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Alabama Exemplary Schools, 1989-1990, 1991-1992: A Study Of Their Characteristics.

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Alabama exemplary schools, 1989–90, 1991–92: A study of their characteristics

Slivka, John Michael, Ed.D.

University of Alabama at Birmingham, 1992

ALABAMA EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS 1989-90, 1991-92:
A STUDY OF THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

by

JOHN M. SLIVKA

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Education in the Joint Program
in Educational Leadership in The Graduate Schools of
The University of Alabama and The University of
Alabama at Birmingham

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION
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Degree __Ed.D._____ Major Subject ___Educational Leadership___

Name of Candidate __John M. Slivka_____

Title __Alabama Exemplary Schools 1989-90, 1991-92: A Study of_____

__Their Characteristics_____

This study examined exemplary Alabama schools recognized by the Elementary School Recognition Program. School characteristics identified by the Elementary School Recognition Program and demographic factors were analyzed to determine whether commonalities existed among selected schools and whether differences existed between selected and non-selected schools.

The sample for the study included 28 schools that applied for the Elementary School Recognition Program in 1989-90 and 1991-92. Fifteen of the schools were selected to represent Alabama in the program, and 13 were not selected. The sample contained 14 city and 14 county schools.

The Alabama Judges' Form provided data related to school characteristics, and the Annual Status Reports from the Alabama State Department of Education yielded demographic factors used in the study. Mean scores and percentages were used to describe data from these two areas. Interviews of a qualitative nature conducted with participants provided data not evident from the Alabama Judges' Forms or the Annual Status Reports.

Results revealed that selected schools: (a) housed fewer students than non-selected schools, (b) indicated fewer students eligible for free/reduced price meals, (c) exhibited a lower pupil-teacher ratio, (d) received a higher percentage of financial support from local efforts, (e) showed a greater percentage of certified personnel holding degrees above the Bachelor's level, and (f) reported more computers per school than non-selected schools.

Results from the interviews indicated that involvement in the Elementary School Recognition Program was time consuming, although involvement was beneficial. Participants reported that the application process was a self-examination process that clarified school goals, unified school staff, and provided a sense of pride for the school community.

Abstract Approved by: Committee Chairman _____

Program Director _____

Date _9/27/92_ Dean of Graduate School _____

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PS-5744

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. John P. Slivka, to my family, Carol and Ally, who gave as much to this study as I did, and to Dr. E. L. Whigham, who started me on this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special debt of appreciation is extended to Dr. Martha Barton. Her honesty and genuine concern was evident throughout this study.

Personal encouragement was offered throughout this effort by my family. With the support of Carol, my wife, and Ally, my daughter, I was able to find the necessary time to complete this study. I am grateful for the personal sacrifices they made to ensure my success. Their change in lifestyle, their faith, and their prayers provided encouragement for completion of this work.

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CHAPTER I

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Numerous attempts have been made to improve the quality of schools over the past decade. Programs for school improvement have focused on such variables as teacher effectiveness, higher order thinking skills, learning styles, peer coaching, various methods of instructional supervision, and site-based management. Schools and school districts have adopted one or more of the improvement programs to increase educational opportunities for students. State boards of education have placed more responsibilities on schools, and various study groups such as the National Commission on Excellence in Education and the Paideia Group have made suggestions for school improvement. For many years, school improvement programs were being implemented in schools across the country; unfortunately, most of the improvement efforts, although founded upon good intentions, have fallen short of goals. Program involvement and mandates were viewed by educators as quick-fixes, and the lives of these programs were usually short and ineffective.

During this period of attempted restructuring, researchers have noted that schools existed which did meet the needs of their clients. Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, and Smith (1979) stated that what set good schools apart from average schools was the ethos, or climate, of the school. Ethos or climate in Rutter

and associates' context meant the tone of the school or the feeling one gets when entering the school. Good schools possessed shared visions and common thoughts of what was and what should be (Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, 1988).

Goodlad (1983) stated that when people recognized schools as social organizations, they would realize that neither the methods commonly used to improve schools were likely to make significant differences, nor were concentrated efforts focused on single variables likely to improve schools. Through a study of 38 schools, involving observations of 1,350 teachers and over 17,000 students, Goodlad determined that the most satisfying schools were those that fostered helping relationships between students and teachers and exhibited a high degree of student ownership towards learning. Likewise, the least satisfying schools were those that lacked these factors. However, Goodlad's study found the pedagogical practices to be virtually the same in both groups of schools (Goodlad, 1983).

Upon completion of his study, Goodlad (1983) proposed strategies for the improvement of schools, including the following:

1.   The individual school was the key unit for school improvement if efforts for change were to be meaningful.

2.   Dialogue concerning a clear set of expectations should be conducted between the school staff and the administration. These expectations should be based on established goals, and an assessment of existing programs and practices should be performed.

3.   Accountability followed responsibility and authority for improvement. However, the measure of accountability was based on more than a single indicator, such as the academic achievement of students. Instead, the measure of

accountability was comprehensive and served as a long-term portrait of the school's progress (Frymier, 1983).

After the release of studies such as "A Nation at Risk" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), and suggested plans of action like "The Paideia Proposal" (Adler, 1982), the American system of education was the target for criticism. In an effort to show evidence that good schools existed, Secretary of Education, Terrell Bell, introduced the Secondary School Recognition Program during the 1982-1983 school year. During the 1985-1986 school year, Secretary of Education, William Bennett, introduced the Elementary School Recognition Program. The purpose of both programs was to identify and recognize schools that were successfully meeting students' needs and could serve as models for other schools. These recognition programs were based on characteristics identified by research to be correlated with effective schools. The characteristics included: (a) leadership, (b) teaching and student environment, (c) curriculum and instruction, (d) parent and community support, (e) student assessment, (f) organizational vitality, and (g) outcome indicators.

Statement of the Problem

There has been much study and research directed towards a clearer understanding of effective schools and their characteristics. The stated purposes of the Elementary School Recognition Program are to identify and recognize unusually successful elementary schools and, through publicity and other means, to encourage emulation of their practices, policies, and programs. Although the purpose of identifying and recognizing these schools at the state level has been accomplished, the goal of using the recognized schools as models for other schools to follow has not yet been reached. One of the reasons this goal has not been met is that no systematic

attempt has been made to examine the characteristics of the schools chosen to represent Alabama in the Elementary School Recognition Program. Characteristics that set apart selected schools from the rest have not been delineated. Further research is needed for educators to have sufficient information to emulate these recognized schools on a state-wide basis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify selected characteristics of those schools selected for the Elementary School Recognition Program and to determine whether or not differences existed between selected and non-selected schools. This study also examined the history of the Elementary School Recognition Program and the purposes and process involved.

Research Questions

During the study of the schools selected to represent Alabama in the Elementary School Recognition Program, data were gathered to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent were common characteristics in the areas of administrative leadership, curriculum, instruction, teaching environment, student environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, and organizational vitality evident in Alabama exemplary schools?

2. To what extent were differences in the areas of administrative leadership, curriculum, instruction, teaching environment, student environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, and organizational vitality evident between selected and non-selected schools?

3.   What demographic factors (such as school location, socioeconomic status as determined by free/reduced priced meal eligibility, number of students, number of administrators, classroom teacher-pupil ratio, other support personnel, school cluster type, school organization, percentage of local revenue available for schools, percentage of certified personnel holding advanced degrees, average daily attendance, and the number of computers available for students) described the selected schools?

4.   To what extent were differences in demographic factors (such as school location, socioeconomic status of the school as determined by free/reduced price meal eligibility, number of students, number of administrators, classroom teacher-pupil ratio, other support personnel, school cluster type, school organization, percentage of local revenue available for schools, percentage of certified personnel holding advanced degrees, average daily attendance, and the number of computers available for students) evident between selected and non-selected schools?

<u>Foreshadowed Question</u>

The interviews conducted in conjunction with the study addressed the following foreshadowed question: What impact has receiving the National Elementary School Recognition Program Award had on the subsequent quality of schooling received by students?

<u>Procedures</u>

The following procedures were used in the study:

1.   A letter was written to Dr. Wayne Teague, State Superintendent of Education, seeking permission for release of the Alabama Judges' Rating Forms for

the Elementary School Recognition Program (data gathering instrument number one). A copy of this letter is found in Appendix A.

2. A letter was written to the Recognition Department of the United States Department of Education requesting information that may have been collected relative to the Elementary School Recognition Program (a copy of this letter is found in Appendix B).

3. Materials were received from Dr. Frank Heatherly, coordinator for the Alabama Elementary School Recognition Program, which included the Alabama Judges' Rating Forms (a copy of the Judges' Rating Forms is found in Appendix C).

4. A follow-up telephone conversation was held with Dr. Heatherly to gather specific information concerning the use of the rating form and the selection of the judges.

5. A review of the literature was conducted including a further request to United States Department of Education for additional information cited in the literature review.

6. Contact was made with Dr. Anita Barber at the Alabama State Department of Education concerning the availability of the Annual Status Reports (data gathering instrument two) for the 1989-90 schools.

7. Demographic information for all schools was obtained from the Alabama State Department of Education Library.

8. Socioeconomic data were obtained through communication with Child Nutrition Supervisors from each of the school systems represented in the study.

9. Interview questions were developed for principals and teachers from randomly selected schools represented in the study.

10. On-site interviews were conducted with principals and teachers. These interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed.

11. An analysis of data was performed.

12. Conclusions and recommendations were made.

Significance of the Study

This study provides insight and information concerning the Elementary School Recognition Program's history, purposes, and procedures. The study investigated the common characteristics of recognized Alabama schools and examined differences between selected and non-selected schools. Through an examination of both the common characteristics of recognized schools and the differences between selected and non-selected schools, interested administrators will have the knowledge of the minimal characteristics sought by past selection panels. Administrators not interested in pursuing the Elementary School Recognition Program will have the characteristics of the recognized schools for their school to emulate if they so aspire. The study also yields pertinent data for superintendents and boards of education to use when assessing the status of their schools compared to the group of exemplary Alabama schools. Existing recruitment procedures, personnel needs, staff development practices, and other internal procedures may have to be altered if emulation or recognition is desired. The study's findings may also have implications for improved school-community relations as the community is made aware of efforts to improve local schools.

Assumptions

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1.   Commonalities existed between recognized exemplary schools in different selection years.

2.   The rating form provided by the United States Department of Education and used by the state selection committee was valid and reliable.

3.   The selection committee was knowledgeable regarding the Elementary School Recognition Program and the criteria used in the process.

Limitations

The following limitations applied to this study:

1.   Due to the narrative nature of the application submitted by each school, selective judging could exist.

2.   A limited amount of training was provided for the judges who rated the Alabama applications.

3.   Data from the 1987-88 selection were not available. Had these data been available, they would have been of limited value because the judging process was not consistent with the process used during the 1989-90 and the 1991-92 selections.

Methodology

A descriptive research design was used in the study to compare and contrast the schools involved in the recognition process. Descriptive statistics of means and percentages were used to describe the data.

Qualitative methods were used for the interview section of the study. No attempt was made to quantify the interview data. Rather, the interview data were summarized and reported. Data are depicted in tables in Chapter IV.

<center>Definition of Terms</center>

The following terms were operationally defined for the study:

Administrator is a person employed in a school as a principal or as an assistant principal.

Advanced degrees are earned degrees beyond bachelor's level degrees.

Annual status reports are reports produced annually by the Alabama State Department of Education. Data for this report were collected from the local education agencies. The reports contain information on demographic factors and performance measures related to each school system. The local school systems' averages are compared to state and school cluster averages. In addition, certain comparable data elements are reported for selected peer states.

Average daily attendance (ADA) is the average number of students in attendance daily.

Demographic factors are data drawn from the Annual Status Reports that provided information relative to school size, location, teacher-pupil ratio, socioeconomic status as determined by free/reduced priced meal eligibility, school cluster type, the school's organization, number of students, number of administrators and other support personnel, percentage of local revenue available for schools, percentage of certified personnel holding advanced degrees, average daily attendance, and highest degree and certification held by the administrator.

Effective school research is the body of research which identified schools that exceeded achievement expectations. The literature also identified factors which contributed to high achievement levels.

Elementary school refers to any school containing a minimum of three grades from kindergarten through eighth grade, and includes K-12 and 1-12 schools.

Elementary School Recognition Award is the award given to a school which is chosen as a national winner in the Elementary School Recognition Program.

Elementary School Recognition Program is a federal program implemented during the 1985-86 school year with the goal of locating and recognizing schools identified as outstanding.

Local education agency refers to a city or county school district.

Local support refers to the financial support a school system receives from the local community in addition to public funding.

Percent average daily attendance refers to the percent of students in attendance compared to daily enrollment.

Quality indicators are 10 indicators that compose the category, quality indicators, from the Elementary School Recognition Program judges' form. The 10 indicators included: school philosophy/goals, school organization, school leadership, curriculum, instruction, student outcomes, character development, school climate, school-community relations, and efforts to maintain high-quality programs and/or to make improvements.

School characteristics were eight characteristics identified in the Elementary School Recognition Program that included administrative leadership, curriculum and

instruction, teaching environment, student environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, organizational vitality, and special emphasis.

School cluster type relates to the way a school is classified (rural, large central city, mid-size city, suburban, large town, or small town), as determined by the Elementary School Recognition Program nomination form.

School improvement refers to efforts to make the educational endeavors of a school more effective in terms of student performance, school climate, parental assistance, and curriculum and instruction.

Secondary School Recognition Program is a federal program implemented by Secretary of Education, William Bell, during the 1982-83 school year to identify and recognize schools which were achieving beyond expectations. This program served as the basis for the Elementary School Recognition Program.

Site visitors are those individuals selected by the United States Department of Education to conduct the site visits as a part of the Recognition Programs.

Site visits are 2-day visitations by knowledgeable people to assess the accuracy of the information provided by schools on the narrative forms.

Organization of the Study

The study contains five chapters. Chapter I provides a global description of school improvement efforts and the beginnings of the Secondary and Elementary School Recognition Programs. From the global description, a statement of the problem and the purpose of the study is explained. Next, research and foreshadowed questions are posed, along with the significance of the problem. Included in the chapter are limitations and important assumptions made prior to conducting the

study. A brief summary of the methods and procedures follows. The organization of the study and an operational definition of terms complete Chapter I.

Chapter II presents a review of the literature, beginning with a description of studies related to the effects of schooling, followed by a review of effective school research. Chapter II closes with a description of the Secondary and Elementary School Recognition Program, including the history of both programs and their components.

In Chapter III, the general design of the study is described, following a restatement of the purpose and research questions. Chapter III concludes with a description of the data collection instruments and the methods used for the study.

