical education classes consisted of more than 120 students. It was doubtful that the essential elements for these classes could be completely taught to all students. At the high school, the Foods and Nutrition class was crowded; only four work stations were provided for 25 students. The team suggested that these class sizes should be adjusted to facilitate maximum instructional opportunities for all students.
Many campuses benefitted from a supportive relationship with parents and patrons. The school-community relationship in School District J was especially noteworthy. School District J received excellent parental support through very active Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs) at each campus. Volunteers worked in the classrooms in one-to-one situations as tutors, in clerical positions helping teachers, and in preparing bulletin boards. Incentives and rewards were provided by numerous businesses and organizations. The community provided scholarships to seniors during an annual special awards assembly in May.

Students showed respect for their school and the property. There was no graffiti or litter, and the classrooms were orderly. The grounds and outdoor equipment have been well-maintained. There was evidence of continuous upgrading through the years to keep pace with the growth of the student population. However, crowded conditions on some campuses detracted from instruction and use of some facilities for their intended purposes.

Health personnel, programs, and services were commendable. The team commended the district's efforts to coordinate health services with the local hospital. The local hospital also provided classroom instructional material relating to health issues.

The nurses indicated that they did not have many opportunities to plan together. The district should encourage the nurses to meet regularly, continue to share ideas, and develop a district-wide plan for health services.
Appropriate safety procedures were practiced regarding tornado, fire, or other possible disasters. Rules and escape routes were posted throughout the district.

The safety standards in secondary schools regarding science laboratories and chemical storage areas were being violated. Safety equipment and supplies such as fireblankets, eyewash fountains, chemical splashproof safety goggles must be provided. Laboratory storeroom and preparation areas should have floor to ceiling, continuous, forced ventilation. The team noted the commendable safety record in vocational classes. Most vocational teachers required 100 percent mastery of safety unit objectives.

Teacher Behavior/High Expectations

The teachers and administrative staff conveyed high expectations for their students. This attitude was echoed by parents and members of the community, who indicated that the teachers were always available to help their children.

The team commended the district for employing personnel who were competent and dedicated. Interviews with administrators, teachers, and support personnel demonstrated that the staff were actively working toward the goals of the schools.

In-service of teachers and administrators was documented on each campus. However, a clear record of staff development for instructional purposes was not available on every campus. Extensive documentation did
verify that the district provided all special programs staff opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills.

**Measurement**

The TEAMS, the Curriculum Assessment Cooperative (CAC), and the Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MAT) and additional data sources provided information to the district on each child. Teachers, counselors, and administrators could use these sources to develop a computerized student profile to determine the unique needs of each student. When these data are combined with student learning styles, dropout statistics, discipline referrals, failure rates, and absenteeism reports, the district can begin to develop more effective campus plans with measurable goals.

The district had not consistently desegregated test data to make comparisons of student performance across grade levels and campuses to determine specific individual needs. Such needs can be used to develop realistic, practical, and usable campus plans with specific, obtainable goals and objectives.

**Instructional Focus**

Committees of teachers, administrators, parents, and community members such as a justice of the peace, served on the district and some campus planning committees. Goals and objectives were determined based on the five correlates of effective schools research.
The team was concerned that not all campus plans reflected student needs as identified on TEAMS, the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) or other assessment instruments. A desegregated analysis of data provided a viable means of planning instruction on some campuses, but it was not used to the same degree on others.

Interviews with the board of trustees indicated that although members were supportive of district and campus planning, they had not been personally included in any of the planning activities. The accreditation team encouraged the board members to become actively involved in district and campus planning.

All faculties in the district were involved in some phase of the district and campus plan. Campus practices reflected a strong commitment to the campus improvement plans. Each elementary school had a campus plan that also related to the district plan. Committees of teachers, other personnel, and administrators served on committees to develop goals, objectives, and activities based on the five correlates identified by effective schools research. Most of the projected timelines for accomplishment were being met.

Interviews with teachers from each campus indicated that teachers planned together on a regular basis. At the secondary schools, instructional planning was organized by departments. Elementary teachers planned instruction by grade or subject area as needed.
The planning process in School District J should be expanded to include an in-depth review of data for instructional planning. Objectives were broad-based and largely unmeasurable. Data from the Mastery Management System (MMS) and the Curriculum assessment Cooperative (CAC) were used on each elementary campus, but the team encouraged the district to use these systems more extensively to plan ongoing instruction.

The curriculum in School District J was well-balanced, met students' needs, and fulfilled state requirements. Sufficient time was allotted for subjects and courses and all courses were state-approved.

Considering the size of the district and its limited financial resources, the district was offering a commendable range of course offerings to address alternatives to social promotion and needs of special populations. Honors courses were offered at the high school. Also offered were programs for gifted and talented students and a special education life skills program.

Essential elements and a coordinated list of sequenced objectives were available for most courses and special programs. Curriculum documents were available in varying stages of completion. Curriculum documents were not available in every subject. Some were outdated and irrelevant. The completed curriculum guides provided student prerequisites, scope and sequence of objectives, and test items for monitoring individual student progress.

A district policy on grading was available, but there was a variance from campus to campus in how grades for mastery of retaught material were
awarded. At the high school, physical education teachers stated that ten points were deducted from students' grades for not dressing out. Title 19 TAC, Chapter 75, Section 75.193 (a) stated that student achievement shall be determined based on degree of mastery of the essential elements.

Special district programs served the special needs of the district's students. Gifted and talented students were serviced in Grades 2-12. The district provided special education services to over 500 students with handicaps. Another program manifested high expectations for all students by allowing students with the most limiting handicaps accessibility to "real life" learning experiences throughout their school career. Resource classes for students who needed part-time special education instruction included a content mastery program; to enable them to be successful in regular classes. Tutorials were scheduled within the school day.

A comprehensive guidance plan was in operation at both the district and campus levels. Interviews with the counselors indicated that most of their time was spent in direct interaction with students.

District-wide, potential dropout students were identified. In addition, skills areas for improvement were also identified. Students received help on each campus through special classes or Chapter 1 programs, special TEAMS tutoring, counseling and assessment. At the high school, additional prevention was addressed through academic adjustment programs and a TEAMS
remediation program. The district drug education program was an integral part of the district guidance plan and the dropout prevention program.

The team noted that an unequal allocation of materials, manipulatives, and equipment existed among classrooms. A parent commented that teachers were purchasing materials with personal funds. The team verified that many classrooms had few manipulatives, while others had an abundance.

The district employed competent librarians and aides on every campus. They were providing well-maintained, colorful, and inviting learning environments. The library media program had neither a district curriculum plan for teaching library skills nor a policy for weeding out old, outdated, or unused books and materials.

The team expressed concern about the utilization of the libraries by teachers and students. Some elementary librarians had lunch duty and the library was closed at a time when students and teachers needed access to it. In the middle school library, science, health, and language arts classes were being held in the library. Some libraries were also crowded; browsing and working areas were limited. Conducting classes in the library discouraged student and teacher use, because it was distracting and took up needed work area.

The district did not provide sufficient specialized equipment, supplies, and environments for science courses at the secondary level. Science facilities were overcrowded because of the numbers of students to be served.
Scheduling of classes prohibited the use of the laboratories for 40 percent of the instructional time. Students were required to work in large groups. Consequently, individual students' direct experience with laboratory activities was limited. There was inadequate space for teacher preparation areas, storage of chemicals, and other materials needed for instruction.

Interviews from Accreditation Team Members

Interview One

I:= Interviewer
C:= Chairperson
RC:= Researcher's Comments

C: The climate was excellent. We found that every principal was working very hard to make the faculty very happy. One elementary principal was going above and beyond with all kinds of little fantastic motivational things. A lot of it is listed in the report.

One thing interesting that they had at School District J was, two principals that had served on accreditation teams. Of course, they probably knew more than some of the other principals.

I: I talked to Ms. Foster.

C: She has lots and lots going for her. The middle school principal also served on the accreditation team. So, that gave them a little edge.

I: I feel like I have somewhat of an edge since I'm writing my dissertation on this topic and TEA will be coming to my district in October. I have
been able to share the information gained from my study with the faculty
and staff at my school.

C: Well, I wish you would share it with the whole district. We don't like to
find anything wrong when we come in...

I: I can understand that. Do you feel that what's written in the report is
generally what's happening in the schools?

C: Yes, because we can't report on anything that we can't back up with an
observation, a comment, or an interview. We just don't go an feelings.
We just don't use those terms. We have to have examples for what we
are saying.

I: Is it possible for a district to snow you in some areas?

C: They really can't snow us in any areas. That's a misconception. They
think they can...It can't be done because of the questions we ask and
the materials we look at.

I: I'm glad to hear that. I know that people put on dog and pony shows
during these folks visit.

C: We see beneath the surface of that and these principals on the team are
helping us do it even better. We have notes and comments from team
members that back it all up. We still have them in file.

I: I was told that field notes had to be thrown away.

C: We do throw away field notes. I'm talking about first drafts and that kind
of thing. We keep newsletters and brochures that back up what we say.
RC: I thanked Dr. Montes for returning my call. She wished me luck on my study.

Interview Two

I: = Interviewer

M: = Member

RC: = Researcher’s Comments

I: Let’s begin with instructional leadership.

M: The overall all district looked fine. There were some schools that were exceptionally well organized as far as instructional leaders. On the other hand, there were schools that didn't seem to know where they were going at all. They knew where they wanted to go, but they didn't know how to get there.

I: What about the area of school climate?

M: It was the same thing. Some schools seemed very good and a very positive school climate. Whereas in other schools, they seemed like they really were not working together.

I: What do you recall in the area of teacher behavior/high expectations?

M: There didn't seem to be enough communication as far as planning and team leaders. They didn't seem to meet regularly.

I: In the report, the team suggested that principals need to continue to monitor teachers' efforts.

M: I agree.
I: Do you recall anything in the areas of measurement and instructional focus?

M: There were one or two schools in particular that didn't seem to have an instructional focus.

RC: I thanked Ms. Stevens for the information related to the two districts that she visited.

School District K

Demographic Data

School District K was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District K had an average daily attendance of under 3,000 students. Of the total student population, 87% were White, 3% were Hispanic, 9% were Black, 0.5% were Asian, and 0.5% were American Indian. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District K was 100% White. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. In addition, all the teachers in School District K were White.