The results of the study are presented in Chapter IV. The characteristics of selected schools are compared with those of non-selected schools. The data also examine the demographic characteristics relative to those selected schools to provide a portrait of those schools and to determine whether differences exist between selected and non-selected schools based on this demographic information.

The study is summarized in Chapter V and conclusions drawn from the results are offered. The primary focus of the conclusions is the commonality of characteristics of selected schools, how selected schools were found to differ from other schools, and feedback relative to strengthening both the individual school applications and the state selection process. Recommendations for further research conclude the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature included articles from professional journals, books, and publications from the United States Department of Education and the General Accounting Office. The organization of this review was developed as follows: (a) a perspective of studies relating to schooling, (b) effective school research, and (c) United States Department of Education Recognition Program.

The question of the effectiveness of the nation's educational system is a question which has been asked many times. Unfortunately for educators, effectiveness has been judged using many different standards. Student academic achievement, drop-out rates, teacher turnover, school climate, and parental involvement have all been utilized to judge school effectiveness in the past decade.

As the standards of effectiveness changed, so, too, did the focus of schools and school districts. Programs which were once thought of as innovations were soon seen as passing fads. However, through the work of effective school researchers and those individuals concerned with the restructuring of schools, it has been noted that the combination of variables, rather than a single variable, was the measure of school effectiveness. The combination of identifiable variables has been used to identify quality schools of today.

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Study of Schooling

Over the past 40 years, researchers have studied the effects of schooling. A study conducted by Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfield, and York (1966) assessed the distribution of educational resources in the United States after the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Coleman and his colleagues surveyed the achievement of 645,000 students in 4,000 elementary and secondary schools and found that resources available to both black and white students were comparable. The findings suggested a more evenly matched resource distribution than was thought possible at the time. Coleman et al. (1966) also found that, in spite of similar resources, black students continued to perform poorer than white students on standardized tests. As a result, the notion that family background was the factor primarily responsible for the educational attainment of the students was proposed. Coleman and co-workers also drew similar conclusions regarding the performance differences between poor and affluent students. They concluded that the quality of schools had little to do with students' overall educational attainment (Coleman et al., 1966).

In 1972, Jencks and a group of Harvard researchers published Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America. The work culminated 3 years of research conducted at Harvard University's Center for Educational Policy Research. The research reviewed the 1966 report of Coleman and associates as well as other studies relating to schooling. Educational inequalities addressed included schools, cognitive skills, educational attainment, occupational status, income, and job satisfaction (Jencks, Smith, Ackland, Bane, Cohen, Gintis, Henys, & Michelson, 1972). They suggested that an increased emphasis was placed on

education in the 1960s to provide everyone entering the job market with comparable skills. The rationale was that schools could equalize cognitive skills and equalize job potential, thereby eliminating a system where any individual ended up economically poor. The increased emphasis on education was based on three assumptions:

1.   Reducing or eliminating poverty could be accomplished by assisting impoverished children to rise out of poverty.

2.   The primary reason poor children failed to escape poverty was that they lacked cognitive skills necessary to obtain and keep a job.

3.   The best system for ending the cycle of poverty was educational reform (Jencks et al., 1972).

However, the study of Jencks et al. (1972) reported:

1.   Although children born into poverty had a higher than average chance of remaining poor, statistics indicated that economic mobility existed in any generation and that economic inequality existed even within the same household.

2.   There was no evidence that educational reform substantially reduced the extent of cognitive inequality. "We cannot blame economic inequalities on the differences between schools since differences between schools seem to have very little effect on any measurable attribute of those who attend them" (Jencks et al., 1972, p. 8).

Jencks et al. (1972) concluded that:

1.   Equalizing the amount of schooling might reduce cognitive inequality by 5 - 15%.

2.   Equalizing the quality of elementary schools would reduce the cognitive inequality by 3% or less.

3.   Equalizing the quality of high schools would reduce cognitive inequality by 1% or less.

4.   Eliminating racial or socioeconomic segregation in schools might reduce the gaps in test scores by 10 - 20% between black and white and rich and poor students.

5.   Additional school expenditures were unlikely to increase achievement, and the reallocation of resources would not reduce test score inequality (Jencks et al., 1972).

According to Jencks et al. (1972), the development of cognitive skills was not the only effect of schooling. Noncognitive traits, however, could not be measured as well as cognitive traits. Jencks and associates believed that the noncognitive effects of schooling were likely to be more important than cognitive skills, but they failed to identify specific noncognitive effects and concluded that differences between schools had little effect on students' educational attainment.

<u>Effective School Research</u>

After Coleman and his colleagues released their report, Equality of Educational Opportunity (1966), educators and researchers disagreed with the report's finding that family background was the primary factor responsible for determining school achievement. Investigators such as Weber (1971), Brookover and Lezotte (1979), Rutter et al. (1979), and Edmonds (1979) examined and identified characteristics of successful schools. These researchers believed that schools could make a difference in student achievement. The identification of successful schools and their characteristics was known as effective schools research.

Researchers stated that effective schools research refuted the earlier studies of Coleman et al. (1966) and Jencks et al. (1972). However, effective schools researchers agreed with the findings of Coleman et al. (1966); Stephens (1967); Averch, Carroll, Donaldson, Kiesling, and Pincus (1972); Jencks et al. (1972); Murnane (1980); and Hanushek (1981) that easily measured differences between and among schools, such as class size, teacher salary, teacher experience, books in the library, school organization, and other demographic factors, had little effect on student achievement. Over the past 20 years, hundreds of studies have been conducted to determine the factors related to school achievement. The primary comparison in the research was between "high-scoring" schools and "low-scoring" schools. The greatest debate concerning the findings of effective schools studies was the assumption that if low-scoring schools took on the same characteristics as high-scoring schools, student achievement would increase in the low-scoring schools (Purkey & Smith, 1982). This aspect of effective school research was further fueled by the research of Jencks and associates (1972). They estimated that if the bottom fifth of the schools improved to the level of the top fifth, student achievement would increase approximately 3% or less.

During the past two decades, many individuals have identified effective schools and their characteristics. An early study was conducted by Weber (1971), who attempted to disprove the theory that inner-city students' reading achievement was predictably low because of the lack of federal funding or because of family background. Weber tested students in the middle and latter part of the third grade for their reading achievement. Through his visitations to four inner-city elementary schools and through his interviews with staff members, Weber concluded that in

addition to the schools' success in reading achievement, he identified eight effective school characteristics that were missing from most inner-city schools: (a) strong leadership, (b) high expectations for students, (c) good school atmosphere, (d) a strong emphasis on reading, (e) additional reading personnel, (f) use of phonics, (g) careful examination of pupil progress, and (h) individualization (Weber, 1971).

Klitgaard and Hall (1974) used regression analyses to control for different student socioeconomic factors. Based on the regression equation, an expected mean achievement score was derived for each school and the expected mean was then subtracted from the actual achievement score. The residual score determined the school's effectiveness or ineffectiveness. They constructed histograms to examine these residuals over a period of time and found that schools exhibiting a series of positive residuals over a period of years to be unusual and deserving of another examination to explain the distribution.

Klitgaard and Hall (1974) recommended comparing schools that exhibited positive outliers with average schools. Effective school research contrasting effective and non-effective schools has been criticized. Critics have argued that the inability of schools to make quantum leaps toward improvement make the comparison of exceptional schools with poor schools of little value.

Edmonds (1979) was one of the pioneers of effective school research. He believed that effective schools were those that raised poor children's minimal mastery to the basic skills achieved by minimally successful middle-class students. Edmonds believed that all children were educable and that the behavior of schools was critical. His Search for Effective Schools group examined the relationship between family background and school effectiveness. By analyzing matched schools, Edmonds found

that family background neither helped nor hindered student progress. He identified six correlates (characteristics) of effective schools: (a) a climate of expectation, (b) strong administrative leadership, (c) an orderly school atmosphere, (d) acquisition of basic skills as the school's highest priority, (e) frequent monitoring of student progress, and (f) clearly communicated goals (Edmonds, 1979).

In 1979, Brookover and Lezotte studied eight Michigan elementary schools and identified 10 characteristics that differentiated improving schools from other schools in fourth-grade reading achievement:

1.　Goals and objectives were used to guide the academic programs.

2.　Improving schools held a belief that all children could master basic objectives.

3.　A high level of expectations existed.

4.　Teachers assumed the responsibility for teaching basic skills and demonstrated a high level of commitment.

5.　Teachers spent a majority of their time on direct instruction.

6.　The principal was the leader of the school.

7.　The staff exhibited a high degree of acceptance towards accountability.

8.　Staff members of improving schools were not content with their present situation.

9.　A higher level of parent-initiated involvement existed in improving schools, although overall parental involvement was about equal.

10.　Regular teachers in improving schools were not responsible for placing students in compensatory education programs.

A study by Rutter et al. (1979) examined 12 inner-city secondary schools in London over a 5-year period. They identified processes that contributed to a positive school climate and had a positive relationship to in-school behavior, attendance, test scores, and delinquency. The processes they identified included: (a) academic emphasis, (b) teachers' actions in lessons, (c) rewards and punishments, (d) pupil conditions, (e) responsibilities and participation (of students), (f) staff organization, and (g) skills of teachers.

Research in the areas of program evaluation and school safety has also provided further insight into school effectiveness characteristics. Armor, Conry-Osequera, Cox, King, McDonnell, Pascal, Pauly, and Zellman (1976); Trisman, Waller, and Wilder (1976); and Doss and Holley (1982) evaluated successful reading programs across the United States. The researchers examined factors which contributed to the success of the programs. The Michigan Department of Education conducted three studies from 1973 - 1978 in an attempt to determine the type of schools that developed effective compensatory programs (Hunter, 1979). The results of these large studies were consistent with the findings of Edmonds (1979), Weber (1971), and Brookover and Lezotte (1979). Most of the successful schools had the following characteristics:

1.   High expectations from the school staff;

2.   Significant input by the school staff in instructional decisions;

3.   Leadership from the principal or another instructional figure;

4.   Evident school goals; and

5.   A sense of order and discipline.

In 1978, the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare conducted the Safe School Study. The study sought to identify elements which made schools orderly, learning environments. Even though the study did not examine student achievement or school characteristics directly, the findings were consistent with other studies related to school climate. Results indicated that school governance was a critical factor in creating a safe school and that the principal was the key figure in school governance. The Safe School Study also indicated a strong relationship between the school's structure of order and academic success (United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1978).

<u>Debate Over Research Results</u>

In spite of the large number of studies conducted over the past two decades, discrepancies exist in various findings of the effective school research. In 1974, the New York State Department of Education conducted three studies using regression analyses of school mean achievement (the same method used by Klitgaard and Hall, 1974). Even though the methodology was similar in all three studies, the results were not. The first study indicated that the methods of reading instruction were significantly different between high-achieving and low-achieving schools (New York State Department of Education, 1974). The second study conducted in the same year found opposite results from the first study--reading instruction methods were not the primary factor affecting student achievement (New York State Department of Education, 1974). The third study conducted in 1976 once again found significant differences in classroom instruction between high-achieving and low-achieving schools (New York State Department of Education, 1976).

Another example of contradictory results from school effectiveness studies was found in the results of studies conducted by Austin (1978) and Spartz, Valdes, McCormick, Myers, and Geppert (1977). In a 1978 Maryland study, results indicated that effective schools had strong instructional leaders (Austin, 1978). However, the study conducted by Spartz and associates showed that effective schools' principals emphasized administrative tasks.

Perhaps the greatest debate in the effective school research has centered on the topic of overlapping correlates and their operational definitions. According to D'Amico (1982), the models proposed by Edmonds (1979), Brookover and Lezotte (1979), and Rutter et al. (1979) each contained different correlates. Although correlate overlap existed in the models, confusion remained over the operational definitions of the correlates.

In Table 1, three models and their respective definitions of effectiveness are presented. Table 1 shows that Brookover and Lezotte (1979) viewed school effectiveness as an increase or decrease in fourth-grade reading and mathematics test scores. Edmonds (1979) linked effectiveness to sixth-grade students' performance on a verbal aptitude test. Rutter et al. (1979) viewed effectiveness in broader terms, using attendance, student examination scores, behavior, and delinquency rates to define effectiveness.

Even though each model in the table used student achievement as an indicator of effectiveness, the operational use of achievement differed among the studies. Brookover and Lezotte (1979) used a simultaneous increase or decrease in reading and mathematics scores; Edmonds (1979) used a verbal aptitude test to measure effectiveness; and Rutter et al. (1979) used a national examination for their study.

Table 1

Effective Schools Models and Definitions*

Terms		
Improving schools (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979)	Effective schools (Edmonds, 1979)	Schools that differ (Rutter et al., 1979)
Definitions		
A school which between 1974 and 1976 indicated an increase of 5% or more of the fourth-grade students who could master a minimum of 75% of the objectives tested by a mathematics and reading test while at the same time the school also indicated a 5% decrease in students who could only master less than 25% of the same objectives.	A school where ½ of the sixth-grade students scored at or above the 75th percentile on a verbal aptitude test.	Schools that were different in terms of student exam success, attendance, behavior, and delinquency rates.

*(D'Amico, 1982)

Although none of the models or the correlates proposed by Edmonds, Brookover and Lezotte, or Rutter was more suited for use, implementation seemed to lean towards either Brooker and Lezotte's model or Edmonds' model (Schmitt, 1989). Ralph and Fennessey (1983) credited the popularity of Edmonds' model to the evangelical sense that Edmonds provided to the effective schools movement.

Through all the confusion and contradictory information found in the effective schools studies, critics seemingly have agreed that the academically effective school is distinguished by its culture. All the other factors identified were part of a cumulative effect on student achievement. Purkey and Smith (1982) cautioned educators

to resist easy solutions for the creation of effective schools. Instead, they suggested that a school's efforts be focused on achieving long-term changes in that school's culture.

<div align="center">Effective Schools Research in Practice</div>

Through the efforts of Edmonds (1979), Brookover and Lezotte (1979), and others, school effectiveness models were implemented across the nation. For example, in 1979, 18 schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, were directed to improve student achievement and did so by Project RISE. Project RISE attempted to implement research-based school and teacher effectiveness findings. In the project, schools established a shared vision, using school effectiveness findings as a framework for establishing a plan. Then the schools implemented their plans in a systematic manner. The schools' desired gains in student achievement occurred over a 5-year period from 1979 - 1984 (McCormack-Larkin, 1985).

Another model was established in Jefferson County, Kentucky, where a mandate was issued from a new superintendent directing schools to improve and to increase student achievement. The school district used Creating Effective Schools (Brookover et al., 1982) as a basis for inservice training. This training used three clusters of characteristics of effective schools:

1.   Ideology of each school. This cluster referred to the general beliefs, norms, expectations, and feelings that characterized the school's social system.

2.   Organization of the school. This cluster contained information on the school's organization, which insured that each student was defined as a high achieving learner. The teacher's role in the cluster was defined as an instructor for all students.

3.   Composition of instructional practices. Within this cluster were the practices of effective instruction, reinforcement practices, student team learning, assessment, and time on task.

Brookover stated that no one characteristic or any combination of two or three characteristics were responsible for producing students who learned at high levels; rather, the total complex of characteristics interacted to produce an effective learning environment.

Although no two schools approached problems in the same manner, significant gains in student achievement were documented after the first year. These schools involved in the Effective Schools Project realized reading achievement gains equal to five times that of the other schools in the district. Mathematics achievement gains were equal to four times that of the other schools. The pilot project's schools began their efforts substantially behind other schools in the district both in reading and mathematics achievement. After their initial involvement in the project, these schools either had caught-up with, or gone ahead of, the other schools in mathematics achievement. In reading achievement, the schools were still slightly below the district average, but the differences were minimal (McCormack-Larkin, 1985).

Edmonds (1982) stated that three types of school improvement programs had resulted from the research conducted on effective schools. The first type of program was organized and implemented in local schools or school districts. Although no singular program design was preferred, there were several generic observations made concerning all school-improvement programs for the school and district levels.

1.   The change included teachers and administrators.

2. The program implemented was evaluated using changes in student achievement data and observable changes in the organization based on the behavior of teachers and administrators.

3. Successful changes at the school level only included those changes that the school controlled. Any change dependent on changes in board policy or administrative regulations was likely to fail because of the untimely implementation of such a change.

The second type of school improvement program involved state education agencies that provided technical assistance to schools and districts and rewarded innovation with funding assistance. The third type of school improvement program occurred in universities because they were the agencies responsible for disseminating knowledge gained from the research. Additionally, universities provided technical assistance (Edmonds, 1982).

As effective school programs increased across the country, federal funds were made available for the districts which implemented these programs. The Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary Improvement Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297), as cited in Gainer (1989), authorized Chapter 1 compensatory education funds and Chapter 2 educational improvement block grant funds to be used for funding school programs. These amendments cited five characteristics that effective school programs should exhibit: (a) strong and effective administrative leadership, (b) emphasis on the acquisition of basic and high-order skills, (c) a safe and orderly environment, (d) a climate of expectations where virtually all children can learn under appropriate conditions, and (e) continuous assessment of students and programs to evaluate the effects of instruction (Gainer, 1989).

In September, 1989, William Gainer, Director for the Education and Employment Issues, sent Augustus Hawkins, Chairperson of the Committee on Education and Labor, a report entitled, <u>Effective Schools Programs: Their Extent and Characteristics</u>. The report's findings were representative of 16,000 local school districts across the country. The report found that 41% (6,500) of the nation's school districts had effective school programs in operation in approximately 48,000 elementary and secondary schools in 1987-88. An additional 17% (4,300) school districts had effective school programs in 27,000 schools that used teams as the opportunity for teachers and administrators to plan and monitor the schools' progress. The schools had written plans for improving school effectiveness. Upon adding the criterion of analyzing achievement data through a separation of ethnicity and socioeconomic status, only 13% of the districts (approximately 2,100) met this criterion. Effective school programs were more likely to be found in large districts but were common to urban as well as non-urban areas. Half of the schools with effective school programs were required by the district to participate. Effect school program implementation usually began with the school staff's exposure to the research and concluded with a school team of teachers and administrators formed to establish a plan of improvement. Of those districts that reported effective school programs in 1988, only 5% began their program prior to 1979-80. This figure rose to 8% in 1982-84, to 25% in 1984-856, and to 58% in 1986-88 (Gainer, 1989).

During school year 1985-86, the Elementary School Recognition Program was introduced by Secretary of Education, William Bennett. The indicators for rating schools that applied for recognition were taken from characteristics identified by Edmonds (1979) and Gainer (1989). The following is a description of the

Recognition Programs sponsored by the United States Department of Education, including the purposes for the programs and their requirements.

<u>United States Department of Education Recognition Programs</u>

The Elementary School Recognition Program was based on the results and design of the Secondary School Recognition Program. For the Elementary School Recognition Program to be better understood, a description of the Secondary School Recognition Program follows.

<u>Secondary School Recognition Program</u>

During the early 1980s, the U.S. was deluged by a number of reports, such as <u>A Nation at Risk</u> (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), and <u>High School</u> (Boyer, 1983), which reported substandard schooling across the nation. At approximately the same time, the purpose of the United States Department of Education was also being debated. From the debate, an agreement was reached that the Department should provide leadership to promote excellence in the nation's public schools. During the 1982-83 school year, the Secondary Recognition Program was established.

The stated purposes of the program were to identify and recognize unusually successful public secondary schools and, through publicity and other means, to encourage other schools to emulate the practices, policies, and programs of the recognized schools. The program was administered by the Secretary of Education's office with cooperation from the state departments of education. The recognition program staff worked closely with each state to develop a fair selection process, representative of the state's needs.

In 1982-83, each state was allowed to nominate five high schools and five schools for young adolescents (junior high or middle schools). During that year, 44 states participated, and 496 applications were received. In 1983-84, each state was given a quota, based on population and the number of eligible schools, for the number of nominations it could submit. In 1983-84, 48 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependent Schools participated, and 555 applications were received. During the 1984-85 selection, 49 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependent Schools participated (Corcoran & Wilson, 1986).

The Secondary School Recognition Program used 14 attributes of success and five outcome measures. The 14 attributes, derived from research on school effectiveness conducted by Edmonds (1979) and others, were:

1.   Clear academic goals,

2.   High expectations for students,

3.   Order and discipline,

4.   Rewards and incentives for students,

5.   Regular and frequent monitoring of student progress,

6.   Opportunities for meaningful student responsibility and participation,

7.   Teacher efficacy,

8.   Rewards and incentives for teachers,

9.   Concentration on academic learning time,

10.   Positive school climate,

11.   Administrative leadership,

12.   Well articulated curriculum,

13.   Evaluation for instructional improvement, and

14.   Community support and involvement (Corcoran & Wilson, 1986).

Later selections addressed additional indicators that reflected the concerns of current reports and studies. The 1990-91 application contained the National Goals of Education, as established by President Bush and the governors, and was revised to indicate current trends and movements intended to strengthen schools (Crossley, 1990).

According to Corcoran and Wilson (1986), 571 of the 1,560 schools which applied had been honored. Through data collected in the selection process, reports from the site visitors and from the schools' nomination forms, nine themes evolved that described the recognized secondary schools.

1.   Shared purpose of faculty, students, administration, parents, and community: In the recognized schools, written statements of goals were transformed into action, and continual assessment of the program was evident. Through the establishment of priorities, ownership for the success of the school was shared by all. An effort also was made to inform the school community of these goals.

2.   Administrative leadership: Everyone interviewed by site visitors named the principal as the individual responsible for providing the energy and vision necessary to create and maintain a school atmosphere conducive to learning. Through data analyses, no single leadership style proved dominant; however, an important factor was that the principal's leadership style closely matched the style of the school community. This match indicated that the principals of recognized schools were able to work closely with all of their constituents.

3.   Successful school principals who delegated authority and still maintained control over the organization: These principals monitored the schools' operations, insisted on careful management of the schools' curriculum, and supervised their staff on a regular basis. Even though the principals were involved in school operations, teachers in successful schools had much freedom, thereby creating an atmosphere of collective responsibility.

4.   Talented teachers and administrators: Teachers recruited by these schools often held master's degrees or higher, and the turnover rate was extremely low. In recognized schools, teachers not only held common goals and values but they also had the power to make meaningful decisions.

5.   Teacher recognition and rewards: Various methods of showing appreciation included merit pay, stipends, and promotions. Although formal and informal recognition of teachers existed, the teachers interviewed by site visitors explained that the most important recognition came from their peers.

6.   Student-teacher relationships: In recognized schools teachers and students were given opportunities to meet during and after the school day. Teachers indicated that they not only cared about academic progress but also were concerned with the students' total development. The attitude and willingness to go beyond a job description led both teachers and students to achieve common school goals.

7.   Belief that all students can learn: The staff accepted responsibility for teaching students in an appropriate manner and usually held higher expectations with stronger reward systems.

8.   Manner in which schools faced problems: Nearly two-thirds of the recognized schools faced the same problems other schools were facing, such as

inadequate facilities, declining enrollments, and financial issues. The difference between recognized schools and other schools was the manner in which they faced their problems. Based on the support of their community, the recognized schools were given latitude and resources needed to assist them in solving problems.

9.   High degree of parental and community involvement: In recognized schools, individuals gave time to assist in the day-to-day operations of the school, thereby freeing school personnel to focus on instructional duties. Strong parent organizations were the norm in recognized schools, and the teachers and staff encouraged parents and the community to become a part of the schools' programs.

Elementary School Recognition Program

Secretary of Education William Bennett proclaimed the 1985-86 school year as the "Year of the Elementary School." As part of this proclamation, the Elementary School Recognition Program began. The new program was based on the Secondary School Recognition Program and sought to identify and recognize exemplary schools to serve as models for schools across the country (Wilson & Corcoran, 1987).

To be eligible for nomination, a school must have: (a) been an elementary school serving at least three grades between kindergarten and eighth grade; (b) had its own administrator; and (c) completed a nomination form. Elementary components of K-12 and 1-12 schools also were eligible for the Elementary School Recognition Program, provided they had not participated in the Secondary School Recognition Program. Middle school participation was limited either to the Elementary or Secondary Program. The nomination form was a three-part narrative application which carried a maximum length of 33 pages (see Appendix D

for copy of the application). The first part of the nomination form focused on demographic information about the school; type of community, as determined by population; the ethnic/racial composition of the school; the school's socioeconomic status, as determined by free/reduced price lunch eligibility; and school staffing.

The second part of the form addressed eligibility criteria. There were three eligibility thresholds related to student achievement, and each school was required to meet one of the three thresholds.

If standardized testing was conducted:

1.   During each of the last 3 years, $\geq 75\%$ of the students achieved at or above grade level in mathematics and reading. (Note: 65% was acceptable in any year in which there had been an enrollment change of $\geq 15\%$, excluding first grade or the lowest grade above kindergarten at the school.)

2.   During each of the last 3 years, the percentage of students who achieved at or above grade level in mathematics and reading had increased an average of 5% annually. In the last year, $\geq 50\%$ of the students achieved at or above the 50th percentile. (Wilson & Corcoran, 1987, pp. 3,4)

If standardized testing was not conducted:

3.   "The school can demonstrate exemplary progress and growth of students as a group, determined by a carefully worked out and fully documented system of evaluation" (Wilson & Corcoran, 1987, p. 4). The school described the system of evaluation used and provided evidence of unusual success.

Also included in the second section of the nomination form were insertions concerning the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), which stated:

1.   The Office of Civil Rights must not have issued a letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school was in violation of one or more of the civil rights statutes or that a district-wide violation that might affect the nominated school existed. However, a letter of findings was not considered if the OCR had

accepted a corrective plan submitted by the district to remedy the violation.

    2.   The nominated school or the school's district must not have refused the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

    3.   The Department of Justice must not have had a suit pending against the school district alleging that the nominated school or the district was in violation of one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause. (Wilson & Corcoran, 1987, p. v).

Additional Eligibility Criteria

Schools that completed the nomination forms also were bound by the following additional eligibility criteria:

    1.   Private schools must have been in operation for a minimum of 5 years.

    2.   The applying school must not have been recognized during the previous Elementary School Recognition Program selection.

State Selection Process

A panel of judges from each state was selected to review and rate each school's application. Each state was allowed to submit applications equal to the number of representatives it had in Congress. For Alabama, selected staff members of the State Department of Education in charge of the program selected the judges. Selection was based on their general knowledge of schools and their involvement with the Elementary School Recognition Program. Judges included past national winners from Alabama, business leaders, and parents. The judges met for 3 days to review and rate applications. The scores were compiled, and the highest ranking applications were sent for further consideration (F. Heatherly, personal communica-

tion, April 11, 1991). A copy of the Alabama Judges' Rating Form for the 1991-92 selection is found in Appendix B.

National Selection Processes

Pre-Site Visit Selection

The nominations from each state were reviewed by a three-step process. First, an 18-member national panel that included representatives from various aspects of public education, business leaders, and parents was convened by the recognition program staff to review the states' applications. After the panel examined the applications, they made recommendations concerning which schools should receive site visits. Typically, the review process reduced the number of applications by approximately one-half.

Site Visits

Following the panel's recommendations for further consideration, each school listed received a site visit. The visit lasted 2 days, and was conducted by researchers, administrators, consultants, and other individuals with extensive knowledge and experience in elementary education. During the site visits, interviews were conducted with teachers, parents, students, administrators, and, when necessary, superintendents and board members. Time also was provided for the visitors to observe individual classrooms and to assess the school's climate.

Upon the conclusion of each visit, a report was completed detailing the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the school, describing the school's climate, and noting the activities observed during the visit.

During the first year of the program (1985-86), 257 schools were site-visited. Those schools represented 47 states and the District of Columbia; included urban,

suburban, and rural schools; and schools with >1,000 and those with <100 students (Wilson & Corcoran, 1987).

From one site visit during the 1985-86 selection process, Charles L. Willis, faculty member at Wright State University, asked, "What good things would you tell your friends about this school?" (Willis, 1986, p. 4). Willis met with groups of 6 - 12 students in each of the schools he visited. Each group had at least one student from each grade represented in the school. Some of the comments he received follow.

From a school with grades K-5, just under 400 students, 95% white, 8% from low income families, located in a suburban community of <40,000, some of the answers he received included:

> The kids and teachers are very nice and they have good equipment outside.

> I like it when you have a birthday. They celebrate a lot here. They announce your name on the PA and you get to have lunch with the principal.

> I like the school because you know they care about you. The teachers always help you with your problems. Everyone is nice to you. (Willis, 1986, pp. 2,3)

From a school with grades K-6, just under 600 students, 51% white, 50% Hispanic, 8% black, one-third from low-income families, located in a small town with a population of <25,000 located near a major city, the comments he received included the following:

> If you have a problem, teachers will try to help. They won't give up.

> The teachers help after school and work with you.

> There's always something to look forward to.

> Big computer lab.

There are different levels of math, reading, and spelling. You don't have to stay behind. You have your own pace. (Willis, 1986, p. 4)

Willis also described classrooms from the schools he visited during the 1985-86 selection. Following are some of his observations.

This school included grades K-5, with just under 400 students, 95% white, 8% from low-income families, located in a suburban community of <40,000. The building was constructed in 1952 with additions in 1954.