Female teachers comprise 75% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 25%. School District K had 50% female administrators and 50% male administrators.
Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: 3rd-grade students were a few percentage points below the statewide average of 69%; 5th-grade students scored the same as the statewide average of 72%; 7th-grade students were a few percentage points below the statewide average of 73%; 9th-grade scores were a few percentages points above the statewide average of 58%; 11th-grade students scored the same as the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District K received an accreditation visit during the 1983-1984 school district. Prior to that visit, the status of School District K was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the district's status was maintained as Accredited.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

The instructional leaders effectively communicated the mission of the school to the staff, parents, community, and students. All decisions supported the school's mission, which was based on the Effective School Correlates.

School goals were developed by the faculty, students, and community. The school mission, as well as the goals, were posted in the halls and in every
classroom throughout the district. The mission was stated differently for each campus.

The accreditation team found quality instructional leadership being provided by all three principals. Although styles of management and supervision varied, the principals were knowledgeable about instruction and curriculum issues appropriate to their particular schools. The sincere commitment to quality education by all principals in School District K was praiseworthy.

The assistant superintendent for curriculum served as the second appraiser for a selected group of classroom teachers. To ensure that the assistant superintendent functions effectively in her role as curriculum director, the team suggested that appraisal duties be removed or minimized.

School Climate

Many of the indicators that exemplify a positive school climate existed in School District K. Teachers were making every effort to maintain a physically attractive school climate. Classrooms were decorated with displays of student work and colorful bulletin boards.

The climate was warm, responsive, and innovative--providing a positive student-support system. Open communication between the administration and staff was evident.

The health services provided by a registered nurse met the needs of all students, including those in special education and special programs. Each
student should meet with the school nurse so that health records and physical assessments may be complete.

The district was violating the Texas Hazard Communication Act by not providing both permanent showers and eyewash facilities to be used in the event of accidental chemical spills. With the exception of that item, appropriate safety equipment was observed throughout the district. Standard precautions were followed in all laboratories and shops. Students were taught the proper use of potentially dangerous materials and equipment before using them.

The school was the hub of most activities. School facilities were routinely used by the community for social activities and meetings. The community strongly supported the instructional program and extracurricular programs, especially those dealing with University Interscholastic League activities. The Parent-Teacher Organization supported the schools with donations and various activities.

The physical environment provided appropriate space for effective instruction and other district functions. The students and faculty provide a positive environment for teaching and learning.

Inspection of the facilities left no doubt that daily custodial care was being provided. Immediate and long-range maintenance and repairs were performed systematically. Office areas and classrooms were clean and attractive. The team complimented the district, the custodial staff, and the students for providing and maintaining a pleasant instructional environment.
Teacher Behavior/High Expectations

Clear rules and expectations were displayed throughout School District K. The student handbook stated the responsibilities of students as well as those of parents, administrators, and teachers. Students were rewarded for their academic efforts at all levels of instruction.

The district employed qualified and competent personnel, assigned them properly, and encouraged their professional growth.

Teachers were properly prepared for their assignments. The district provided a staff development program that brought about educational improvement. Administrators and teachers participated in professional growth opportunities provided by a regional education service center, as well as state professional organization meetings.

Measurement

At School District K, scores on TEAMS, Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS), and Regional Cooperative for Outcome-Based Education (RCOBE) tests were reviewed and analyzed by grade level. All areas whose scores were below average norms were identifies. Instructional needs were ranked by grade and subject area. The teachers then developed specific instructional goals.

Instructional Focus

At School District K, the teachers, administrators, and parents cooperatively determined district and campus goals as well as the school
mission statement. After district goals were determined, campus-level principals worked closely with their respective staff in developing specific campus plans to support and accomplish the district-wide goals. The correlates of effective schools research were incorporated into all campus. The campuses prominently displayed their school focus, and students were aware of the instructional emphasis.

To improve the goal-setting process as well as student performance, test data from the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) and the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) should be desegregated. The achievement levels of special populations of students may then be more accurately determined.

Overall, the team was impressed with the effectiveness of the program for handicapped students. The team observed good coordination between the resource teachers and the regular classroom teachers. Students were mainstreamed as appropriate; at the elementary level, handicapped students have been routinely exited from the program and placed into the regular classroom. The team was pleased to find a wide range of course offerings at the high school. The district offered approximately 20 electives in addition to courses mandated by State Board of Education rules.

Curriculum documents which were in place for each subject, were used in a variety of ways. At the elementary level, the documents appeared to be the driving force behind the instructional program. Many additions and deletions
were noted, indicating that the documents were being used effectively in the teachers' daily planning. However, at the secondary level, the documents were used as a resource to supplement the textbook or the teachers' edition. The team recommended that staff development activities addressing this issue should be planned by the assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum in cooperation with campus-level administrators.

The district's instructional procedures and conditions supported effective teaching a learning. Procedures were in place for identification, assessment, and placement of students. The district offered special programs in special and compensatory education; Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) remediation and drugs, alcohol, and AIDS awareness.

The team was pleased to find an active vocational program at the high school. Courses were available in vocational agriculture and vocational home economics.

Team members were concerned about the lack of consistency among teachers in awarding grades on re-tests over essential elements. For all students to be graded equally, the district should develop and follow one acceptable system.

Interviews with teachers and review of lesson plans indicated that secondary science classes were not being taught by the laboratory method. The district must insist that additional laboratory activities be included in the science classes to assure that the 40 percent laboratory requirement was met.
While, classes at the high school were reasonably small, the team noted with concern that several classes at the middle school had enrollments of 29 or more students. As the middle school enrollment continues to increase, class sizes should be reduced to support effective instruction.

The district had a commendable tutoring program that was in compliance with state guidelines. The peer tutoring program should increase academic achievement for all students involved in the program.

The district provided adequate supplies and materials for students and teachers to use, Proper equipment was provided for science courses. The district systematically acquired, maintained, and replaced instructional materials and equipment. Teachers stated that requested supplies or materials were always promptly provided.

The district had an effective guidance services program and was making a sincere effort to meet the needs of all students. All standardized tests were administered by the guidance department. The certified counselor, who served both elementary and secondary students, analyzed and distributed test results to teachers and administrators.

According to interviews with the counselor and administration, individual and group services addressed both academic and personal needs. At the time of the visit, the counselor was spending more than 75 percent of her time in direct interaction with students.
An effective library media program was achieved through the cooperative efforts of the library media specialist, library aides, administrators, teachers, and students. Full-time library aides, supervised by a certified librarian, operated the library media center at each of three campuses. They assisted students in locating, evaluating, synthesizing, and using information. These centers were accessible throughout the day. Each library collection contained the state required 10 volumes per student.

Interview from Accreditation Team Members

Interview

I: =  Interviewer
C: =  Chairperson
RC: =  Researcher's Comments

I:  What were some strengths or weaknesses in this school district?
C:  Overall, I felt like they had a good school system up there. The leadership was strong, probably too strong. The down beat was that the superintendent was pretty dictatorial to the board of education. Don't get me wrong, he's a neat guy. It's just that most places we go it's the board we have to get on because they try to be administrators. In this particular case, it was the other way around. We knew that he was retiring and that things would change.
They were having problems with one of the principals at the junior high school. We did not pick up on it at the time. We found out about it sometime later. The principal did not finish out the school year.

I think they had good strong leadership and instructional leadership even in that particular case. It appeared that the principal at the junior high was pretty strong instructionally. Of course, we get a lot of eye wash sometimes.

I: What were some other reactions to that district in relation to the effective school correlates?

C: I think they were all probably pretty well in place with exception to that junior high school. Again, it was because of all the flap they were having with that principal at the time. Again, it was something I discovered after the accreditation visit. So that's why it was not in the report. The expectations were all there. The instructional focus seemed to be in place also. They had campus plans for all those schools and teachers were knowledgeable of those campus plans. The correlates all seemed to be well in place.

I: Is what's written in the report pretty much true to fashion?

C: It's pretty much accurate.

RC: Once again, Mr. Morgan was very helpful. He took his time in answering my questions and put lot of thought into his answers.
School District L

Demographic Data

School District L was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District L had an average daily attendance of under 5,000 students. Of the total population, 63% were White, 17% Hispanic, 19.6% Black, 0.3% Asian, and 0.1 American Indian. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District L was 85% White, 2.6% Hispanic, 12% Black, and 0.4% American Indian. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. The ethnicity of the district's teachers consisted of 85% White, 2.3% Hispanic, 12.4% Black, 0.3% American Indian.

Female teachers comprise 80% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 20%. School District L had 25% female administrators and 75% male administrators.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were; 3rd-grade students were a few
percentage points above the statewide average of 69%; 5th-grade students were well above the statewide average of 72%; 7th-grade students were a few percentage points above the statewide average of 73%; 9th-grade scores were a few percentage points above the statewide average of 58%; 11th-grade students scored below the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District L received an accreditation visit during the 1983-1984 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of School District L was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the Accredited status was reaffirmed.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

Campuses in School District L were placing emphasis on the Effective Schools Correlates. A local regional service center generated profiles for each campus based on these correlates. The analysis was based on input from each staff member and from the parents affiliated with each school. Each school had a mission statement that was developed with input from faculty members. Also, each school had developed its own goals and objectives under the leadership of the building principal. Test scores and the profiles were used in the planning process.

Each principal considered himself/herself the instructional leader of the school. This view was confirmed by the staff. The accreditation team recommended that greater emphasis should be placed on staff development
under the principal's direction. The principal should more consistently monitor and discuss lesson plans with teachers. The team also recommended that teachers and principals increase collaborative decision-making and planning.

School Climate

School-wide and classroom rules were posted and implemented. However, school-wide consistency in discipline policies should be addressed through more teacher training and involvement of the total staff.

Students were recognized for achievement, attendance, and behavior through both individual and classroom recognition, as evidenced by bulletin boards, assemblies, notes, phone calls, newspaper articles, displays, and a student of the week award. Teachers were also rewarded and recognized for their efforts, as evidenced by articles in the local newspaper and the district newsletter.

Health services met the needs of all students, including these special education and special programs. They also complied with state health requirements.