> Each classroom and adjacent corridors of the school were filled with displays of student work, posters relating to current units of study, and charts and lists of student achievements. In addition to the computers in the computer lab, there was a computer in each fifth-grade classroom (three) and one for each grade level, one through four (four). Each classroom had one typewriter for student use. Each had one or more globes. Shelf space under classroom windows was filled with books, learning kits, and reference materials. The daily schedule for classes and information relating to unit activities was on the chalkboards and/or newsprint. (Willis, 1986, pp. 2,3)

This school included grades K-6, with just under 600 students, 51% white, 40% Hispanic, and 8% black. One-third came from low-income families, in a small town of <25,000 near a major city.

> The school building was constructed in 1956. There were numerous displays of student work inside each classroom and on many adjacent corridor walls of the school. The rooms had moveable student chairs and desks arranged in different ways from room to room. Most had one or more tables for small group and other work. All had screens for visual projections, pull-down maps, and charts. Most had at least one globe--one room had seven globes of various sizes. Nearly every room had at least one typewriter, and one classroom had six typewriters of different makes and vintage. The computer laboratory, located in the Learning Center (library) had 11 computers and two printers. A number of other computers were on mobile carts and, with the exception of those in special education, moved from room to room as needed. (Willis, 1986, p. 3)

Post-Site Visit Review

The final step in the national selection process was the review of the site visit reports by the national panel. The site visitors' reports, the schools' applications, and notes regarding the interviews conducted were examined. If necessary, the site visitors met with the panel to clarify information or to answer specific questions. Prior to the final selection, all nominated schools were reviewed by the Office of Civil Rights to insure that the schools were in compliance with Federal civil rights laws. A recommendation was made to the Secretary of Education concerning the final list of schools to be considered for national recognition. The final list was based on evidence found during the site visits and how well these schools would serve as models for other schools to emulate (Wilson & Corcoran, 1987). During the first year of the Elementary School Recognition Program, 212 of the 257 schools who received site visits were recommended for national recognition.

National Recognition Ceremony

Following notification of their selection, recognized schools were invited to send their representatives to Washington, DC, to attend a luncheon and reception in their honor. The representatives were presented with the Secretary of Education's flag, a symbol of excellence in education, to display in their schools.

At the time of the first recognition ceremony in Washington in September, 1986, a report entitled "First Lessons: A Report on Elementary Education in America" was issued (Bennett, 1986). The report, prepared by Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett, with assistance from a 21-member Elementary Study Group, concluded that elementary schools were performing better than they had in previous years, but common problems in school organization and policy still existed. He

suggested that elementary schools adhere to fair but firm standards for students, and that students be required to meet minimal academic standards when given time to do so. Bennett also suggested that businesses assist elementary schools in producing higher quality students through increased funding. He noted that the primary responsibility for teaching children self-discipline rested with the home, but that teachers and administrators must be given the authority to act accordingly to preserve order in schools. Preserving order within the schools would be accomplished through a code of conduct that was clearly understood by both students and parents. Additional recommendations in "First Lessons" related to drugs, class size, textbooks, kindergarten, special education, gifted education, minority students, and the English language. Bennett concluded that parents, local officials, educators, and others must realize that elementary education is no less important than secondary education and, because education is a lifelong process, the elementary school provides the critical beginning to a student's education.

<div align="center">Other Program Considerations</div>

Throughout the history of the Secondary and Elementary School Recognition Programs there have been resolved issues that have affected the process and selection. Five of those issues were addressed upon review of the first 3 years of the Secondary School Recognition Program. They included:

1. Creation of a national program,

2. Definition of "unusually successful,"

3. Promoting quality and progress,

4. Common forms for all schools, and

5. Lack of feedback to schools not selected for recognition.

The following discussion addresses the views of the recognition staff concerning these issues.

Creation of a National Program

It was noted that the quality of the application pool from which the recognized schools were selected was dependent on the decisions made by the chief state school officers. The recognition staff continued to work closely with state liaisons to insure that the goals of the program were accurately communicated. As the program continued, the states were able to assess their past selections and improve the state recognition process.

Definition of "Unusually Successful"

In both the Elementary and Secondary Programs, the recognition staff was explicit that the review process was neither scientific nor objective. Nor did the staff claim to have identified the "best" schools. The recognition program has resisted any formal rules for the selection of schools. Instead, the staff relied on the professional judgments of individuals involved in the state selection process, the pre-site visit review, the site visits, and the post-site visit review. The criteria that influenced the judgment of those involved were as follows:

1.   An effort was made to avoid an overly developed model for effective schools. The idea presented was that successful schools were responsive to their communities.

2.   Site visitors were particularly attuned to any discrepancies noted in the interviews conducted. If contradictory statements were made about the school, the school was unlikely to be selected for recognition.

3.   If the climate and atmosphere of the school did not provide opportuni-
ties for all children to experience success, particularly those with the greatest need,
the school was not recognized.

4.   Honesty was a virtue to the site visitors. Schools that expressed the
problems they had faced were admired, whereas those schools that indicated there
were no obstacles to overcome were met with skepticism.

5.   Successful schools provided a documented and consistent record. Data
over a period of time indicated positive or stable trends.

Promoting Quality and Progress

The question of whether to recognize schools that had the best programs or
schools that had shown improvement over their past remained unanswered. Selec-
tions from the early years of the program indicated that the recognized schools were
those that had exhibited excellence. In recent selections, a better balance existed.
The recognition staff noted that to define improvement was not a simple task. It
appeared that improving schools had to provide more proof of their improvement
than good schools did of their goodness.

Common Form for All Schools

One concern related to the use of a common form for all schools. According
to the staff, the nomination form and the site-visit reports were open-ended enough
to allow the schools to emphasize their unique characteristics. The program struc-
ture provided sufficient flexibility for the whole picture to be viewed clearly.

Lack of Feedback to Schools That Were not Recognized

The recognition programs have done an excellent job in selecting and recog-
nizing schools that were unusually successful. The least effective part of the

programs has been in promoting excellence in the schools that were not recognized. The recognition staff has been asked on occasion to justify why a particular school was not selected, and the answer required personalized feedback about the concerns raised by the panel or site visitors. In some instances, the feedback has brought about change in the schools. Two efforts were underway to provide additional feedback. First, the Secretary of Education sponsored yearly regional conferences where recognized schools explained their practices, and second, an exemplary practices handbook was prepared, which described the practices and programs of recognized schools and listed contact people from each school who could provide interested parties with additional information (Corcoran & Wilson, 1986).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the history of the Elementary School Recognition Program and to describe the selection process involved. The study also identified the characteristics of Alabama schools chosen to represent the state in the national program. In addition, the study looked at selected and non-selected schools to determine whether there were significant differences that could be identified between the two groups.

The procedures followed in the study are described in this chapter. The first section describes the population sample used in the study, the second section presents the data-gathering instruments, and the final section explains the procedures used for data analysis.

Research Questions

The study was driven by the following research questions:

1. To what extent were common characteristics in the areas of administrative leadership, curriculum, instruction, teaching environment, student environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, and organizational vitality evident in Alabama exemplary schools?

2.   To what extent were differences in the areas of administrative leader-ship, curriculum, instruction, teaching environment, student environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, and organizational vitality evident between selected and non-selected schools?

3.   What demographic factors (such as school location, socioeconomic status as determined by free/reduced priced meal eligibility, number of students, number of administrators, classroom teacher-pupil ratio, other support personnel, school cluster type, school organization, percentage of local revenue available for schools, percentage of certified personnel holding advanced degrees, average daily attendance, and the number of computers available for students) described the selected schools?

4.   To what extent were differences in demographic factors (such as school location, socioeconomic status of the school as determined by free/reduced price meal eligibility, number of students, number of administrators, classroom teacher-pupil ratio, other support personnel, school cluster type, school organization, percentage of local revenue available for schools, percentage of certified personnel holding advanced degrees, average daily attendance, and the number of computers available for students) evident between selected and non-selected schools?

Foreshadowed Question

The interviews conducted in conjunction with the study addressed the follow-ing foreshadowed question: What impact has receiving the National Elementary School Recognition Program Award had on the subsequent quality of schooling received by students?

Description of the Population

The population sample for this study was composed of 28 schools that applied for the Elementary School Recognition Program for Alabama. From these 28 schools, 14 were a part of county school systems, and the remaining 14 schools were from city school systems. Schools from 17 different school systems were represented in the study. A comprehensive breakdown of school characteristics is discussed in Chapter IV.

Data-Gathering Instruments

Three data-gathering instruments were used in this study. The United States Department of Education Elementary School Recognition Program Alabama Judges Form was provided by the United States Department of Education (see Appendix C) for use by the individuals selected to judge the schools' applications for the program. The rating form is based on the seven criteria of leadership, teaching environment, curriculum and instruction, student environment, parent and community support, outcome indicators, and organizational vitality. These criteria corresponded with the original application submitted by each school. The reliability and validity of this instrument has not been field-tested; however, Barbara Greenberg, a member of the Blue Ribbon Schools staff in Washington, DC, addressed the following points when asked about the rating instrument:

1.   The form has undergone only minor changes in the 6-year history of the Elementary School Recognition Program. It focuses on conditions for effective learning.

2.   The seven criteria have remained constant since the inception of the program.

3.   Statistical data such as standardized achievement test scores are used as a part of the original school application.

4.   The three-step review process (state level review, pre-site visit review, and the site visit review) involved experts and has proved effective for selecting excellent schools (B. Greenberg, United States Department of Education, Washington, DC, personal communication, July 24, 1991).

Judges were chosen from past state recognized schools and business and parent organization leaders to select the schools to represent Alabama in the national program. There were four judges for the 1989-90 selection. They met for 3 days to examine the applications. After the applications had been reviewed, the judges ratings were tallied to determine the schools that would be chosen to represent Alabama in the Elementary School Recognition Program.

The "Annual Status Report on the Condition of Education: System Reports" is a document that is provided annually to each state school system. It contains information on demographics, revenues, and expenditures. It also contains the performance measures that include standardized and state-administered achievement test results. From the Annual Status Report, the results for the performance measures were separated by schools in the system. These reports provided demographic information, such as student population, number of teachers and administrators, additional personnel present, and the grades contained in the school (see Appendix E).

The third instrument used in data gathering was the interview form for principals and teachers from schools that had applied for the program. A copy of the interview questions is found in Appendix F.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data found using the United States Department of Education Elementary School Recognition Program Alabama Judges Form and the "Annual Status Report on the Condition of Education: System Reports." Means and percentages described individual criterion and the demographic data taken from the Annual Status Reports. Qualitative methods were used for the interview process. No attempt was made to quantify the interview data; rather, it was summarized. Specific tables and figures for the corresponding data are found in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSES OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the characteristics of exemplary Alabama schools as identified by the Elementary School Recognition Program and to determine whether differences existed between selected and non-selected schools. The characteristics identified by the Elementary School Recognition Program were administrative leadership, curriculum and instruction, teaching environment, student environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, and organizational vitality. These data were gathered from the Alabama Judges Forms.

Attempts also were made to determine demographic factors that described selected schools and to examine whether there were differences in demographic factors between selected and non-selected schools. The demographic factors examined were school location, socioeconomic status of the school as determined by free/reduced price meal eligibility, number of students, number of administrators, pupil-teacher ratio, other support personnel, school cluster type, school organization, percentage of local revenue available for schools, percentage of certified personnel holding advanced degrees, average daily attendance, and the number of computers for students. These data were gathered from the Annual Status Reports.

Interviews were conducted to obtain additional qualitative data that could not be extracted from the Alabama Judges' Forms or the Annual Status Reports. Participants from four schools were queried about the application process, changes that have occurred since applying, and benefits derived from the program.

Chapter IV contains analyses of data gathered from the Alabama Judges' Forms and the Annual Status Reports. It also contains responses from interviews conducted for the study.

Analyses of Data

Research Question One: To what extent were common characteristics in the areas of administrative leadership, curriculum and instruction, teaching environment, student environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, and organizational vitality evident in Alabama exemplary schools?

The Alabama Judges Forms yielded data for research questions one and two. The characteristics identified by the Alabama Judges' Forms corresponded to the narrative application completed by each school. Table 2 contains mean scores from the Alabama Judges' Forms for all selected schools from the 1989-90 and 1991-92 selections. The data in Table 2 reveal that 1989-90 selected schools gathered 87.5% of the total points possible in the area of administrative leadership, and selected schools in 1991-92 received 82.1% of the possible points. Selected schools from 1989-90 indicated 91.62% of all possible points in teaching environment, whereas selected schools from 1991-92 acquired 79.77% of the possible points. In the area of curriculum and instruction, 1989-90 selected schools received 95.32% of the available points, and selected 1991-92 schools acquired 75.33% of the total possible points. Selected schools from 1989-90 exhibited 89.9% of all possible points, and 1991-92 selected schools showed 76.84% of the possible points in the category of

Table 2

Characteristics of Selected Alabama Exemplary Schools 1989-90, 1991-92

Category	1989-90 selected schools			1991-92 selected schools		
	X score	Possible points	%	X score	Possible points	%
Leadership	8.75	10	87.5	8.21	10	82.10
Teaching environment	32.07	35	91.62	27.92	35	79.77
Curriculum & instruction	47.61	50	95.32	52.75	70	75.33
Student environment	35.96	40	89.90	38.42	50	76.84
Parent & community support	23.86	25	95.44	20.08	25	80.32
Quality indicators	23.54	25	94.16	21.13	30	70.43
Organizational vitality	32.89	35	93.97	15.75	20	78.75
Other (special emphasis)	8.36	10	83.60	8.08	10	80.80
Totals	212.69	230	92.48	192.34	250	76.94

N=15

student environment. For parent and community support, 1989-90 selected schools received 95.44% of all points possible, whereas 1991-92 selected schools received 80.32% of all possible points. Selected schools from the 1989-90 selection gathered 94.16% of the total possible points in the area of quality indicators, and selected 1991-92 schools had 70.43% of all available points. In the category of organizational vitality, 1989-90 selected schools acquired 93.97% of the possible points, and 1991-92 selected schools were given 78.75% of the possible points. Selected schools in 1989-90 received 92.48% of the possible points in the area of special emphasis, whereas selected schools in 1991-92 had 76.94%. For 1989-90, selected schools received 92.48% of the 230 possible points. Selected schools in 1991-92 received 76.94% of the 250 possible points.

Overall, the results from Table 2 indicated that 1989-90 selected schools received a higher percentage of available points in each of the eight categories. The least amount of difference between the two selections was found in the categories of administrative leadership (5.4%) and special emphasis (2.8%). However, in the categories of teaching environment, curriculum and instruction, student environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, and organizational vitality, the differences between selected schools from the two selections ranged from 11.85% in teaching environment to 23.73% in the category of quality indicators. The average difference in these six categories was 13.50%. The greatest differences between schools in the two selections were evident in the categories of quality indicators (23.73%) and curriculum and instruction (19.89%).

No comparisons could be made between the 1989-90 and the 1991-92 selected schools using mean scores because the total possible points in four of the eight categories and the total points available were different.

Table 3 contains mean scores of 1989-90 selected schools for each of the eight categories. The table is broken down by selected city schools and selected county schools. Data from Table 3 show that 1989-90 selected city schools received a mean score of 9.06, and selected county schools received a mean score of 8.33 in the area of administrative leadership. In the category of teaching environment, selected city schools had a mean score of 31.81, whereas selected county schools showed a mean score of 32.42. Selected city schools exhibited a mean score of 48.25 in curriculum and instruction, and selected county schools received a mean score of 46.75. In the area of student environment, selected city schools had a mean score of 37.25, and selected county schools received a mean score of 34.25. Selected city schools were given a mean score of 24.19 in parent and community support, whereas county selected schools had a mean score of 23.42. In the category of quality indicators, selected city schools received a mean score of 24.06, and selected county schools received a mean score of 22.83. Selected city schools showed a mean score of 33.25 in the area of organizational vitality, and selected county schools indicated a mean score of 31.58. In the area of special emphasis, selected city schools had a mean score of 8.18, whereas selected county schools received a mean score of 8.58. Selected city schools had a total mean score of 216.06, and selected county schools had a total mean score of 208.16.

Table 3

Characteristics of Selected City and County Schools (1989-90)

Characteristics	City schools X score	County schools X score	All schools X score	Possible points
Leadership	9.06	8.83	8.75	10
Teaching environment	31.81	32.42	32.07	35
Curriculum & instruction	48.25	46.75	47.61	50
Student environment	37.25	34.25	35.95	40
Parent & community support	24.19	23.42	23.86	25
Quality indicators	24.06	22.83	23.54	25
Organizational vitality	33.25	31.58	32.54	35
Other (special emphasis)	8.19	8.58	8.36	10
Total	216.06	208.16	212.69	230

N=7

The results from Table 3 indicated that 1989-90 selected city schools received more points than selected county schools in six of eight categories. The selected county schools received slightly more points in two categories, teaching environment and special emphasis. The greatest difference in points received between the two groups was evident in student environment (3 points). The 1989-90 selected city and county schools showed the greatest degree of similarity in the category of parent and community support.

Table 4 shows the breakdown of selected schools for 1991-92 by city and county school systems for each characteristic. The figures from Table 4 indicate that 1991-92 selected city schools received a mean score of 9.33, and selected county schools received a mean score of 7.53 in administrative leadership. In teaching environment, selected city schools had a mean score of 28.33, whereas selected county schools showed a mean score of 27.67. Selected city schools exhibited a mean score of 58.33 in curriculum and instruction, and selected county schools received a mean score of 49.40. In student environment, selected city schools had a mean score of 36.89, and selected county schools received a mean score of 39.33. Selected city schools were given a mean score of 21.22 in parent and community support, whereas county selected schools had a mean score of 19.40. In the category of quality indicators, selected city schools received a mean score of 23.78, and selected county schools received a mean score of 19.53. Selected city schools showed a mean score of 16.33 in the area of organizational vitality, and selected county schools indicated a mean score of 15.40. In the area of special emphasis, selected city schools had a mean score of 9, whereas selected county schools received a mean score of 7.53.

Table 4

Characteristics of Selected City and County Schools (1991-92)

Characteristics	City schools X score	County schools X score	All schools X score	Possible points
Leadership	9.33	7.53	8.21	10
Teaching environment	28.33	27.67	27.92	35
Curriculum & instruction	58.33	49.90	52.75	70
Student environment	36.89	39.33	38.42	50
Parent & community support	21.22	19.40	20.08	25
Quality indicators	23.78	19.53	21.13	30
Organizational vitality	16.33	15.40	15.75	20
Other (special emphasis)	9.00	7.53	8.08	10
Total	203.21	185.79	192.34	250

N=8

Selected city schools had a total mean score of 203.21, and selected county schools had a total mean score of 185.79.

The results from Table 4 indicated that 1991-92 selected city schools received more points than selected county schools in seven of eight categories. The selected county schools received more points in one category, student environment. The two groups showed the most similarity in the category of teaching environment. In the categories of administrative leadership, curriculum and instruction, parent and community support, quality indicators, organizational vitality, and special emphasis, the differences between selected city and county schools ranged from .93 points in organizational vitality to 8.43 points in the category of curriculum and instruction. The greatest discrepancy was indicated in the category of curriculum and instruction.

> Research Question Two: To what extent were differences in the areas of administrative leadership, curriculum and instruction, teaching environment, student environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, and organizational vitality evident between selected and non-selected schools?

Data from the Alabama Judges' Forms also provided information related to research question two. Table 5 contains the differences in school characteristics between selected and non-selected schools. In 1989-90, 20 schools were considered for selection. Seven of these schools were selected to represent Alabama in the Elementary School Recognition Program. The selected schools exhibited a mean score for leadership of 8.75, and non-selected schools had a mean score of 7.88 of 10 possible points. In the category of teaching environment, selected schools recorded a mean score of 32.07, whereas non-selected schools indicated a mean score of 27.77 of 35 possible points. The seven selected schools showed a mean score of 47.61 in curriculum and instruction. The 13 non-selected schools had a mean score

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Table 5

Characteristics of Selected and Non-Selected Alabama Exemplary Schools (1989-90)

Characteristics	Selected schools		Non-selected schools	
	X score	Possible	X score	Possible
Leadership	8.75	10	7.88	10
Teaching environment	32.07	35	27.77	35
Curriculum & instruction	47.61	50	39.44	50
Student environment	35.96	40	32.42	40
Parent & community support	23.86	25	20.62	25
Quality indicators	23.54	25	20.79	25
Organizational vitality	32.54	35	27.56	35
Other (special emphasis)	8.36	10	6.83	10
Total	212.69	230	183.31	230

N=20

of 39.44 of 50 possible points. Selected schools had a mean score of 35.96 of 40 possible points in student environment, whereas non-selected schools showed a mean score of 32.42 points. In parent and community support, selected schools reported a mean score of 23.86, whereas non-selected schools indicated a mean score of 20.62 points from 25 possible points. Selected schools had a mean score of 23.54 in the category of quality indicators, and non-selected schools received a mean score of 20.79 points of 25 possible points. In organizational vitality, selected schools showed a mean score of 32.54 points. Non-selected schools received a mean score of 27.56 points of 35 possible points. Selected schools showed a mean score of 8.36 in the other (special emphasis) category, whereas non-selected schools had a mean score of 6.83 points of 10 points for the same category. Selected schools in 1989-90 received a total mean score of 212.69, and county schools received a total mean score of 183.31 points of 230 possible points.

The data from Table 5 showed that selected schools received more points in each of the eight categories. The most notable difference between selected and non-selected schools was found in curriculum and instruction (8.17 points). The two groups exhibited the greatest degree of similarity in the category of administrative leadership. For all eight categories, the average point difference was 3.67 points.

No comparisons between selected and non-selected schools can be made for the 1991-92 selection because all of the schools that met eligibility criteria were selected. Seven schools applied in 1991-92 and failed to meet all eligibility criteria. Those seven schools were not described in this study because they were not eligible to be judged.

Research Question Three: What demographic factors (such as school location, socioeconomic status of the school as defined by free/reduced price meal eligibility, number of students, number of administrators, pupil-teacher ratio, other support personnel, school cluster type, school organization, percent of local revenue available for schools, percent of advanced degrees held by certified personnel, average daily attendance, and number of computers available for students) described selected schools?

The Annual Status Reports yielded data related to research questions three and four. From the 1989-90 and the 1991-92 selections, 15 schools were selected to represent Alabama in the Elementary School Recognition Program. Twenty-four percent of the students in selected Alabama schools were eligible to receive free/reduced price meals. The average selected school housed 614 students, with a mean of 1.57 administrators for each school. This group of schools reported approximately 20.6 students for each teacher. There was a mean of 6.53 for other support personnel employed at each of the selected schools. Selected schools were part of school systems that generated a mean of 24.92% of their revenues from local efforts. Over 95% of the students in selected schools attended school daily. For the 15 schools in this group, the mean percent of certified personnel who completed advanced degrees was 63.29. Regarding computers for students in selected schools, there was an average of 28 computers for each school. Of the 15 selected schools, 7 were part of city school systems, and 8 were county schools.

School cluster types were the groupings that were organized by the Alabama State Department of Education. Eight school system clusters were developed based on socioeconomic levels, academic and ability levels of students, financial resources available, and the size of the school system in a city or county. The following school cluster type distribution was evident for all selected schools:

Cluster one small - 1 school,

Cluster one large - 7 schools,

Cluster two large - 4 schools,

Cluster three large - 1 school,

Cluster two small - 1 school,

Cluster three small - 1 school,

Cluster four small - 0 schools, and

Cluster four large - 0 schools.

School organization denoted grade levels contained in a school. Although many organizational patterns existed for Alabama schools, seven patterns were evident in this study, four of which were predominant in selected schools. The first organizational pattern in selected schools was kindergarten through sixth grade. Three selected schools exhibited this pattern. The second pattern reported was kindergarten through fifth grade. Nine of the 15 selected schools indicated this pattern. The third pattern shown was kindergarten through third grade, and two selected schools reported this pattern. The fourth pattern was kindergarten through second grade. One selected school was organized in this manner. No schools with the organizational patterns of kindergarten through fourth grade, kindergarten through eighth grade, fifth, or sixth grade were selected.

Research Question Four: To what extent were differences in demographic factors (such as school location, socioeconomic status of the school as defined by free/reduced price meal eligibility, number of students, number of administrators, pupil-teacher ratio, other support personnel, school cluster type, school organization, percent of local revenue available for schools, percent of advanced degrees held by certified personnel, average daily attendance, and number of computers available for students) evident between selected and non-selected schools?

Data from the Annual Status Reports also provided information related to research question four. Table 6 shows the comparisons between selected and non-selected schools in the study.

The figures from Table 6 were analyzed by individual demographic factors, and the findings are presented in Tables 7-18. The first demographic factor analyzed was school location, city or county. Table 7 differentiates selected and non-selected schools based on school location. In the 1989-90 selection, 11 (55%) of the schools applying for the Elementary School Recognition Program were from city school systems, and 9 (45%) were from county school systems. Of the 20 applications submitted in 1989-90, 7 (35%) were selected. From these selected applications, 4 (57.1%) were city schools, and 3 (42.9%) were county schools. For the 1991-92 selection, three (37.5%) schools were part of city school systems, and 5 (62.5%) were from county school systems. It should be noted that in 1991-92, 7 schools that applied for the Elementary School Recognition Program failed to meet the eligibility criteria and were not considered for the program. Those seven schools were not treated in the population group for the study. Of those schools, four were from city school systems, and three were a part of county school systems.

The second demographic factor examined was socioeconomic status, defined as the percentage of students in each school eligible to receive free/reduced price meals. Table 8 shows the comparison of selected and non-selected schools based on socioeconomic status.

For the 1989-90 selection, selected city schools reported that 36.75% of their students were eligible for free/reduced price meals. Non-selected city schools reported that 24.43% of their students were eligible to receive free/reduced price

Table 6

Comparison of Demographic Factors for Selected and Non-Selected Schools
(1989-90, 1991-92)

Demographic factors	Selected schools		Non-selected schools	
	X	Mdn.	X	Mdn.
Free/reduced price meals	24%		29.08%	
Number of students	614	521	676	551
Number of administrators	1.57	1.5	1.46	1
Pupil-teacher ratio	21:1	20:1	23:1	23:1
Support personnel	7	5	5	4
Percent of local support	24.92%		21.32%	
Average daily attendance	95.57%		96.05%	
Certified personnel holding advanced degrees	63.29%		57.11%	
Number of computers for students	28		20	
City schools	7		7	
County schools	8		6	
School cluster type:				
One small	1		1	
One large	7		1	
Two large	4		6	
Three large	1		2	
Two small	1		3	
Three small	1		0	
Four small	0		0	
Four large	0		0	

Table 6 (cont'd)

Demographic factors	Selected schools X	Mdn.	Non-selected schools X	Mdn.
School organization:				
K-6	3		3	
K-5	9		6	
K-3	2		0	
K-6	0		1	
5-6	0		1	
K-2	1		1	
K-4	0		1	
K-8	0		1	

N=28

Table 7

School Location of Selected and Non-Selected Schools
(1989-90, 1991-92)

System	1989-90 No.	%	1991-92 No.	%	Total
Selected schools					
City	4	57.1	3	42.9	7
County	3	37.5	5	62.5	8
Total	7		8		15
Non-Selected Schools					
City	7	35	0	0	7
County	6	30	0	0	6
Total	13				13
Grand total	20		8		28

Table 8

Free/Reduced Price Meal Eligibility for Selected and Non-Selected Schools
(1989-90, 1991-92)

System	1989-90 X%	1991-92 X%
Selected schools		
City	36.75	27
County	15	17.4
Non-Selected Schools		
City	24.43	0
County	34.50	0
Total selected	24	
Total non-selected	29.08	

N = 28

meals. Selected county schools indicated that 15% of the students were eligible for free/reduced price meals, whereas non-selected county schools showed 34.5% of the students were eligible for free/reduced price meals.

For the 1991-92 selection, selected city schools indicated that 27% of the students were eligible for free/reduced price meals and selected county schools reported 17.4% of their students eligible for free/reduced price meals. For all selected schools for both selections, 24% of the students were eligible for free/reduced price meals. For all non-selected schools for both selections, 29.08% of the students were eligible for free/reduced price meals.

The figures from Table 8 showed that the percentage of students in non-selected county schools who were eligible to receive free/reduced price meals in

1989-90 was more than twice that of selected county schools. Almost one-third more students were eligible to receive free/reduced price meals in 1989-90 selected city schools than in non-selected city schools. Selected city schools indicated almost two and one-half times as many eligible students than selected county schools in 1989-90.

The third demographic comparison between selected and non-selected schools was the number of students in each school. The results are found in Table 9.

Table 9

Number of Students in Selected and Non-Selected Schools
(1989-90, 1991-92)

System	1989-90 No. of Students	No. of Schools	1991-92 No. of Students	No. of Schools	Total
Selected schools					
City	433	4	427	3	7
County	752	3	789	5	8
Non-Selected Schools					
City	556	7	0	0	7
County	815	6	0	0	6
Total selected	614	15			
Total non-selected	676	13			
X total for all schools	643				

N=28

The mean number of students for selected schools in the 1989-90 selection was 433 students per school, and non-selected city schools reported 556 students. County schools during the 1989-90 selection indicated a mean of 752 students in selected schools and 815 in non-selected schools.