The community and civic groups were involved in activities that supported the educational process. In addition, School District L received excellent support from its parental group as evidenced by attendance at the local Parent-Teacher Club (PTC) and Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. Retired citizens were also encouraged to participate in school activities.
School District L ensured that each school was safe and physically attractive. The accreditation team commended the district for its strong commitment to upgrading all district facilities with bond monies generated in recent elections. All Schools had air conditioning and carpeting. These conditions and the continued renovations have made the older buildings in the district very functional for learning and instruction.

The team observed, however, that facilities had not been adapted so that they were accessible to handicapped people. This was especially true at one elementary, which housed the special education program for the district. In addition, board meetings were held on the second floor of the administration building, which was not accessible to mobility-impaired people.

Fire and tornado drills were conducted regularly. Schematics on how to evacuate the building were observed in all the classrooms.

The team commended the district for its long-range preventive maintenance program and landscaping procedures. Daily custodial services were effective, as evidenced by the clean and bright buildings.

A positive atmosphere was observed on each campus. Relationships among staff members was based upon mutual respect.

Teacher Behavior/High Expectations

School District L hired and assigned teachers to meet the requirements of a well-balanced curriculum. Paraprofessional instructional personnel were properly assigned, trained, and supervised. Some aides were delivering
instruction to children without the direct supervision of a certified teacher. This was a violation of Texas Education Agency (TEA) Bulletin 753, Procedure No. 1.1600, page 6.

Teachers stated their belief that all students can master basic skills as a result of the instructional program. School-wide policies were communicated through teacher and student handbooks. Teachers voiced a commitment to time on task. Continual emphasis should be placed on high expectations for all students. Regular classroom teachers would benefit from staff development about the strategies now used in the district's gifted classes.

**Measurement**

School District L made use of the Annual Performance Report (APR), the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS), and the California Achievement Test (CAT) to identify and report to the public both the programs and services that needed improvement and those with high quality which should be maintained.

The district used the APR to evaluate the performance on each campus by comparing the percentage of students mastering the basic skill measured by TEAMS with statewide averages at every grade level tested for mathematics, reading, and writing. The team recommended that these test data be further analyzed and desegregated by special populations. These could include such variables as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and special programs.
Each school had an evaluation program that monitored and reported students' progress using TEAMS and California Achievement Test (CAT). This information was used to develop the goals and objectives for each campus and grade level. The team recommended that each campus desegregate test data in order to meet the needs of all students.

The accreditation team recommended that regular classroom teachers be provided with assessment methods and instruments to measure the curriculum objectives. The district had a teach/reteach and grading policy that needed to be communicated and consistently used by all teachers.

Measurement of student progress should be continuous, not merely related to standardized tests. Staff development should address student learning deficiencies in specific areas such as composition and reading.

Instructional Focus

Under the direction of the building principal, each elementary school had a set of common school goals that were developed from the district goals and included specific objectives for each of the grade levels. Both the campus goals and objectives reflected the involvement of the staff. The campus improvement goals, however, were not written in readily measurable terms. The accreditation team recommended that campus improvement goals be measurable and that specific timelines for accomplishing objectives be included to monitor progress toward goal accomplishment.
The accreditation team observed that the curriculum was well balanced and met current student needs. It contained a wide range of course offerings to challenge students academically and to prepare them to be successful life-long learners. District schedules allowed sufficient time for subjects and courses.

The team commended the district for offering a wide range of vocational courses, and credited the vocational program as being a positive influence in the low dropout rate. Programs to prepare handicapped, academically disadvantaged, and at-risk students for the job market were integrated into the curriculum as early as the second grade.

A program for single parents was commendable, as was a strong computer-based instructional program in Fundamentals of Mathematics (FOM) at the high school. The district supplied 32 computers for two sections of FOM.

The accreditation team found that the graduation guidelines in Grades 9-12 met state requirements. Interviews with campus and district staff revealed that the district offered many alternatives to social promotion. The content mastery classes in special education were observed to be an excellent method of supporting handicapped students in mainstream classes. The coordination between the teachers was commendable, with regular teachers being very supportive of mainstreaming and content mastery.

The accreditation team noted that curriculum guides in mathematics and science needed to be updated, and those for elementary language arts and
social studies needed to be revised. Some teachers referred to curriculum guides for instructional planning; however, most teachers relied on the teachers' edition as the basis for their planning. The instructional focus on campuses in School District L could be improved by better use of locally adapted scope and sequence curriculum objectives. The accreditation team ascertained that instructional procedures and conditions that support effective teaching and learning were in place. However, certain instructional procedures required improvement. The team was concerned about the large number of parent denials that prevented limited English proficient (LEP) students from enrolling in the bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) program. The purposes and services provided by the bilingual and ESL programs should be articulated to avoid parents' misconception that these programs were disadvantageous for their children.

The team observed that some physical education instructors were taking off points for not suiting out for physical education. Grading policies and procedures must ensure that student grades are based on academic achievement.

At the elementary level, retest grades were not awarded according to a consistent procedure. Reteaching and retesting are effective parts of the instructional process when conducted consistently to serve the best interests of students who do not all learn at the same pace. The team ascertained that some teachers did not fully understand the best practices for reteaching by
using a variety of instructional strategies, materials, and resources to promote mastery by appealing to all learning styles.

The discipline management plan was effective in managing student behavior. Elementary teachers expressed an interest in additional staff development about assertive discipline techniques.

The team observed ample evidence of practical lesson planning by teachers. Teachers needed to consistently use their common planning periods to plan together and better coordinate instruction.

The team noted teachers do not consistently enrich instruction for students in the regular program. It was recommended that teachers collaborate to develop strategies and acquire resources for curriculum enrichment. Tutorials were coordinated with classroom instruction and used to improve student enrichment. At the time of the visit, the junior high planned to pilot an in-school tutorial program during the fifth six-weeks of the 1988-1989 school year. The team recommended that the high school members consider establishing the same arrangement for the high school tutorial program.

The accreditation team observed adequate instructional supplies and equipment. The district had systematic procedures and policies for acquiring, maintaining and replacing instructional materials and equipment that were appropriate for instructional programs. Textbooks were adopted with teacher input and with attention given to their consistency with instructional objectives.
The district provided adequate space, equipment and supplies to meet the requirements of all courses offered. However, the team recommended that the district consider the expansion of its instructional computing program, especially at the elementary level, when developing the local long-range plan for educational technology.

The team commended School District L for striving to meet the needs of their gifted and talented students. Other pull-out programs supported the development of identified students' basic skills. There was evidence of informal communication between these special programs and the regular classrooms.

School District L had developed and adopted a guidance plan for Grades K-12. Two counselors were employed full-time to implement the plan. The team complimented the high school principal for enabling the counselor to spend the majority of the time interacting with students. Guidance services included making decisions, strengthening self-esteem, improving study skills, and meeting personal as well as academic needs. The team was concerned, however, that the junior high counselor, because of many clerical duties, only spent 20 percent of her time in direct interaction with students.

The secondary school library program and facilities were exemplary. The collection contained a large selection of research materials and an extensive microfiche collection. The high school had an automated checkout system and was networked with the other libraries in the district.
The team commended the elementary libraries for the large selection of periodicals appropriate for young readers. However, the team expressed concern that the library collections of three of the five elementary schools do not contain the required 10 books per student.

The team observed that the school libraries lacked a systematic policy and procedure for weeding out worn and/or outdated books and obsolete materials especially in the area of science and technology. Some books on the shelves were purchased 30 years ago. The library collections need to be current and relevant to the curriculum and interests of the students.

Interviews and observations indicated that the district operated a staff development program that supported educational improvement. The team also noted a need for staff development for teachers who serve special populations students in such programs as bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL).

Interview from Accreditation Team Members

Interview

I: = Interviewer

M: = Member

RC: = Researcher's Comments

RC: Although Mr. Morgan was employed by the Texas Education Agency, he served as a member and not as the chairperson of this visit to School District L.
M: That was an excellent school district. The schools were top, top notch.

The secondary principals were terrific leaders. They had a new superintendent there and they were really moving.

They had a few violations having to do with the bilingual program and handicapped access on a couple of buildings. We cited them in our report.

The new superintendent was moving slowly as I think that he should have done and not come in and make major wholesale changes. He had a few problems with central office administrators and the lack of support and visibility at the campus level. We found that they were pretty much staying in the central office all the time. They were not providing the support to the campus level that we needed to be provided.

At the campus level, there were really no problems that I can recall.

School District M

Demographic Data

School District M was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District M had an average daily attendance of under 500 students. Of the total population, 95% were White, 4% were Hispanic, 0.3% were Asian, and 0.7% were American Indian. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.
The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District M was 100% White. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1%, American. In addition, all the teachers in School District M were white.

Female teachers comprise 80% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 20%. School District M did not have any female administrators. All of the district's administrators were male.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: 3rd-grade students scored extremely higher than the statewide average of 69%; 5th-grade students were a few percentage points above the statewide average of 73%. No data were available for 9th-grade students and 11th-grade students.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District M received an accreditation visit during the 1981-1982 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of the district was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1981 visit, the status was maintained at Accredited.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

The school mission was written by the administration after goals were developed by members of the school board, instructional staff, and community.
The mission was articulated to students, teachers, parents, and other members of the community in the district's newsletter.

The instructional programs at School District M were supervised and monitored by the principal. Interviews reported that the principal reviews lesson plans, visits classrooms, and gives verbal and written feedback. Expectations for faculty, staff, and students were clearly stated. Therefore, administrative decisions enhanced expectations for high student achievement.

School Climate

The school climate in School District M was one of safety, cleanliness, and orderliness. Student behavior on the campus was excellent. The principals and teachers used a variety of assertive strategies to manage discipline. A positive feeling permeated the school. Staff, students, parents, and patrons strived to maintain the long-existing atmosphere of the "family" and at the same time provide high-quality education.

Teachers, believed that it was their responsibility to teach all children, continually seek better ways of teaching and learning. Clear rules, policies, and expectations were in place and consistently enforced by all adults. The team observed that high expectations from staff members and parents contribute to an orderly campus.