In the 1991-92 selection, selected city schools reported a mean of 427 students, and selected county schools showed 789 students. For both the 1989-90 and 1991-92 selections, selected schools had a mean of 614 students, and non-selected schools reported a mean of 676 students. For all schools for both selections the mean number of students was 643.

The results from Table 9 indicated that selected county schools housed almost twice as many students as selected city schools and that student enrollment in non-selected county schools was one and one-half times greater than student enrollment in non-selected city schools. Both selected city and county schools reported consistent student enrollments over the two selections.

The fourth demographic comparison was based on the number of administrators in selected and non-selected schools. Table 10 describes the mean and median number of administrators for selected and non-selected schools for both the 1989-90 and 1991-92 selections.

The figures found in Table 10 show that selected city schools in 1989-90 had a mean of 1.38 administrators per school, whereas selected county schools for the same selection reported a mean of 1.67 administrators. In 1991-92, the mean number of administrators per selected city school was one, and the mean for selected county schools was two. For all selected schools the mean number of administrators reported was 1.57. Non-selected city schools in 1989-90 indicated a mean number of administrators of 1.29, and non-selected county schools reported a mean of 1.67. The mean number of administrators for all non-selected schools was 1.46.

Overall, county schools indicated one-half to one administrator more than city schools in both selected and non-selected schools. Because county schools reported

more students than city schools in both selected and non-selected schools, a higher number of administrators would seem appropriate. The number of administrators for both selected and non-selected city and county schools appears to respond to reported average enrollments.

Table 10

Number of Administrators in Selected and Non-Selected Schools
(1989-90, 1991-92)

Systems	1989-90		1991-92	
	X	Mdn.	X	Mdn.
Selected schools				
City	1.38	1.25	1.00	1.0
County	1.67	1.5	2.00	2.0
Non-selected schools				
City	1.29	1.0	0.00	
County	2.00	1.5	0.00	
Total selected = 1.57				
Total non-selected = 1.46				

N=28

The fifth demographic factor examined was pupil-teacher ratio, the number of students per classroom teacher. Table 11 shows the pupil-teacher ratio for selected and non-selected schools for 1989-90 and 1991-92.

Data from Table 11 indicate that selected city schools from 1989-90 had a mean of 18.65 students for each teacher. Selected county schools had a mean of 23.23 students per teacher. In 1991-92, selected city schools reported a mean of

17.67 students per teacher, whereas selected county schools showed a mean of 22.36

students for each teacher. The mean for all selected schools was 20.61 students.

Table 11

Pupil-Teacher Ratio in Selected and Non-Selected Schools (1989-90, 1991-92)

Systems	1989-90		1991-92	
	X	Mdn.	X	Mdn.
Selected schools				
City	19:1	19:1	18:1	17:1
County	23:1	23:1	22:1	22:1
Non-selected schools				
City	22:1	22:1	0.00	
County	25:1	25:1	0.00	
Total selected = 21:1				
Total non-selected = 23:1				
Total for all schools = 22:1				

N=28

For 1989-90, non-selected city schools indicated a mean of 21.76 students per

teacher, and non-selected county schools showed a mean of 24.53 students per

teacher. The non-selected school mean was 23.04 students, and the mean for all

schools in the study was 21.74 students per teacher.

The pupil-teacher ratio for selected city and county schools showed little

variation over the two selections. Both groups reported an equal decrease in the

number of students per teacher in 1991-92. However, selected city schools reported

a noticeably lower pupil-teacher ratio than selected county schools in both 1989-90

and 1991-92. Both non-selected city and county schools indicated two to three more students per teacher than selected city and county schools for 1989-90.

The sixth demographic factor was additional support personnel employed. These individuals are both certified and non-certified personnel who are involved in the instructional program but are not classified as classroom teachers. Table 12 shows the comparison of support personnel between selected and non-selected personnel.

Table 12 shows that selected city schools for 1989-90 reported a mean of 8.38 additional support personnel, and selected county schools had a mean of 4.8 support personnel. For 1991-92, selected schools indicated a mean of 5.23 support personnel, and selected county schools reported a mean of 6.88. The mean for all selected schools was 6.53 additional support personnel.

Non-selected city schools for 1989-90 had a mean of 4.03, whereas non-selected county schools showed a mean of 6.1 additional support personnel. For all non-selected schools in the study the mean was 4.98. The mean for all the schools was 5.81 additional support personnel employed.

The figures from Table 12 showed a difference between the mean and median scores for both selected city and county schools from both selections. The differences were a result of a wide range in the numbers of support personnel employed in the schools. The greatest discrepancy was noted in the 1989-90 selected city schools group. The mean score reported was 8.38, while the median score was four. The range in this group was from 2 to 24 additional support personnel employed. When using the median scores, selected city and county schools in 1989-90 were similar in the number of additional support personnel employed. In 1991-92,

Table 12

Support Personnel in Selected and Non-Selected Schools (1989-90, 1991-92)

Systems	1989-90		1991-92	
	X	Mdn.	X	Mdn.
Selected schools				
City	8	4	5	7
County	5	4	7	5
Non-selected schools				
City	4	4	0.00	
County	6	7	0.00	
Total selected = 7				
Total non-selected = 5				
Total for all schools = 6				

N=28

selected city schools employed slightly more support personnel than selected county schools. Non-selected schools employed an equal or greater number of support personnel than selected schools.

The next demographic factor examined was school cluster types. A school cluster is a division created by the Alabama State Department of Education, representing a homogeneous group of school districts based on the socioeconomic condition of the community served by the school system and the size of the school system. There were eight clusters of school systems, representing four categories of economic condition, each of which was divided into large and small systems with similar economic conditions. Table 13 shows the breakdown of school cluster types for selected and non-selected schools.

Table 13

School Cluster Types for Selected and Non-Selected Schools (1989-90, 1991-92)

Cluster type	No. of city	No. of county	Total	No. of city	No. of county	Total
	1989-90 selected schools			1991-92 selected schools		
One small	0	0	0	1	0	1
One large	2	1	3	0	4	4
Two large	0	2	2	1	1	2
Three large	1	0	1	0	0	0
Two small	0	0	0	1	0	1
Three small	1	0	1	0	0	0
Four small	0	0	0	0	0	0
Four large	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1989-90 Non-selected schools			1991-92 Non-selected schools		
One small	1	0	1	0	0	0
One large	0	1	1	0	0	0
Two large	1	5	6	0	0	0
Three large	2	0	2	0	0	0
Two small	3	0	3	0	0	0
Three small	0	0	0	0	0	0
Four small	0	0	0	0	0	0
Four large	0	0	0	0	0	0

N=28

The data from Table 13 indicated that selected city and county schools reported similar school cluster type distributions from both selections. Almost three-fourths of the selected schools were from large school systems. A noticeable difference was evident between selected and non-selected city schools. More than one-half of the non-selected city schools were from small school systems. Non-selected county schools and selected county schools reported similar school cluster distributions. Overall, over 60% of the schools in this study were a part of large school systems.

The eighth demographic factor examined was school organization. School organization referred to the grades in a school. Table 14 shows a comparison of school organizational patterns for selected and non-selected schools.

The figures from Table 14 indicate that in 1989-90, selected city schools reported the following school organizational patterns: grades K-5--three schools and grades K-2--one school. Selected county schools for 1989-90 showed organizational patterns of grades K-6--one school and grades K-5--two schools. For 1991-92, selected city schools reported two schools that had grades K-5 and one school with grades K-3. Selected county schools for 1991-92 had two schools with grades K-6, two schools with grades K-5, and one school that reported grades K-3. No selected schools reported school organizational patterns of grades 5-6, grades K-4, or grades K-8.

For 1989-90, non-selected city schools showed the following organizational patterns: grades K-5--three schools, grades 5-6--one school, grades K-2--one school, grades K-4--one school, and K-8--one school. The non-selected county schools were organized by the following patterns: grades K-6--three schools, and grades K-5--

Table 14

School Organizational Patterns in Selected and Non-Selected Schools (1989-90, 1991-92)

Grade levels	1989-90 selected schools			1991-92 selected schools		
	No. of city	No. of county	Total	No. of city	No. of county	Total
K-6	0	1	1	0	2	2
K-5	3	2	5	2	2	4
K-3	0	0	0	1	1	2
5-6	0	0	0	0	0	0
K-2	1	0	1	0	0	0
K-4	0	0	0	0	0	0
K-8	0	0	0	0	0	0

Grade levels	1989-90 Non-selected schools			1991-92 Non-selected schools		
	No. of city	No. of county	Total	No. of city	No. of county	Total
K-6	0	3	3	0	0	0
K-5	3	3	6	0	0	0
K-3	0	0	0	0	0	0
5-6	1	0	1	0	0	0
K-2	1	0	1	0	0	0
K-4	1	0	1	0	0	0
K-8	1	0	1	0	0	0

N=28

three schools. The only school organizational pattern not reported by non-selected schools was K-3.

The results from Table 14 showed that selected city and county schools were organized similarly. The majority of the schools in both groups were schools which reported either grades K-5 or K-6. Non-selected schools from 1989-90 also exhibited the same organizational patterns. Kindergarten through fifth-grade schools and K-6 grade schools accounted for almost 70% of all the schools in the study.

Another demographic comparison was made based on the amount of local support available for schools. The comparison was made using the percentage of the school system's total budget derived from local efforts. Table 15 shows the percentage of local support for selected and non-selected schools. The data from Table 15 show that for the 1989-90 selection the four city schools were from systems that reported a mean local support of 29.68%. Non-selected city schools showed a mean local support of 21.67%. The three selected county schools from 1989-90 reported a mean of 16.4%, whereas non-selected county schools indicated a mean local support of 17.4%.

For the 1991-92 selection, selected city schools had a mean local support of 31.63%, and selected county schools had a mean of 22.32%. For both selections the 15 selected schools reported a mean local support of 25.1%. The 13 non-selected schools showed a mean local support of 21.04%. For all schools from both selections, the mean local support was 23.28%.

The data from Table 15 indicated that both selected and non-selected schools reported an increase in the percentage of funding available from local support. Selected county schools from 1991-92 exhibited a greater increase in local support

Table 15

Local Support for Selected and Non-Selected Schools (1989-90, 1991-92)

| System | 1989-90 | | 1991-92 | | |
	X%	No. of schools	X%	No. of schools	Total
Selected schools					
City	29.68	4	31.63	3	7
County	16.47	3	22.32	5	8
Total selected	25.10	7		8	15
Non-selected schools					
City	24.67	7	0	0	7
County	17.40	6	0	0	6
Total non-selected	21.04	13			13
Total for all schools = 23.28					

N=28

from the 1989-90 selection; however, even with the increase, a noticeable difference between selected city and county schools remained. While selected and non-selected county schools from 1989-90 showed similar percentages of local support, a discrepancy of more than 5% was noted between selected and non-selected city schools.

The tenth demographic comparison was based on the average daily attendance of students in selected and non-selected schools. Table 16 shows the mean percent of average daily attendance for selected and non-selected schools.

The figures from Table 16 indicate that in 1989-90 selected city schools had a mean average daily attendance of 95.73% and selected county schools reported a mean of 96.43%. In 1991-92, selected city schools showed a mean of 96.30%,

whereas selected county schools indicated a mean average daily attendance of 95.70%. For all selected schools, the mean average daily attendance was 95.67%.

Table 16

Average Daily Attendance for Selected and Non-Selected Schools (1989-90, 1991-92)

System	1989-90 X%	1991-92 X%
Selected schools		
City	95.73	96.30
County	96.43	95.70
Non-Selected Schools		
City	96.13	0.00
County	95.97	0.00

Total selected = 95.67
Total non-selected = 96.05
Total for all schools = 96.01

N=28

Non-selected city schools reported a mean average daily attendance of 96.13% and non-selected county schools showed a mean of 95.97%. The mean average daily attendance for all non-selected schools was 96.05%, and the mean for all schools was 96.01%.

Overall, selected and non-selected schools exhibited similar average daily attendance percentages. Non-selected schools reported a higher average daily attendance than selected schools. This could be attributed to the fact that non-selected schools had a larger student population. If the same number of absences occurred in both selected and non-selected schools, the average daily attendance

percentage in selected schools would be more adversely influenced. Non-selected schools housed more students who were eligible to receive free/reduced price meals, which could also account for a slightly higher average daily attendance in non-selected schools.

Another demographic comparison of selected and non-selected schools was based on the percentage of certified school personnel holding advanced degrees. Advanced degrees was defined as certification received above the Bachelor's level. Table 17 shows the mean percent of advanced degrees held by certified personnel in selected and non-selected schools.

The findings from the comparison of advanced degrees held by certified personnel in selected and non-selected schools indicated that 65.89% of the certified personnel in city schools completed certification above the Bachelor's level. In selected county schools, 61.67% of the certified personnel held advanced degrees. Non-selected city schools reported 57.99% of the certified personnel held advanced degrees, and non-selected county schools had 56.08% of the certified personnel with degrees above the Bachelor's level. The mean for all selected schools was 63.29%, whereas the mean for all non-selected schools was 57.11%. The mean for all schools of certified personnel with advanced degrees was 60.42%.

The findings from Table 17 indicate that 1989-90 selected city and county schools reported similar percentages of certified personnel with degrees above the Baccalaureate level. However, in 1991-92, a noticeable difference was found between the two groups. The greatest discrepancy between selected and non-selected schools was noted in non-selected county schools. Certified personnel in this group were less

Table 17

Percentage of Certified Personnel Holding Advanced Degrees in
Selected and Non-Selected Schools (1989-90, 1991-92)

System	1989-90 X%	1991-92 X%
Selected schools		
City	59.38	72.40
County	60.97	62.36
Non-selected schools		
City	57.99	0.00
County	56.08	0.00
Total selected = 63.29%		
Total non-selected = 57.11%		
Total for all schools = 60.42%		

N=28

likely to obtain a degree above the Baccalaureate level than any other group in the

study.   The final demographic factor examined was the number of computers

for students. Table 18 shows the mean number of computers from selected and non-

selected schools.

Data from Table 18 showed that selected city schools in 1989-90 reported a

mean of 23.75 computers for students, and selected county schools indicated a mean

of 14.33 computers.   In 1991-92, selected city schools showed a mean of 29

computers for students, and selected county schools had a mean of 39 computers.

The mean for all selected schools for both selections was 28 computers.

Non-selected city schools in 1989-90 had a mean of 15.44 computers for

students, and non-selected county schools had a mean of 24 computers. The mean

number of computers for students for non-selected schools was 20.15. All the schools in the study had a mean of 24.36 computers for students.

Table 18

Computers for Students in Selected and Non-Selected Schools (1989-90, 1991-92)

System	1989-90 X%	1991-92 X%
Selected schools		
City	23.75	29.00
County	14.33	39.00
Non-selected schools		
City	15.44	0.00
County	24.00	0.00
Total selected = 28.00		
Total non-selected = 20.15		
Total for all schools = 24.36		

N=28

The results from Table 18 indicated that selected city schools in 1989-90 reported almost two times as many computers for students than selected county schools. However, in 1991-92, selected county schools reported more computers for students than selected city schools. A noticeable discrepancy existed between non-selected city and county schools. Non-selected county schools showed over one and one-half more computers for students than non-selected city schools. Overall, selected schools reported almost eight more computers for students than non-selected schools.

Foreshadowed Question: What impact has receiving the Elementary School Recognition Program Award had on the subsequent quality of schooling received by students?

The interviews conducted provided data which were not evident from either the results of the Alabama Judges' Forms or the Annual Status Reports. Sample participants from four schools were questioned on various aspects of content and process, including the application process, benefits derived from the Elementary School Recognition Program, test scores, definitions of successful schools, factors that fostered recognition, and advice to prospective Elementary School Recognition Program applicants.

The first school was a suburban school that housed 651 students in kindergarten through third grade. The school employed a total of 34 teachers. All of the classes were self-contained. The school also housed an early childhood handicapped program. This school was a state recipient in 1985-86 and was also a national winner. The second school was part of an urban city school system. This school reported 16 classroom teachers for grades kindergarten through eighth grade. The school served approximately 400 students, with a racial composition mirroring that of the city--65% white, 35% black. All of the classes in this school were self-contained. The school also housed a district-wide trainable mentally retarded program for teenaged students. This school was a state winner in 1987-88 and also a national winner. The third school was an urban school with kindergarten through fifth grade that housed approximately 300 students. The school reported 15 classroom teachers, and all classes were self-contained. This school was selected in 1989-90 as a state winner. The fourth school was from a city school system that served under 5,000 students. The school had 25 teachers and 447 students in

kindergarten through second grade. All of the classes were self-contained. This school was a state winner in 1991-92.

Participants were questioned about the application process, the changes that have been made since the original application, and the benefits derived from being part of the program. The responses were related to the foreshadowed question. The data from the interviews follow.

A noted area that emerged from the interviews was administrative leadership. Principals in the schools exhibited various leadership styles. Two of the four principals appeared to be authoritative in their approach to management, whereas the other two principals seemed to provide more opportunities for teacher input in decision-making. All four of these principals had extensive knowledge of their instructional program, with most of the knowledge gained through regular classroom visits. The decision to apply for the Elementary School Recognition Program was initiated by the principal of each school and the school's faculty agreed. Teachers interviewed noted that the principal provided the necessary leadership throughout the application process.

The application process, according to those interviewed, provided awareness related to the school. Several participants explained that the process made them conscious of many areas such as school climate, expectations for students, and instructional practices. One teacher stated that the application process let the school's faculty know what everyone was doing in his/her classroom. Completing the application also kept school goals focused and clarified the school's strengths and weaknesses. Several participants compared the Elementary School Recognition Program application process to completing the application required for the Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools for accreditation. Although similarities existed between the two applications, those interviewed noted that the Elementary School Recognition Program application was more difficult because it asked for creative and innovative ideas.

The eligibility requirements of the Elementary School Recognition Program included test score criteria. All participant schools reported test scores above the state and national averages. One school noted that its test scores had been in the top 10 statewide for several years. Since recognition, test scores have remained above state and national averages. One school stated that test scores had risen for about 2 years and then leveled out.

While discussing test scores, a majority of those interviewed responded that test scores were one measurement of student progress; however, most felt that too much emphasis was being placed on test scores. One participant stated that test scores measured a certain body of knowledge, but the school's curriculum was not based only on test scores. Another participant said that test scores were very limited in what they could measure, particularly for at-risk learners. This individual noted that she did not put a lot of stock in the scores.

There were two aspects of the schools that participants felt made them a state or national winner. The first factor mentioned was parental involvement. One teacher stated that parents are not necessarily in the school every day, but when volunteers are needed, parents do not hesitate to serve. The second factor was the faculty of the school. One principal commented that teachers are at school long after the final bell rings and on weekends. She noted that the commitment of the faculty towards meeting the needs of children was a major factor in recognition.

Another individual noted the right combination of faculty: some experienced and others right out of college, but all of them willing to use their talents in a combination that created a successful learning environment for students.

According to those interviewed, a successful school exhibited many facets. One teacher discussed a learning environment designed for the child. Several participants noted that a successful school has happy learners where the school atmosphere is positive and everyone is respected. Some participants spoke of a successful school as a school that is flexible and yet held high expectation for the learners. One teacher spoke of being successful as leaving the school each day knowing that she had done everything for students.

Those interviewed noted that things have not remained the same since recognition. One school reported that they were using the whole language approach more than they had been when the school was recognized. Another commented that those instructional practices that worked 5 years ago (when the school was recognized) might not be effective today. Therefore, the school was constantly updating its instructional practices. Portfolio assessment of students was the latest innovation attempted in this school. Another school indicated that many things had changed since their recognition. The school had developed flexible scheduling for their library, began an enhancement lab for language arts, and the school had become one of seven state demonstration sites for physical education.

When asked what advice they would give prospective Elementary School Recognition Program applicants, the responses were similar. All of those interviewed encouraged other schools to apply for the program. They stated that the benefits of discovering valuable information about the school was worth the effort

regardless of whether or not the school was recognized. All participants noted the time commitment required to complete the application. One participant offered a word of caution for prospective applicants. She stated that before the school applied, to make sure that current practices were good for the students and that these practices and programs go above and beyond what an average school would do. Average schools do not get recognized.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze characteristics of exemplary Alabama schools as identified by the Elementary School Recognition Program and to determine whether differences existed between selected and non-selected schools. The characteristics examined were administrative leadership, curriculum and instruction, teaching environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, organizational vitality, and special emphasis. Data related to these characteristics were found using the Alabama Judges' Forms. The study also examined demographic factors exhibited by selected and non-selected schools. These demographic factors were extracted from the Alabama State Department of Education's Annual Status Reports. Additional qualitative data were gathered from interviews with principals and teachers whose schools had participated in the Elementary School Recognition Program.

The sample for the study was drawn from Alabama public schools that applied for the Elementary School Recognition Program in 1989-90 and 1991-92. Four research questions and one foreshadowed question were the basis for the study. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the findings related to school characteristics and demographic factors of selected and non-selected schools. Qualitative

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methods were used in the interview process. No attempt was made to quantify the interview responses, which were summarized.

Findings Related to Research Question One

> Research Question One: To what extent were common characteristics in the areas of administrative leadership, curriculum and instruction, teaching environment, student environment, parent and community support, quality indicators, and organizational vitality evident in Alabama exemplary schools?

In analyzing data related to research question one, it was noted that selected schools from 1989-90 received almost 15% more total points than 1991-92 selected schools. The 1989-90 selected schools received a higher percentage of points in each of the eight categories. The margin of difference for each category was:

Administrative leadership	+ 5.4%
Teaching environment	+ 11.85%
Curriculum and instruction	+ 19.89%
Student environment	+ 13.06%
Parent and community support	+ 15.12%
Quality indicators	+ 23.73%
Organizational vitality	+ 15.22%
Special emphasis	+ 2.8%

The selected city schools from each selection scored higher than selected county schools. In the 1989-90 selection, city schools received more points in six of eight categories and scored almost 8% higher than selected county schools. In 1991-92, city schools obtained a higher rating in seven of eight categories and scored approximately 17% higher than selected county schools. No comparisons could be

drawn between selected 1989-90 and 1991-92 schools using mean scores because each

category total and the total possible points were different.

Finding Related to Research Question Two

Research Question Two: To what extent were differences in the areas
of administrative leadership, curriculum and instruction, teaching
environment, student environment, parent and community support,
quality indicators, and organizational vitality evident between selected
and non-selected schools?

In analyzing data related to research question two, it was noted that selected

schools scored above non-selected schools in all eight categories. The two groups

exhibited the greatest similarity in the category of administrative leadership, whereas

a noticeable difference between selected and non-selected schools was found in

curriculum and instruction. The margin of difference between the two groups for

each of the eight categories were as follows:

Administrative leadership	+ 0.87 points
Teaching environment	+ 4.30 points
Curriculum and instruction	+ 8.17 points
Student environment	+ 3.54 points
Parents and community support	+ 3.24 points
Quality indicators	+ 2.75 points
Organizational vitality	+ 4.98 points
Special emphasis	+ 1.53 points
Total points	+29.38 points

The only comparison between selected and non-selected schools that could

be made was using schools from the 1989-90 selection because in 1991-92, all of the

schools that met eligibility criteria were selected. There were seven schools from the

1991-92 selection that failed to meet all the eligibility criteria. Those schools were not included in this study because they were not eligible to be judged.

Findings Related to Research Question Three

Research Question Three: What demographic factors (such as school location, socioeconomic status of the school as defined by free/reduced price meal eligibility, number of students, number of administrators, pupil-teacher ratio, other support personnel, school cluster type, school organization, percent of local revenue available for schools, percent of advanced degrees held by certified personnel, average daily attendance, and number of computers available for students) described selected schools?

In analyzing the findings related to the demographic factors evident in selected schools, it was found that a majority of selected schools were from school cluster types one and two large. Selected schools from these two clusters represented almost three-fourths of all selected schools. Most selected schools contained either kindergarten through fifth grade or kindergarten through sixth grade and exhibited an average pupil-teacher ratio of 26 students for each teacher. Approximately one in every four students from selected schools was eligible to receive free/reduced price meals, and over 95% of the students in selected schools regularly attended school. Students from selected schools were likely to receive instruction from a certified instructor holding a degree above the Baccalaureate level. Selected schools were part of school systems which generated almost one-fourth of their revenue from local support.

Findings Related to Research Question Four

Research Question Four: To what extent were differences in demographic factors (such as school location, socioeconomic status of the school as defined by free/reduced price meal eligibility, number of students, number of administrators, pupil-teacher ratio, other support personnel, school cluster type, school organization, percent of local revenue available for schools, percent of advanced degrees

held by certified personnel, average daily attendance, and number of computers available for students) evident between selected and non-selected schools?

In analyzing data related to research question four, it was found that non-selected schools housed more students than selected schools and that students in non-selected schools were more likely to qualify to receive free/reduced price meals. Non-selected schools noted two more students per class than selected schools. These schools had a lower percentage of certified instructors holding degrees above the Baccalaureate level and non-selected schools also employed fewer additional support personnel than selected schools. Non-selected schools averaged eight fewer computers and were part of school systems that generated approximately 4% less revenue from local support than the school systems that represented selected schools. Non-selected and selected schools were similar in school organizational patterns. A majority of both groups contained either kindergarten through fifth grade or kindergarten through sixth grade. Both selected and non-selected schools also exhibited similarities in their school cluster type distribution: a majority were from either school cluster type one or two large.

Findings Related to the Foreshadowed Question

Foreshadowed Question: What impact has receiving the Elementary School Recognition Program Award had on the subsequent quality of schooling received by students?

The interview responses related to the foreshadowed question found that the decision to apply for the Elementary School Recognition Program was initiated by the principal and that the school's faculty concurred. Both the principals and teachers noted that the application process involved a self-examination of school programs and practices. In the process, the school's strengths and weaknesses were

clarified and unity among the school's staff increased. The participants noted parental involvement, administrative leadership, and the faculty's commitment towards meeting children's needs as key factors in recognition. Recognition gave the participants a sense of accomplishment as well as increasing the morale of the school community. A majority of participants stated that, while test scores were a measure of accomplishment, they did not view test scores as a measure of success. However, according to test scores, these schools were successful. Prior to schools' recognition and continuing years after recognition, participants' test scores were above the state and national averages. The schools also reported a continual updating of instructional practices to meet the needs of a changing student population. All of the participants interviewed stated that involvement in the Elementary School Recognition Program made the school community more conscious of school goals. While participants encouraged others to apply for the Elementary School Recognition Program, they also noted the time commitment necessary to complete the nomination form. Participants also cautioned prospective applicants to be certain before applying that the school's current practices and programs were above average and not status quo.

Conclusions

Although the population for this study was small, it seemed reasonable at the beginning of the study to assume that data gathered would sufficiently portray exemplary Alabama schools as defined by the Elementary School Recognition Program. Throughout the analyses of data, no findings altered the original assumption. There were occasions when one school's mean might have skewed the total group mean because of the small group size; however, these occurrences were

few. Due to a limited population sample, no efforts were made to generalize conclusions beyond the represented schools.

<u>Conclusions Related to Research Question One</u>

Selected schools from 1989-90 received a higher percentage of points than selected schools from the 1991-92 competition. This can be attributed to the fact that all schools which met eligibility criteria were selected in 1991-92. Had there been more schools that met the eligibility criteria in 1991-92, other schools might have been selected, and the scores for the 1991-92 selection would have been higher.

<u>Conclusions Related to Research Question Two</u>

Administrative leadership was evident in both selected and non-selected schools; however, selected schools appeared to focus more efforts in the area of curriculum and instruction. The discrepancy in the category of curriculum and instruction accounted for almost one-fourth of the total point difference between the two groups.

<u>Conclusions Related to Research Question Three</u>

Schools from larger school systems were more likely to apply and receive state recognition. These schools were part of school systems which generated almost one-fourth of their revenue from local support. This additional funding allowed selected schools to employ additional instructional support personnel while also providing opportunities to interact with new technologies.

<u>Conclusions Related to Research Question Four</u>

Non-selected schools served a student population from a lower economic status while at the same time non-selected schools exhibited a larger student enrollment than selected schools. Students in non-selected schools were more likely

to receive instruction from an instructor without a degree above the Baccalaureate level than students in selected schools. These schools were part of school systems that generated less revenue from local support than the school systems that represented selected schools. This difference in funding could account for the fact that non-selected schools employed fewer additional support personnel and were less likely to have new technologies available for students than selected schools.

Conclusions Related to the Foreshadowed Question

Responses from participants of the Elementary School Recognition Program provided data consistent with the findings of effective schools research. Individuals such as Weber (1971), Austin (1978), Edmonds (1979), Brookover and Lezotte (1979), and Rutter et al. (1979) reported various factors that accounted for school success. Among the factors identified were (a) high expectations, (b) significant input by the school faculty in instructional decisions, (c) leadership, (e) school goals and objectives, (e) parent involvement, (f) order and discipline, (g) academic emphasis, and (h) frequent assessment of student progress.

These factors were evident throughout the interviews. Participants indicated they relied on school goals and objectives to guide their practices and that school goals were based on the needs of children. Even though goals existed, involvement in the Elementary School Recognition Program helped clarify existing goals while focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Participants noted that the application process was time consuming, yet it forced a self-examination of practices and programs, and this inward look made involvement in the Elementary School Recognition Program worthwhile. The decision to apply for the program was made by the principal with agreement by the faculty. When recognized, the participants

received a sense of pride and accomplishment. Recognition also provided a boost to the morale of the school community.