Students were rewarded for academic efforts and accomplishments in a variety of ways: displays of work in the hall, positive comments on work, and reading aloud in class.
Professional staff stated in interviews that teachers are rewarded for academic efforts through recognition in the district newsletter and letters of commendation from the board. One administrator presented surprise flowers to teachers for exemplary work; another sent notes and candy bars.

Students received adequate health services from a registered nurse, who worked in the school three days per week. Parent volunteers who had received Red Cross training served as health aides during the two days each week the nurse is not on campus.

Interviews and observations indicated the district had established proper guidelines and procedures to promote student safety. Students participated in regularly scheduled drills on fire escape and tornado procedures. The dates of the emergency drills were posted in the school office.

Team members expressed concern about the open cabinets and shelves in the kindergarten and first-grade rooms, which contained stored materials. They could be a safety hazard to these younger children; therefore the team recommended that storage areas be enclosed.

Almost 100 percent of all parents in School District M belonged to the Parent-Teacher Club (PTC). Interviews confirmed that parents strongly supported the goals of this organization. In addition, approximately 90 percent of all parents attended the school's open house and other evening programs.
Volunteers assisted students and teachers in the classroom, library, and clinic. Others donated money for educational purposes. Individuals and businesses frequently contributed needed equipment to the school.

The team observed several excellent publications and processes that informed citizens of district, campus, and classroom activities. Particularly noteworthy was a school newsletter published twice a year; a school calendar of news releases and photographs assembled by a volunteer group; and the daily school bulletin.

The team commended School District M for being the hub of the community. Interviews revealed that scouting groups, adult community educational groups, sports associations, and civic and church groups used the district's facilities three to four nights each week.

The team observed that the district's physical facilities received proper maintenance. The school and administration buildings were neat, clean, and comfortable.

**Teacher Behavior/High Expectations**

The district employed qualified and competent personnel, assigned them properly, and encouraged their professional growth. Only one new teacher was employed in 1987-1988, yielding a turnover rate of three percent. The team believed that the consistently low teacher turnover rate had contributed to the continuity of the district's instructional programs and thus to the district's high student achievement.
School District M was characterized by high expectations from principals, students, and the teachers. The team observed that the staff believed and demonstrated that all students can attain mastery of basic skills by having high student expectations and clear goals for student achievement.

Teachers provided quality feedback to students and parents through teacher notes and parent conferences. The team observed that teachers know and use a variety of proven instructional techniques as well as innovative approaches to teaching. Teachers emphasized success and potential through positive overt behaviors such as praise and encouragement.

The district operated a staff development program that brought about educational improvement. Opportunities for staff development were available through district-produced workshops, as well as workshops delivered by the regional education service center personnel, area colleges, and adjacent school districts.

Communication between special and regular program teachers was excellent. Grade-level teachers planned together weekly. Periodically, the principal attended their planning meetings and gave instructional suggestions. The faculty was “team” oriented.

Measurement

School District M used the Annual Performance Report (APR), the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS), and the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) to identify and report to the public both the programs
and services that needed improvement and those whose high quality should be maintained. The district provided a copy of the APR report to the local newspaper and retained copies in the school library for public use.

The district used the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) and the TEAMS test to measure the learning growth of its students. Teachers were using these test results to diagnose academic strengths and weaknesses of individual students.

The team observed that teachers were addressing these deficient areas and had planned appropriate instructional strategies. Interviews with staff indicated that the principal had reviewed and implemented test item analysis of achievement data to plan modifications in the instructional program.

Interviews and reviews of documents revealed that the district did a good job interpreting and reporting test results for students, parents, the school board, and the general public. The team felt that these additional factors contributed to the high success in student achievement.

**Instructional Focus**

The school had a set of common goals that were developed collaboratively by faculty, administration, and the community. These goals were the driving force behind most important school decisions. In addition, they were displayed in prominent places in the school and in the district's newsletter. The team, however, reminded the district of the need to build in feedback mechanisms for yearly evaluation, updating, and revision of the campus plan.
Interviews and observations revealed that teachers used the school goals
to guide their instructional decisions. In reviewing these goals, the team
observed that they reflected the staff's commitment to the belief that all children
can learn.

The accreditation team observed that the curriculum was well balanced
and met current student needs. The district's curriculum documents were
being developed at the time of the accreditation visit. Many additions and
deletions were noted indicating that the documents were being used effectively
in teachers' daily planning. Workshops have explored ways for the staff to
adapt and use the curriculum guides more effectively in teachers' daily
planning. Workshops have explored ways for the staff to adapt and use the
curriculum guides more effectively.

Instructional procedures and conditions supported effective teaching and
learning. The accreditation team observed that procedures for identification,
assessment, and placement of students were in place.

Documentation of student mastery of the essential elements was
recorded in the teachers' planning books and grade books. In addition,
grading procedures were in place and consistently followed.

The accreditation team observed documentation of remediation
procedures, including tutorials. The district provided tutors for a 45-minute
period twice a week after school for students who had failed one or more
subjects or failed to demonstrate mastery of the essential elements.
Observations and interviews revealed that instructional arrangements supported effective teaching and learning. The team commended the district for its low class size.

Adequate instructional supplies and equipment were observed. The accreditation team commended the district for budgeting over $100 for each teacher to buy instructional materials.

School District M had a written guidance plan in place. The district planned to hire a school counselor that spring in response to needs indicated by a survey of the community and school staff. The team agreed with these surveys as to the value and need for a school counselor and a realistic developmental program of guidance services at all grade levels.

The district's one library was staffed by a full-time, certified librarian and a full-time library aide. The librarian integrated library skills into literature appreciation lessons. The team also observed that although the librarian had developed extensive lesson plans to teach library skills, no skills continuum or curriculum guide was available on the day of the visit. The team recommended that the librarian develop a curriculum guide incorporating the plans and materials she currently uses.

The atmosphere and arrangements of the library were warm, inviting, and child centered. A couch, rocking chair, rugs, and pillows donated by parents were available for student use. Furthermore, although the library arrangements were conducive to learning, the district planned to build a new library facility the
following year. The team commended the district and parents for the exceptional quality of library personnel, and for importance placed on reading and library services. The team, however, noted that the library lacked access for handicapped persons.

The library contained 8,650 books and subscribed to 45 periodicals. The team, however, was concerned that even though the number exceeded 10 volumes per student, the books were worn and out-of-date. The library contained books dated as early as 1936. The team recommended a systematic policy and procedure for weeding and replacing worn and out-of-date books as specified in Title 19, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 81, Subchapter F, Library Media Standards.

**Interview from Accreditation Team Members**

**Interview**

I: = Interviewer

C: = Chairperson

RC: = Researcher's Comments

C: School District M was just fantastic for a small school district. During our parent forum, they had parents coming out the woodwork. We had to get the gym. The climate was excellent too.

I: What about School District M in the area of instructional leadership?

C: It's very high. They had knowledgeable instructional leaders.

I: What did you observe in the area of teacher behavior/high expectations?
C: It was definitely there. It was the kind of thing you might find in a good private school. It was just the same feeling. The message they used with their kids indicated that they did expect a lot from them.

RC: Dr. Montes could not recall any specific information in the areas of measurement or instructional focus. Throughout the interview, Dr. Montes appeared confident that what was written in the report was a true representation of School District M.

School District N

Demographic Data

School District N was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District N had an average daily attendance of over 20,000 students. Of the total student population, 85% were White, 9% were Hispanic, 4% were Black, 1.7% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in school District N was 99% White, 0.6% Hispanic, 0.3% Black, and 0.1% American Indian. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. The ethnicity of the district's teachers consisted of 99% White, 0.6% Hispanic, and 0.4% Black.
Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: 3rd-grade students were a few percentage points above the statewide average of 69%; 5th-grade students scored below the statewide average of 72%; 7th-grade students scored several percentage points above the statewide average of 73%; 9th-grade scores were well above the statewide average of 58%; 11th-grade students scored a few percentage points above the statewide average of 72%.

Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits

School District N received an accreditation visit during the 1984-1985 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of School District N was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the status was maintained as Accredited.

The Visiting Team Report

Instructional Leadership

Interviews with teachers indicated that the principals were accessible and supportive. Principals visited classes frequently, collected plan books, and provided staff with feedback. Teachers were kept well-informed of district information. Principals had high expectations for staff and students, and supported these high instructional standards through a variety of strategies for creating positive academic growth.
The team observed the district mission posted on most campuses. The mission statement and the campus objectives were a microcosm of the district plan with campus-specific issues addressed.

Communication with parents was commendable on most campuses. Parental involvement was accepted and encouraged by administrators. Interviews with teachers and parents indicated that the principals communicated by means of notes, telephone calls, and conferences; and they encouraged the teachers to do likewise.

The team was concerned that some faculty meetings served informational needs only rather than provide staff development. The team determined that more staff development was needed at the campus level and should be provided by the instructional leader. Many principals indicated that they needed more training in one or more of the effective schools correlates. The team suggested that the principals attend appropriate workshops, and conduct well-planned, in-service programs for teachers on their own campuses.

Principals were responsible for managing the test data and supervising school-wide instructional changes based on these data. On some campuses, the principals needed to continue emphasizing the school mission to teachers, parents, and students. Principals were responsible for a positive school climate on their respective campuses. The principals were knowledgeable about curriculum documents; however, more staff development was needed to define the purpose and use of curriculum guides and to use textbooks only as a resource.
School Climate

An excellent climate for learning and teaching was provided for the students of School District N. Assemblies during both the spring and fall recognized students for their literary and sports accomplishments. Elementary schools encouraged and recognized library users by periodic drawings. The team observed many other quality personal touches, such as a student population that was safe and well-behaved, that made School District N a pleasant place to teach and learn. The team noted that in a few schools, positive climate conditions needed to be completed by the principals. Indications from some principals during the course of the visit caused accreditation team members to underscore the importance of demonstrating the philosophy that all children can learn. The majority of schools in School District N demonstrated this philosophy.

House Bill 72 required that 22-to-1 maximum student-to-teacher class size be in place for Grades 1-4 for the 1988-1989 school year. Several third- and fourth-grade classes in School District N exceeded this requirement. The team noted with concern several class sizes in the district were too large to support effective instruction. One elementary school had 120 students enrolled in one section of physical education. Some secondary classes had 30 or more students enrolled. A home economics section had 30 students enrolled in a setting designed for 20 students.
The nurses' stations were well-equipped, and the health services programs complied with state guidelines. The nurses taught class in health-related topics. The team commended the district for its commitment to quality health services. The nurses met district wide for updates and in-service training. A district wide computer system monitored student immunizations.

No fire blankets were available in many science laboratories, and science storage was generally needed. Two of the secondary science laboratories had no permanent eyewashes or showers available. No goggles were in use in the shop area where machinery was being used at one high school. The Texas Hazard Communication Act of 1985 requires that an eyewash bubbler and shower be in place.

The community was supportive of the schools and participated in school district programs. School District N had a district wide program to involve parents and to increase communication. The community was informed about school activities through newsletters, newspapers, instructional television, radio, and special publications.

The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) was active in most schools. The PTA provided ongoing help to the community in many service areas such as parent volunteers, parent educational programs, scholarship assistance, newsletter, and the nursery and preschool.

The efforts of School District N to maintain a quality learning environment was commendable. The district had invested in a state-of-the-art cooling and
heating system at a new high school, and planned to update the systems on its other campuses.

Although the district had to use portable classrooms to accommodate student growth and maintain the community school concept, the portables were of high quality construction. They had an internal environment equivalent to permanent classrooms.

The team commended the district and community for providing conditions that supported the faculty. Many teachers and principals indicated that they either had grown up in the community and returned to teach in the district or they had been employed in the district a long time. The team noted little turnover among the staff.

**Teacher Behavior/High Expectations**

School District N employed qualified and competent personnel, assigned them properly, and encouraged their professional growth. All teachers were properly prepared for their assignments, with the exception of in-school suspension personnel in some instances.

School District N had several quality personnel practices which were in place. New teachers must sign an agreement with the district that they will acquire a master's degree within 10 years of employment. Principals are involved in selecting teachers for their respective campuses. The district had a philosophy that all teachers will receive a postobservation conference after their
instruction has been formally observed. All administrative personnel received training and appraisal procedures.

Teachers and students exhibited characteristics that indicated a positive attitude about the students' potential for learning. High expectations for students and teachers were communicated, both subtly and overtly.

The staff at one elementary school offered many excuses for students' low performance. Teachers indicated that they did not know what the TEAMS objectives were for the next grade level, which revealed a need for cross grade-level planning. Total disaggregation of test data, if accomplished, should identify specific deficient areas. Teachers, in some cases, did not use the teaching cycle for instruction. The team felt that without this procedure, teachers lacked feedback from students needed for motivation and instructional planning adjustment. High expectations for students can only be realized if the teachers know daily at what conceptual state students have acquired knowledge.

At another campus, teachers tended to label students as prone to low performance due to their residing in disadvantaged housing areas. The team felt that this tendency could detract from student self-esteem and should be overcome. The accreditation team recommended campus-level staff development to improve teachers' high expectations of all students. Teachers and administrators were encouraged to communicate that they expected the
most and best of all children, regardless of socioeconomic status or other disadvantages.

**Measurement**

School District N used the Science Research Associates (SRA) percentiles to determine instructional levels for students. Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (GMRT) were used as indicators of achievement levels. The TEAMS objectives were also addressed in planning and delivering classroom instruction. Gains and losses were analyzed and were used to plan instruction and grouping.

Test results were reported to students and parents in appropriate ways, such as memoranda and parent conferences. The team was concerned that (a) test data were not desegregated (b) documenting mastery of essential elements was inconsistent across the district and (c) a review of some of the teachers' grade books showed that reteaching did not occur.

Interviews with teachers and counselors indicated that they were not yet conversant with methodologies to assist at-risk students. The team encouraged the district to fully communicate details of this program to all staff as soon as possible so that at-risk students may be identified and served in a timely manner.

**Instructional Focus**

Instructional focus regarding academic goals and strategies for implementation was clear in School District N. Each campus was either in the
process of developing goals or had just completed its campus plan for involving
the community. Although parents were involved in developing plans on some
campuses, other campuses had less extensive parent involvement. Some
parents knew little of the campus plan.

In a dialogue with several principals and teachers, the team noted some
discrepancy in the degrees of teacher's knowledge of campus goals. The team
felt that this discrepancy could be remedied by displaying goals throughout
each campus. Parents, students, teachers, and community members were
involved in goal development.

Teacher planning was not consistent among teachers by grade or
subject matter. Special programs personnel used the regular curriculum
guides, but little interpersonal coordinated planning between regular and special
program staff was apparent.

Course offerings in the district were many and varied. Time allotments
for subjects and courses were correct and adequate.

During interviews with professional staff and reviews of posted rules for
students, the accreditation team learned that points were being deducted from
grades for tardiness, inappropriate dress in physical education, and poor
citizenship in physical education. Title 19, Texas Administrative Code (TAC),
Section 75.170 (b) states that policies regarding grading shall ensure that
students' grades shall be based on academic achievement only.
Interviews with many teachers and discussions of curriculum documents indicated that teachers primarily use textbooks to plan lessons. Curriculum documents did not have resources correlated to a scope and sequence of objectives. Without this correlation to objectives, teachers are inclined to use the curriculum documents as a check list rather than as a catalyst for planning.

Instructional procedures and conditions supported effective teaching and learning in School District N. The accreditation team did note, however, that documentation of mastery of retaught essential elements was inconsistent among teachers on the same campus and between campuses. Discussions with teachers on several campuses indicated inconsistency in awarding grades on retests over essential elements and for establishing grades in general.

Librarians taught library skills at the elementary schools and provided instruction on items relevant to TEAMS objectives. The team expressed concern that some schools did not have a sufficient number of books and some libraries were crowded and cluttered. The team also expressed concern about one elementary school's inadequate space for storing equipment or computers.

Interviews from Accreditation Team Members

Interview One

I: = Interviewer
C: = Chairperson
RC = Researcher's Comments
I: What were some outstanding points or weaknesses in School District N?

C: Their superintendent and past superintendent are very instruction oriented and they are very much into long-range planning both in terms of instruction, facility management, and growth.

Generally speaking, their principals were excellent in terms of how well the principals activities are managed. Their effectiveness, not only the principals doing their job, but efforts are being managed and monitored by central office.

I: Do you recall any weak points?

C: I think they had very few.

RC: During our interview, Mr. Armstrong stated that he was working on short term memory. He also said that when he puts it in a report, he forgets it because he has to move on to another school. He did assure me that what was written in the report was a true indication of what the team found during the visit.

Interview Two

I: Interviewer

M: Member

RC = Researcher's Comments

I: What were some outstanding strengths or weaknesses related to the effective schools correlates?
M: I went to a targeted school and I went to a very, very good school. Probably one area in School District N that concerned me the most was the different levels of instructional leadership. There was a wide point from the very, very strong instructional leadership to a school that had no instructional leadership. They didn't have any idea what was going on in the building. That's why that school was targeted.

I: What about the climate of the schools?

M: Again, I guess I went to a targeted school. Everything looked real good. It appeared to be good. Again, I think the instructional leadership set the tone in one of those buildings and it kind of felt like it was a false impression.

The quality of instructional leadership was very, very high. Again, there were some that were very, very, low.

I: I think it's interesting that you found such diversity.

M: I really think that the instructional leadership set the tone of a building if you have all the other correlates in place. We went into one building where the principal was not a strong instructional leader but the teachers were. Basically, the teachers were running the school. They were happy with that.

RC: From an instructional leader's standpoint, Ms. Foster was able to provide me with some interesting insight.
School District O

Demographic Data

School District O was evaluated for accreditation during the 1988-1989 school year by a visiting team from the Texas Education Agency. School District O had an average daily attendance of under 600 students. Of the total student population, 91% were White, 1% were Hispanic, and 8% were Black. The state's student population during the 1988-1989 school year was 52.5% White, 30.9% Hispanic, 14.6% Black, 1.8% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian.

The ethnicity of the professional personnel in School District O was 100% White. The state's professional personnel during the 1988-1989 school year was 77.5% White, 12.7% Hispanic, 9.5% Black, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. In addition, all the teachers in School District O were White.

Female teachers comprise 80% of the district's teaching core. Males made up 20%. School District O had 80% male administrators and 20% female administrators.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) achievement information was derived from the administration of the TEAMS test during the 1987-1988 school year. Scores for students passing all three parts (math, reading, and writing) of the test were: 3rd-grade students were well below the statewide average of 69%; 5th-grade students were extremely below the statewide average of 72%; 7th-grade students were extremely below the statewide average of 73%; 9th-grade students scored exceptionally well
compared to the statewide average of 58%; 11th-grade students were a few percentage points above the statewide average of 72%.

**Summary of Prior Accreditation Visits**

School District O received an accreditation visit during the 1984-1985 school year. Prior to that visit, the status of School District O was Accredited. Based on the findings of the 1984 visit, the accredited status was reaffirmed.

**The Visiting Team Report**

**Instructional Leadership**

Interviews with teachers and parents indicated that principals were diligent about keeping them informed and involved. Each planning committee used a needs assessment and involved parents in completion of the needs assessment. The principals also involved their faculties in instructional planning. Principals indicated that revisions of the campus plans could be conducted annually.

The elementary principal was enthusiastic about the involvement of her teachers. They were actively involved in weekly lesson planning and mastery documentation.

The principals in School District O gathered, analyzed, and desegregated some test data. Although some desegregation of data occurred, the accreditation team saw little evidence that data were collected throughout the year and used to modify curriculum, instruction, or programs. The team found that little diagnosis of students' learning strengths and weaknesses had
occurred. The team suggested that the principals organize staff development in the use of data for continuous instructional planning.

The Texas Teacher Appraisal System (TTAS) was conducted according to expectations. Teachers indicated that the appraisals were helpful, fair, and consistent between their appraisers. Postappraisal conferences were helpful and most of the teachers indicated that the principals discussed ways to improve instruction. The team noted that very few growth plans were developed for the teachers.

Instructional leaders conducted staff development sessions for the purpose of improving instruction on each campus. The principals of the elementary and middle schools planned training sessions in elementary writing across the curriculum, effective teaching practices, and effective schools correlates. The team suggested peer coaching for future staff development.

School Climate

Students and the community took pride in the school facilities. The students were respectful and cheerful in the halls and on the grounds of the school. They demonstrated this pride by keeping the grounds and buildings clean, attractive, in good repair, and free of graffiti.

A new district behavior management system had been implemented during the 1988-1989 school year. The new system had a positive focus, and most teachers encouraged and reinforced each student's self-image. Posted rules for behavior were not positively stated in all classrooms.
Teachers and students were often rewarded for accomplishments. Six weeks award assemblies in the elementary school provided encouragement for students. The district also had an active club that promoted scholarship, leadership, and citizenship. Teachers were recognized in meetings or in articles written in the local newspaper.

Acceptable health services were provided. The nurse was available one day a week. When the nurse was not present, teachers reportedly dispensed medication.

No permanent shower or eyewash was available in the high school laboratory area. As a result, the district was in violation of the Texas Hazard Communication Act and 19 (THCA), Section 97.27 (3) which required that safety equipment be present. Standard precautions must be observed throughout the district with special attention given to science laboratories.

Teacher interviews determined that only one fire drill had been conducted during the year. The team encouraged the district to conduct fire drills on a regularly scheduled basis.

The community and civic groups were involved in activities that supported the educational process. The local newspaper covered school events through school and community publications. Paid volunteers were used as substitutes and aides. Incentives of ice cream cones came from a local shop. The community responded to individuals who needed uniforms and
special equipment. Interviews with staff indicated that the community was most responsive to the needs of the schools.

**Teacher Behavior/High Expectations**

The teachers in School District O were observed by the team to be competent, caring professionals. The home economics teacher at the high school was teaching one class of health in addition to home economics courses. She had no certification, deficiency plan, nor 12 semester hours in health as required by *Texas Certification Handbook*, Section 1 (formerly Bulletin 691203, Section 1, Certification, Temporary Classroom Assignment Permits).

The team observed teachers throughout the district enthusiastically delivering instruction to their students. Results of a survey administered to middle school staff members, however, indicated that some teachers held low expectations for some of the students. Staff developments should be planned about the correlate of high expectations.

School District O was outwardly committed to instructional excellence as evidenced by the facilities under construction and those that were currently being well maintained. However, lasting excellence begins with attitudinal changes made by caring adults and transmitted to their students through meaningful instruction.

**Measurement**

Test data was not being used to evaluate the district’s effectiveness. The team required the superintendent to submit to the Division of Accreditation a
plan to use desegregated data analysis in the evaluation of the school improvement plan.

**Instructional Focus**

The planning activities in School District O were supported by effective schools research. Many positive comments from teachers indicated that the planning process on the campuses had led to increased communication and cooperation among the staff. They also said that time on task had increased as a direct result of the planning process and data analysis. Additional instructional planning occurred between special and regular programs and all teachers planned together informally. The team encouraged further articulation of instructional information between campuses.

The team recommended that the district focus additional staff developments efforts on reading and writing. A review of teachers' lesson plan indicated that instructional activities were often selected with little consideration of district language arts objectives.

The district's curriculum was well balanced and met students' needs. School District O offered a wide range of curricula for a district this size.

The team reviewed curriculum guides and observed that many of the listed activities were not used by teachers. Teachers indicated to the team that the guides were cumbersome and were used inconsistently. Some teachers had added their own resources to the guides; others indicated that they used the objective lists to plan instruction. Teachers in School District O did not have
access to the state curriculum frameworks which contained significant information about essential elements and philosophy.

Various teachers on each campus indicated that they had been involved in a county cooperative effort to develop curriculum guides. Some of the guides were locally developed by the teachers; others were locally adapted to the needs of the students; and some guides contained activities and resource references that were no longer appropriate. The accreditation team recommended that these guides be revised and updated annually based on an analysis of student data. In-service should also be provided to the teachers about effective classroom instruction using these guides.

Team members were concerned about the lack of consistency among teachers in awarding grades on re-tests over essential elements. For all students to be graded equally, the district needed to develop and to follow one acceptable system. The policy on reteaching and retesting that was currently under review needed to be considered carefully. Additionally, the team recommended that the district needed to revise the policy statement that unexcused absences resulted in a zero for work or tests missed with no opportunity for make-up. This practice served only to demotivate already unmotivated students.

The team noted that physical education classes at the middle school were being conducted on a sex-segregated basis. All physical education classes are required, by Section 106.34 of the Title IX regulation, to be
conducted coeducationally except during the playing of a contact sport or teaching of a unit on human sexuality.

On the day of the visit, the team determined that the lesson plans of the middle school earth science teacher did not reflect instruction by the laboratory method for 40 percent of the time as required by the State Board of Education rules. The teacher informed the team that more frequent laboratory activities planned for the end of the year would accomplish this laboratory requirement.

The team encouraged the district to survey students and parents to determine their level of interest in additional advanced courses. Although the district had a high percentage of students who attended college, more advanced course offerings would better prepare students to meet challenges encountered in both the college/university and occupational areas.

At the time of the accreditation visit, the staff was developing a technology plan and gifted and talented program to be implemented in the 1989-1990 school year. The team suggests that the criteria for gifted and talented programs include additional group-administered tests.

The counselor was available in the district two and one-half days a week. Forty to fifty percent of her time was spent on individual counseling. This was a commendable use of the counselor's time. However, the counselor was not assigned classroom space that would enable her to conduct small group sessions.
School District O instituted a new program designed to help the at-risk student. Twenty teachers, administrators, and teacher-aides volunteered to help these students by adopting one or more of the students. The administrators reported that several students showed academic improvement as a result of being in this program. The program reduced students' anxiety by having an advocate immediately available at school to alleviate academic and other types of problems quickly.

Interviews with teachers indicated that materials were usually provided when they were requested. The accreditation team found many limited and old materials. Supplemental teaching materials were needed in English, mathematics, and science classes. Paperback novels were not available in the English classes. Mathematics manipulatives were needed in many classrooms. Overhead projectors were available on each campus, but were not being used in many classes. Classrooms at the elementary and middle school campuses were supplied with some laboratory equipment, but not enough for whole class laboratory activities.

The district's library media services needed improvement. The library media program did not have a weeding policy for old books nor a curriculum that the librarian and the teachers could use to teach library skills. All three libraries contained collections of donated books. Books at the elementary school were largely donated and outdated.
Interview from Accreditation Team Members

Interview

I: = Interviewer

M: = Member

RC: = Researcher's Comments

M: They had a real nice building program and so there were a lot of really cheerful looking things that you saw there.

The high expectations were really not there. What I saw, and I really understand this, was a philosophy from the top that was protective of teachers. They felt worried that it would hurt the climate and the self-image of defective teachers if they mentioned test scores and it was almost like they didn't want to. So, there was almost no disaggregation of test scores. That would affect measurement and that would affect climate. It would affect all the correlates.

In talking to the superintendent about that, he just could not quite see having to do all that work for feeling it would demoralize the teachers. We tried to tell him that it would make teachers feel driven and more energetic and more committed if they had some ownership in studying test scores and setting goals. Hopefully, that happened after we left. I did not see the final report.

I: The final report recommended more disaggregation of test data to modify curriculum.
M: I think it was more of a protectiveness. We had teachers who had no idea what the test scores had been. They had no idea how they compared with any other districts. So that was a sad thing for us. That was the main thing that bothered me.

The elementary school was much more enthusiastic and there were some really good classes there. The principal was overwhelmed with many responsibilities. I felt that she was very sharp, aware, and one of the strongest people on their staff. She was in charge of community public relations for the district. She seemed to have a lot of different jobs and wore many hats.

They had problems with a secondary principal. There was little leadership and it looked like nothing had been done. The person had only been there one year and it just didn't look good at all. I do remember at the elementary that you saw more turned on feelings.

There was a lot of community pride and a lot of beautiful building programs. You could tell that there was a sense of pride. But, when it came to student learning, there just hadn't been... The awareness that comes from goal setting, problem solving, studying, and setting higher objectives was not there.

It also seemed to me that they didn't have any writing programs. This is very important since TEAMS stresses writing. They also had a
real weak staff development program. That's kind of what we saw. It looked real good from the outside.

RC: I thanked Ms. Thompson for being so helpful and for providing me with additional information.
CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify school environment practices in designated school districts in a selected region in the state of Texas based on an accreditation visit from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in the school year 1988-1989 and to identify specific elements of positive school environment that were valued by TEA. The researcher reviewed the documents of the accreditation reports in each of the fifteen school districts. Particular attention was paid to Section III - ON-SITE OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS.

The study focused on conditions observed at the campus level. Additional data was gathered at the district level as it reflected conditions in the areas of instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus. Demographic data was gathered in order to provide the researcher with an in depth look at each of the fifteen school districts.

Letters were written to visiting team members asking for permission to conduct telephone interviews with the visiting team member(s) of each accreditation team. Some of these interviewed visited more than one school district. The interviews generated additional data about their observations of the school districts during the accreditation visit.
During the data gathering process, the researcher found that indicators were being used for the first time during the 1988-1989 school year as criteria to reflect conditions observed at the campus level. These indicators, called Correlates of Effective Schools (see Appendix B), have been consistently identified in numerous studies as characteristics present in effective schools. These characteristics were derived from the research efforts of Brookover et al. (1982).

After analyzing accreditation reports of the fifteen school districts and conducting interviews with members of the accreditation team, the researcher began the process of establishing units of analysis. Charts were generated in the areas of instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus. These five areas represented conditions observed at the campus level.

Once categories began to appear in each of the five areas, the data was compared and sorted so that relationships were identified. Comparative style charts (see Appendix C) were formulated in order to accomplish this identification. These visual aids enabled the researcher to graphically compare each district.

Tallies were made of all fifteen school districts in each of the five areas. Points were totaled and school districts were ranked according to totals. After studying the charts, two districts obviously ranked higher than the rest in total points. The next ten districts were similar in ranking and could not be
considered either strong or weak. The remaining three were by far the weakest of the fifteen in the majority of the areas.

Comparisons were made between the top two districts and bottom three districts to differentiate between districts that were rated very high based on the effective schools correlates and very low on the correlates. Charts were then made to answer the research questions. The researcher, aware of the qualitative nature of the data, did not generalize the results to other populations.

Findings

School District C and School District H were the two districts that stood out in total point value. School District I, School District N, and School District O were the districts that were consistently low in total points. The other ten school districts fell somewhere between the high and low districts.

Demographic data (see Figures 1-6) shows the diversity of each district as well as some similarities. The student population for average daily attendance in the districts ranged from under 600 students to over 30,000 students. The percent of average daily attendance throughout the five districts were from 95.1% - 97.7%. Pupil-to-teacher ratios were 13.9:1 - 19.2:1. TEAMS mastery for all students in the five districts ranged from high to extremely low in some grades. The ethnicity of teachers and students were diverse in some districts and not so diverse in others. The total revenue per pupil ranged from a high of $4,356.51 to a low of $2,551.00.
**Figure 1.** Pupil-to-Teacher-Ratio 1987-1988 School Year

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**Figure 2.** Average Daily Attendance 1987-1988 School Year

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Figure 3. Percent of Student Ethnicity
1987-1988 School Year

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Figure 4. Percent of Teacher Ethnicity
1987-1988 School Year

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Figure 5. TEAMS Percent Mastery for All Students

1987-1988 School Year

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<td>58</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Average Daily Attendance--Total Revenue Per Pupil

1987-1988 School Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Average Daily Attendance</th>
<th>Total Revenue per Pupil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Over 30,000</td>
<td>$ 4,356.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Under 6,000</td>
<td>$ 3,593.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Under 3,000</td>
<td>$ 3,312.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Over 20,000</td>
<td>$ 2,551.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Under 600</td>
<td>$ 2,971.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings, when comparing the two top districts and three bottom districts, are discussed below. They are broken down as follows, into
demographic data and into the five areas as stated in the Effective Schools Correlates:

Demographic Data

Student ethnicity (see Figure 3) in School District C was diverse. The pupil-to-teacher-ratio (see Figure 6) in the district was slightly higher than the state's average. The Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) mastery (Figure 10) was the highest of the five districts.

School District H had a student population that was ethnically diverse. The pupil-to-teacher-ratio in the district was the same as the state's average. The test scores on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) mastery were consistently high.

Student population in School District I was 100% White. They were the least diverse of the five districts. They had a very low pupil-to-teacher-ratio when compared with the state's level. School District I had average test scores of student mastery on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS).

Student ethnicity in School District N was diverse but, not as diverse as School District C and School District H. The pupil-to-teacher-ratio for the district was higher than the state's average. Scores on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) were average.

The ethnicity of the student population in School District O was not very diverse. The pupil-to-teacher-ratio in the district was above the state level.
They had the lowest scores of mastery on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills of the five districts.

**Instructional Leadership**

School District C and School District H had high expectations (see Figure 7) that were clearly stated for faculty, staff, and students. Very few indicators were not marked for these two districts. School District C had all indicators checked off in the area of instructional leadership.

Although School District N did very well in the area of instructional leadership in the report, this was not verified in the interviews. One of the team members that was interviewed stated that there was a wide gap which ranged from very strong instructional leadership to a very low instructional leadership within that district.

School District I and School District D were very weak in the area of instructional leadership. The elementary campus in School District I was lacking in this area by virtue of the fact the principal served this campus for two hours each afternoon because he was enrolled in an internship at a local university. Principals did not reinforce high expectations for all children. Campus goals throughout the district lacked measurable objectives and specific timeliness that might have enabled progress to be monitored by the instructional leaders. Teachers had not received feedback on lesson plans, which were required to be turned in weekly, from instructional leaders.
### Figure 7. Instructional Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Mission clearly defined and communicated to teachers, parents and students</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time and energy spent carrying out the mission</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional programs are supervised, monitored and evaluated</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student achievement reported and interpreted for the school community</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations for faculty, staff and students clearly stated</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All administrative decisions enhance expectations for faculty, staff and students</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive school climate is promoted</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis placed on communication among school staff and between the staff and community</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the secondary level in School District O, leadership was lacking, especially at the high school campus. There was little evidence that data was collected throughout the year at the various campuses and used to modify
curriculum, instruction, or programs. Little diagnosis of students' learning strengths and weaknesses had occurred in this district.

School Climate

In the area of School Climate (see Figure 8), School District C and H clearly had school environments where teaching and learning were emphasized and rewarded. School District C again had all their indicators in place while School District H was missing only one. The school climate on their campuses was positive, enthusiastic, and orderly.

School District I, School District N, and School District O had a total of 8 points out a possible 24 points on the 8 indicators. School District N received only one point in the area of school climate.

Teachers in School District I did not extend their positive attitudes to the basic expectation that all students in the schools could learn. They failed to have higher expectations for those students who were not easily taught.

No mention was made that would indicate that students were being rewarded for academic efforts and accomplishments in School District I. Likewise, no mention was made that teachers were being rewarded for academic efforts, professional growth, and teaching accomplishments.

Few positive climate conditions were articulated in some of the schools in School District N. Several third- and fourth-grade classes exceeded the state maximum student-to-teacher class size of 22-to-1. In addition, some class sizes were too large to support effective instruction. Libraries in some of the
elementary schools were crowded and cluttered. Several teachers in this district expressed a desire to see their building cleaned more extensively and regularly. In-service in ways to enhance school climate was recommended for one campus.

**Figure 8. School Climate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment is safe, orderly, clean and conducive to learning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers believe it is their responsibility to teach all students</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff believes that all children can learn the essential elements</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear rules, policies and expectations are in place</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear rules, policies and expectations consistently enforced by all adults</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are rewarded for academic efforts and accomplishments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are rewarded for academic efforts, professional growth and teaching accomplishments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A spirit of collegiality and collaboration exists among the staff and between staff and community in reaching the goals of the school</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High expectations in School District O were hampered by administrators who held onto a philosophy that was protective of teachers. The administration felt worried that it would hurt the climate and the self-image of defective teachers if test scores were mentioned. As a result, there was almost no disaggregation of test scores that would enable teachers to modify materials, instruction, and programs. Teachers lacked ownership in studying test scores, problem solving, and setting higher objectives.

**Teacher Behavior/High Expectations**

Once again, it was obvious that teacher behaviors in the schools of School District C were characterized by high expectations for students and staff (see Figure 9). Staff members were fully committed to causing students to learn at the highest level and to conduct themselves as good citizens. High expectations of students in this district were demonstrated by the enrichment programs offered on campuses district-wide. School District H was not as effective in the area of teacher behaviors/high expectation when compared with School District C.

School District I received as many points as School District H and could not be criticized in the area of teacher behavior/high expectations. However, School District N and School District O were extremely low in the area of teacher behavior/high expectations. Both districts received one point each out of seven indicators.

Some teachers in School District N tended to label students as prone to low performance due to their residing in disadvantaged housing areas. One
particular campus failed to communicate high expectations by not displaying student work and other forms of recognition. Teachers, in some cases, did not use the teaching cycle for instruction. Teachers, therefore, lacked feedback from students needed for motivation and instructional planning adjustment.

Some teachers in this district did not have proper certification or were not properly qualified for their assignments.

**Figure 9.** Teacher Behavior/High Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A shared belief by school personnel that all students can master the basic skills</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are responsible for ensuring academic learning time for all students</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observable effective teaching practices</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers &amp; administrators provide quality feedback to students, parents, and community</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and administrators communicate schoolwide policies</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and administrators enforce classroom rules consistently</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and administrators demonstrate positive overt behaviors toward all students regardless of personal biases</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several teachers in School District O held low expectations for some of the students. Teachers in this district lacked skills in the delivery of instruction for reading and writing improvement. Meaningful instruction and specific feedback was not being given to keep students focused, resulting in increased student learning. Many teachers lacked knowledge of test score results within their buildings. They had no idea how they compared with any other districts. Even though this district had really nice buildings, high expectations for students was lacking.

According to interviews from visiting team members, both School District I and School District O had very attractive buildings. The exterior appearance was a higher priority than the importance of having high expectations for all students.

Measurement

In the area of Measurement (see Figure 10), School District C had all eight indicators in place. School District H used tests to measure the learning growth of its students. The results of these tests, which were reviewed by grade level, were used to modify programs and to implement services.

School District C had a comprehensive district-wide testing program that generated information about individual student progress for parents and school personnel. The district administered a total of ten various types of tests that generated information, at different grade-levels, about individual student programs for parents and school personnel. Parents and students were
informed about the testing program through district publications, the school calendar, campus handbooks, and newsletters. The district's research and evaluation department had the capability of generating data for use in program planning and evaluation and for student placement.

**Figure 10. Measurement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators and teachers define at each campus needed information about individual students and groups of students</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests are in place that are locally generated, nationally validated, criterion referenced, curricular based and standardized</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test data are grouped and reported according to socioeconomic status, students, race, sex, etc.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test data are collected throughout the school year on a regular basis and used for modification or materials, instruction and programs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test results are used to diagnose individual student's strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal responsible for managing the test data, monitoring student progress, conducting needed staff development and supervising school-wide instructional changes based on the data</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All data are reported and interpreted for students, parents, and community</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School District N did an excellent job of reviewing and analyzing district data for use in planning. Instructional levels and indicators of achievement
levels were measured in School District N by using four tests at various grade-levels. Test results were reported to students and parents in appropriate ways, such as memoranda and parent conferences. The TEAMS objectives were also addressed in planning and delivering classroom instruction.

School District I administered two tests to measure the learning growth of its students. Test data and analysis were not fully used to determine needs assessment for instructional improvement. Disaggregation of test scores was not provided to all appropriate staff members. Inconsistencies were also present in grade books, which documented the mastery of essential elements.

There was almost no disaggregation of test scores in School District O. According to an interview from an accreditation team member, the superintendent felt that this type of test information would demoralize the faculty. Some teachers in the district had no idea what the test scores had been and how they compared to other districts. The lack of ownership in studying test scores and setting goals affected the commitment of the faculty.

**Instructional Focus**

Instructional focus permeated the campuses of School District C (see Figure 11). They had clear statements of purpose, and goals that were communicated and supported by staff, and parents. The campus and district planning committees included parents, teachers, students, administrators, community representatives, central office staff, and board members.
### Figure 11. Instructional Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school has a set of common goals that were developed collaboratively by faculty, administrators and the community</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school has a written curriculum document</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum document made available not only to teachers and administrators, but to the community at large</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals of the school are displayed in a prominent place in the school</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the principal's decisions support the goal</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All teachers reinforce the goals of the school</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals of the school guide teachers' instructional decisions about students and are communicated to parents and the community whenever possible</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A basic curriculum that is coordinated between grades and within grades</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A curriculum with an evaluative monitoring system that reflects the school's goals in place</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals at the school reflect the philosophy that all students can learn</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School District H had developed specific instructional goals based on available test data. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents were involved in developing the campus and district goals. The written curriculum documents were locally adapted and provided instructional focus for courses and subjects.

Curriculum guides were not the driving force for planning lessons in School District I. Campus plans were developed with input from faculty, parents, and administrators. The plans lacked specific, measurable objectives and criteria for noting accomplishments and timeliness for monitoring progress. There was inconsistent application of the grading procedures in each grade level and between grade levels in the areas of reteaching, retesting, and mastery of essential elements.

Although N looked good on charts, the visiting team saw differences between campuses in the area of instructional focus. Parents in School District N were involved in developing plans on some campuses, other campuses had less extensive parent involvement. Some parents knew little of the campus plan. Several teachers on various campuses had varying degrees of knowledge of campus goals. There was also a failure to display goals throughout each campus.

Campus planning committees in School District O used a needs assessment specific to each campus and involved parents in completion of the
campus plan. The planning activities were supported by effective schools research.

Some curriculum guides in School District O were locally developed by the teachers; others were locally adapted to the needs of the students; and some guides contained activities and resource references that were no longer appropriate. A review of teachers' lesson plans indicated that instructional activities were often selected with little consideration of district language arts objectives.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the comparison of the two outstanding school districts in the selected region and the three weaker school districts based on the effective schools correlates and indicators. The conclusions reflect the areas where the three weaker districts failed to meet the criteria.

Due to the qualitative nature of this study to identify school environment practices in a selected region in the state of Texas, generalizations to other populations could not be made from the results. However, the information gained from the materials used by the accreditation team can be of great value to those schools awaiting accreditation in Texas.
**Demographic Data**

Both School District C and School District H were more diverse than the other three districts. Diverse student populations did not have a negative impact on school effectiveness. Diversity did not keep School District C and School District H from having high TEAMS scores. Smaller teacher-to-pupil-ratios did not have an effect on school effectiveness. School District I had the lowest pupil-to-teacher ratio but it scored in the bottom three on the indicators of the effective schools correlates. Having a larger teacher-to-pupil-ratio did have a negative impact on school effectiveness. Spending more money per pupil had a positive impact on school effectiveness.

**Instructional Leadership**

The districts that met the criteria of the indicators in instructional leadership had strong leaders who were visible and who had high expectations for all students.

**School Climate**

School districts that had high expectations for students and believed that all children could learn met the criteria of the indicators for school climate. Campuses that rewarded students and teachers for academic achievement and accomplishments and administrators who were open with teachers about instructional matters relating to test scores were rated high in on the school climate indicators. Lack of teachers' ownership in studying test scores and
setting goals resulted in lack of commitment by the faculty and a citation from the visiting team.

**Teacher Behavior/High Expectations**

Schools with beautiful exterior appearances did not guarantee faculty within these buildings to have high expectations for students. High expectations for low performers and disadvantaged children were important indicators of effective schools.

**Measurement**

Disaggregation of test scores in order to diagnose a student's strengths and weaknesses were important indicators of school effectiveness. Test data made it possible for a campus to evaluate its effectiveness based on student achievement.

**Instructional Focus**

The indicators for instructional focus were based on clear and measurable objectives. When teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders were involved in the planning process and documents were available not only to teachers and administrators but to the community at large the districts were commended. The teams also recommended that all principal's decisions support the campus goals and be based on the effective schools correlates and that goals of the school reflect the philosophy that all students can learn.
Texas Education Agency

The Texas Education Agency did an outstanding job in effective schools research in preparing criteria for the accreditation process. It appeared that the members of the accreditation team were qualified, objective, knowledgeable, and unbiased during their visits.

Recommendations

Recommendations for School Districts

Districts are encouraged to use the Effective Schools Correlates as guides when making plans at the district and campus levels in order to produce an environment where teachers can teach and students can learn. This could be accomplished through staff development sessions such as the following: what research says are the attributes of effective schools, leadership training programs, and analysis and data collecting techniques. Video tape presentations, speakers, hands-on demonstrations, and discussions will be the methods used in these sessions.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is recommended by the researcher that further research be conducted using school districts who do not receive accreditation and to compare them with districts who are accredited. The commonalities and diversity among these districts could be analyzed.
APPENDIX A

LETTER AND PERMISSION FORM

TO VISITING TEAM MEMBERS
Dear :

I understand that you served on an accreditation team(s) for the following school districts during the 1988-1989 school year in Region X:

I am currently collecting data for my dissertation topic. The data I am using are the accreditation reports from the sixteen Texas school districts in Region X visited by an accreditation team for that year. Dr. Ruben Olivarez, Assistant Commissioner for Accreditation, gave me permission to make copies of the accreditation reports of all sixteen school districts. This study has the approval of my dissertation committee at the University of North Texas.

In order to validate the information contained in the reports, I would like to telephone you with specific questions regarding the on-site observations and findings related to instructional leadership, school climate, teacher behavior/high expectations, measurement, and instructional focus in these school districts. Your input during the accreditation visit is of importance for providing triangulation.

Please be reassured that all information gathered during the telephone interview will remain confidential. Neither names of accreditation team members nor school districts will be revealed in the dissertation. Please fill out the attached sheet specifying the date and time that is most convenient for you.

Sincerely,

Linda P. Peregrine

Dr. Betty Mason
Major Professor
Permission Form

I will be happy to cooperate in your study with the understanding that neither my name, the name of any committee members, school districts, nor any school personnel will be revealed in your dissertation.

Signature ________________________

Address ________________________

Telephone ________________________

Available time and date (please choose a date between August 6-17, if possible):

Time __________ Date __________

Home phone: (214) 285-3577

Office phone (after August 21): (214) 309-7140

Please return in enclosed self-addressed envelope.
APPENDIX B

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS CORRELATES WITH INDICATORS
CAMPUS OBSERVATION CRITERIA

X. Instructional Leadership

The instructional leader is one who effectively communicates the mission of the school to the staff, parents, community, and students. All decisions made support the school's mission which is based on the correlates of effective schools.

A. The school mission is clearly defined and communicated to teachers, parents, students, and the community at large. The principal spends time and energy carrying out the mission.

B. Instructional programs at the school are supervised, monitored, and evaluated. Student achievements is reported and interpreted for the school community.

C. Expectations for faculty, staff, and students are clearly stated. All administrative decisions enhance those expectations.

D. A positive school climate is promoted.

E. Communication and collaboration among the school staff and between the staff and community are emphasized.

XI. School Climate

A positive school climate goes beyond safety and orderliness. School climate is an atmosphere where teaching and learning are emphasized and rewarded. A consistent system of norms, attitudes, and beliefs form the foundation for the policies and practices in the school.
A. The environment is safe, orderly, clean, and conducive to learning.

B. Teachers believe it is their responsibility to teach all students.

C. The staff believes that all children can learn and should be provided the opportunity to learn the essential elements.

D. Clear rules, policies, and expectations are in place and are consistently enforced by all adults.

E. Students are rewarded for academic efforts and accomplishments.

F. Teachers are rewarded for academic efforts, professional growth, and teaching accomplishments.

G. There is a spirit of collegiality and collaboration among the staff and between the staff and community in reaching the goals of the school.

XII. Teacher Behavior/High Expectations

Behaviors in the school are characterized by high expectations for students and teachers. The staff believes and demonstrates that all students can attain mastery of basic skills. The staff has the capability and responsibility to help all students achieve mastery.

A. There is a shared belief by school personnel that all students can master the basic skills.

B. Teachers are responsible for ensuring academic learning time for all students.

C. Observable effective teaching practices including questioning techniques ensure/equal learning opportunities.
D. Teachers and administrators provide quality feedback to students, parents, and community.

E. Teachers and administrators communicate school-wide policies and enforce classroom rules consistently.

F. Teachers and administrators demonstrate positive overt behaviors toward all students regardless of personal biases.

XIII. **Measurement**

Measurement is feedback on student academic progress through the use or test instruments and other non-test related data such as attendance and dropout rates. The results of testing and other available data are used to improve individual student performance, curriculum, and instructional practices of the school.

A. Administrators and teachers at each campus define carefully what information they need and want about individual students and groups of students.

B. Tests are in place that are locally generated, nationally validated, criterion referenced, curricular based and standardized.

C. Test data are grouped and reported according to socioeconomic status of students, race, sex, etc.

D. Test data are collected throughout the school year on a regular basis and used for modification of materials, instruction, and programs.
E. Test results are used to diagnose individual student's strengths and weaknesses.

F. The principal is responsible for managing the test data, monitoring student progress, conducting needed staff development, and supervising school-wide instructional changes based on the data.

G. All data are reported and interpreted for the students, the parents, and the community.

H. Test data that makes it possible for a school to evaluate its effectiveness based on student achievement is in place. Data should indicate little or no differences in the proportion of students achieving minimum mastery as functioning members of a group to which they belong.

XIV. Instructional Focus

Instructional focus is the attention to academic goals, objectives, and priorities. Effective schools maintain an instructional focus that supports academic achievement for all children.

A. The school has a set of common goals that were developed collaboratively by faculty, administrators, and the community.

B. The school has a written curriculum document. This document is made available not only to teachers and administrators but to the community at large.
C. Goals of the school are displayed in a prominent place in the school. This may be through the use of buttons that all school staff wear, through bulletin boards, through newsletters.

D. All of the principal's decisions support the goal.

E. All teachers reinforce the goals of the school. It guides their instructional decisions about students and is communicated to parents and the community whenever possible.

F. A basic curriculum that is coordinated between grades and within grades with an evaluative/monitoring system and that reflects the school's goal is in place.

G. The goals at the school reflect the philosophy that all students can learn.
### Instructional Leadership

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* Indicates a majority
REFERENCES