Participants noted parental involvement as a factor in recognition. Parents were involved in many aspects of school programs--some served as first-aid volunteers, others as PTA officers, and many were involved in the instructional program. Regardless of the duties, parents reported a school climate which included respect and high expectations for everyone. They also noted confidence in teachers and the principal.

When questioned about student assessment, participants viewed standardized test scores as one method of measurement. A majority stated they did not believe in using test scores to guide curricula. The schools were involved in a continual process of updating and revising instructional practices. Through the assessment of students, schools established learning labs for language-deficient students, implemented student portfolio assessment, and moved toward increased whole language instruction.

Two factors were evident throughout the interviews: the commitment of the staff to meeting needs of children and a strong sense of people working together to meet common goals. Teachers and principals both spoke of untold hours spent at school in late afternoons, evenings, or on weekends. They also noted that the team approach helped them solve problems and remain motivated while focusing on school goals. One teacher stated that the combination of older teachers and young teachers direct from college made the school successful. A sharing of talents and melding of ideas existed.

Another aspect that was evident was leadership. Various leadership styles appeared to be utilized. One principal used grade-level chairpersons to communicate information to the faculty, while one had an authoritarian approach to management. Another delegated a great deal of authority to the instructional staff; however, it was evident that this individual was keenly attuned to instructional practices through frequent classroom visits. Regardless of the leadership style employed by the principal, all participants reported that the principal clearly communicated goals and provided data necessary to make evaluations and revisions.

<u>Implications for Administrators</u>

Based on data gathered for the study, the following implications were drawn:

1.   Because of the Elementary School Recognition Program's eligibility criteria, most Alabama schools would not be eligible. Therefore, state level administrators should provide assistance to interested schools to foster the development of strategies and practices consistent with goals of the program.

2.   State level administrators should provide feedback to non-selected schools of the mean scores from each category. The feedback should also include the schools' own scores and could be used by individual schools to strengthen their future applications. At the present time, non-selected schools are notified by letter.

3.   State level administrators should promote selected schools as models for successful practices and programs. This information should then be disseminated throughout the state. Such a practice not only would provide further recognition for selected schools but also would provide information and publicity for the Elementary School Recognition Program and its requirements.

4.   Schools from larger school systems with greater financial and personnel resources are more likely to obtain state level recognition. State level administrators should work with other school systems to encourage more applicants.

5.   Selected administrators and faculty should be used as presenters at state-wide staff development workshops.

6.   The Elementary School Recognition Program personnel should examine eligibility criteria to include a comparison of student ability to performance on standardized tests as an alternative for eligibility.

7.   Greater lead time needs to be provided by the Office of Recognition for applicant schools, as 1 month is the current time allotment for receiving the nomination package, completing the form, and returning it. For a national program, the current time allotment does not appear to be sufficient for a majority of schools. Greater interest would be sparked if time allotments were increased.

8.   State level administrators should implement a state recognition program with similar, alternative, eligibility criteria. This program could be used to recognize successful schools that are not eligible to apply under the current guidelines. The program could also be used as a basis for strengthening future Elementary School Recognition Program applications.

9.   In order to provide the recommended assistance to local school systems and to create new programs, the resource allocation at the state level must be revised.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The following recommendations for future study include:

1. More interviews of selected school personnel should be conducted to gather additional qualitative data related to successful practices and to identify characteristics that make the school effective.

2. Additional studies on selected schools should be conducted while examining single school characteristics such as administrative leadership. These studies could provide more in-depth information on important school characteristics.

3. Additional studies should be conducted to determine why schools from city systems scored consistently higher than county schools.

4. Comparison studies should be conducted using selected schools in the southeast or randomly selected schools nationwide to determine commonalities and differences between Alabama selected schools and selected schools across the country.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO DR. WAYNE TEAGUE

John M. Slivka
901 West McKinney Avenue
Albertville, AL 35950

February 15, 1991

Dr. Wayne Teague
State Superintendent of Education
Gordon Persons Building
Room 5114
50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-3901

Dear Dr. Teague:

My name is John Slivka. I am a doctoral student attending the University of Alabama at Birmingham. My purpose in writing you this letter lies in seeking assistance with my dissertation. The dissertation does not presently have a title. I intend to examine the literature regarding the effective school movement and then examine those schools who have applied for the National Elementary School Recognition Program. I also intend to compare and contrast those schools selected and those schools not selected with the findings in the literature.

Before I begin this study I need your approval and the Department's assistance. I have spoken with Dr. Barton, who is a member of my committee, and she suggested that I speak with Mr. Bill Ward. I spoke with Mr. Ward yesterday concerning the information I need.

The information I need to compile my data is the rating sheets used in the 1990 selection process. Mr. Ward indicated that he was willing to release the data pending your approval and receipt of a letter of confidentiality. Mr. Ward suggested I write you this letter and the attached letter of confidentiality.

The present design of my study is to compare and contrast the schools selected against those not selected relative to the characteristics of the schools. I would also like to take the eight (8) schools selected this year and the schools selected in 1988 and 1986 and see whether commonalities exist among the past three groups. No names of school.s, whether selected or not, will be used. A numbering or lettering system will identify the schools examined for this study. Even for those schools whose names have been released because of their selection, the numbering

(lettering) system will be maintained. In all regards, anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained.

I would appreciate your cooperation in my study if possible. This study could have implications for building administrators who aspire for their schools to become part of this select group. Implications also exist for personnel directors seeking individuals who will improve the instructional process and superintendents and board members who wish to establish or strengthen criteria by which they judge their schools. This study will not be possible without the release of this information. I hope that you will find considerable educational value in this study rather than just another dissertation topic.

I await your reply.

Sincerely,

John M. Slivka

cc: Dr. Martha Barton
        Mr. Bill Ward
        Dr. Frank Heatherly

John M. Slivka
901 West McKinney Avenue
Albertville, AL 35950

February 15, 1991

Dr. Wayne Teague
State Superintendent of Education
Gordon Persons Building
Room 5114
50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-3901

Dear Dr. Teague:

If approval is granted for the release of the data from the rating sheets for the National Elementary School Recognition Program, all nominal data such as school names shall remain anonymous. For the purposes of this study the data from the schools shall be placed in either numerical or alphabetical order. There shall be no distinguishing system which would allow for the identification of any of the schools involved.

Even demographic data from the previously selected schools shall also be numbered or lettered. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality throughout the study, including defense and publication of results.

Sincerely,

John M. Slivka

cc: Dr. Martha Barton
       Mr. Bill Ward
       Dr. Frank Heatherly

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO RECOGNITION DIVISION,
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

February 26, 1991

Recognition Division
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
United States Department of Education
555 New Jersey Avenue N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20208-5645

Dear Recognition Division Personnel;

My name is John M. Slivka and I am a doctoral student at the University of Alabama. My dissertation topic is related to schools from Alabama which have been selected at the state level for the National Elementary Recognition Program. I will begin to work soon with Dr. Frank Heatherly in Montgomery.

What I need to find out from your office is concerning information that might be available relative to the program in general. Perhaps you will be able to answer my questions or provide direction so that these questions can be answered. Is there literature which might provide information on how the program came into existence, how the criteria for the program came to be (are they based on research or a national study), has there been any type of study done through the 1990 group as to commonalties of school characteristics or demographics? If the literature is available, how may I get a copy? If the literature is not available in printed form, who might know the answers to these and other questions?

I would appreciate any help that you might provide to me. Time is drawing close for my completion and these questions remain unanswered. The same questions from the state level have been covered and I need to examine the national aspects of this program. I can be reached by phone at (205)878-7699. If I am not in, please leave a message or name and number with my secretary. I have been phoning (202)708-5366 and this number has been busy for the last three days. I know this is a general information number so if there is another number and specific person I need to contact, I will be glad to do so. The mailing address for any information which you think might be helpful is below:

John M. Slivka
901 W. McKinney Avenue
Albertville, AL 35950

Thank you again for any assistance that you can provide.

Sincerely,

John M. Slivka

APPENDIX C

ALABAMA JUDGES' FORM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
1989-90 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
RECOGNITION PROGRAM

ALABAMA JUDGES' FORM

SCHOOL NAME _____

COMPOSITE SCORE (MAXIMUM 230) _____

JUDGE _____
(SIGNATURE)

A. Leadership

1. The principal and staff have a clear vision for the school and its students which is defined in terms of specific priorities and policies and programs to carry them out.

   Rating (circle one) (E - 5) G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

2. The school leadership has created a sense of shared purpose among faculty, students, parents, and community by inspiring them to work collaboratively to define and accomplish the school's mission.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5 (G - 4) A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

   Total points on Leadership (maximum 10) 9

B. Teaching Environment

1. Opportunities for teacher involvement in such matters as decisions about instruction, curriculum, discipline policy, and teacher evaluation exist. Teacher input is valued and is instrumental in the operation of the school.

   Rating (circle one)   E = 5   (G = 4)   A = 3   BA = 2   P = 1   M = 0

2. Staff are encouraged to work collaboratively and opportunities are provided for meaningful interaction among staff members.

   Rating (circle one)   E = 5   G = 4   A = 3   BA = 2   P = 1   M = 0

3. Teachers are evaluated on a regular basis by designated individuals, provided with useful feedback, and monitored to ensure that evaluation data effect change.

   Rating (circle one)   E = 5   G = 4   A = 3   BA = 2   P = 1   M = 0

4. Staff members participate in meaningful staff development activities related directly to school priorities as well as individualized plans consistent with professional growth.

   Rating (circle one)   E = 5   G = 4   A = 3   BA = 2   P = 1   M = 0

5. Special provisions are made for the supervision and support of beginning teachers.

   Rating (circle one)   E = 5   G = 4   A = 3   BA = 2   P = 1   M = 0

6. Special provisions are made for the support and recognition of excellent teachers.

   Rating (circle one)   E = 5   G = 4   A = 3   BA = 2   P = 1   M = 0

7. The school has been successful in improving staff working conditions in at least three important areas.

   Rating (circle one)   E = 5   G = 4   A = 3   BA = 2   P = 1   M = 0

Total points on Teaching Environment (maximum 35) _34_

C. Curriculum and Instruction

1. As the result of school and classroom organization, students' needs and the school's mission are addressed.

    Rating (circle one) (E = 5) G = 4 A = 3 BA = 2 P = 1 M = 0

2. In each curriculum area identified in the question, a comprehensive and challenging educational program is offered for all students.

    Rating (circle one) (E = 25) G = 20 A = 15 BA = 10 P = 5 M = 0

3. The school places appropriate emphasis on the development of students' writing abilities, employing a comprehensive and challenging program for all students.

    Rating (circle one) (E = 5) G = 4 A = 3 BA = 2 P = 1 M = 0

4. The school offers special programs that reflect an effort to adapt the academic program to meet the needs of specific groups of students, enabling all students to realize maximum achievement. Student selection criteria are equitable and match student needs to appropriate programs.

    Rating (circle one) E = 5 G = 4 A = 3 BA = 2 P = 1 M = 0

5. The school offers special remediation programs. Students who are not readily identified in special populations and who need remediation are identified and receive appropriate services.

    Rating (circle one) E = 5 G = 4 A = 3 BA = 2 P = 1 M = 0

6. The library/media center supports the development of information retrieval and analysis skills in all students and supports the overall instructional program. Students have ready access to high-quality children's literature.

    Rating (circle one) E = 5 G = 4 A = 3 BA = 2 P = 1 M = 0

Total points on Curriculum and Instruction (maximum 50) __50__

O. Student Environment

1. Opportunities to meet with staff for academic and personal advise-
   ment are varied and easily accessed. A high percentage of students
   take advantage of these opportunities.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5   G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

2. The school has well-organized and effective procedures to identify
   and assist potential dropouts or "at risk" students. A significant
   number of these students are served by the programs.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5   G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

3. The school has anticipated and provided for the needs of students to
   accomplish smooth transitions both into the school and also from
   the school to the next level of education.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5   G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

4. A variety of academic and non-academic enrichment activities are
   made available to students.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5   G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

5. The school has a well-articulated discipline policy. The policy is
   effective in encouraging students to behave in an orderly fashion
   without numerous external restraints.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5   G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

6. School policies and programs are effective in discouraging the use
   of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, by students both at and
   away from school. The school's policies and programs address drug
   education as well as policies designed to regulate behavior.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5   G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

7. Opportunities exist for a significant number of students to play an
   active role in solving classroom and school problems and influencing
   school policy. Student input is valued and contributes to school
   policy decisions.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5   G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

8. School policies, programs, and practices and teacher and administra-
   tor behavior reflect a commitment to the development of principled,
   well-behaved, and self-disciplined students.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5   G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

Total points on Student Environment (maximum 40)   40

E. Parent and Community Support

1. The school effectively communicates expectations to <u>all</u> parents and members of the community. There is evidence that parent and community expectations are understood and respected by staff.

    Rating (circle one) (E = 5) G = 4 A = 3 BA = 2 P = 1 M = 0

2. All parents are regularly informed of student progress through formal and informal means.

    Rating (circle one) E = 5 (G = 4) A = 3 BA = 2 P = 1 M = 0

3. The school provides evidence of a variety of types of parent involvement. A substantial number of parents are involved and they
    - are representative of the community.

    Rating (circle one) (E = 5) G = 4 A = 3 BA = 2 P = 1 M = 0

4. School staff members and students are involved in community service activities at the school's encouragement.

    Rating (circle one) (E = 5) G = 4 A = 3 BA = 2 P = 1 M = 0

5. School staff have been successful in involving the broader community, including business and civic groups, in support of school activities and programs.

    Rating (circle one) (E = 5) G = 4 A = 3 BA = 2 P = 1 M = 0

Total points on Parent and Community Support (maximum 25) __24__

F. Outcome Indicators

1. Over the past 3 years, results from formal student achievement mea-
   sures represent outcomes above what would be expected in schools with
   similar characteristics.

   Rating (circle one) (E - 5) G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

2. The school systematically employs a variety of valid assessments for
   monitoring student progress.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5 (G - 4) A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

3. Student and teacher attendance compare favorably with that of
   schools with similar demographic characteristics. Changes in these
   statistics in the last 3 years are well explained and indicate
   improvements that can be attributed to specific school efforts.

   Rating (circle one) (E - 5) G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

4. The school, its staff, and its students have received a variety
   of awards and other recognition, and the school provided support to
   participate in appropriate competitions.

   Rating (circle one)   (E - 5) G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

5. The school has clearly attained measurable success in other areas it
   has determined to be significant.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5 (G - 4) A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

Total points on Outcome Indicators (maximum 25) _23_

6. Organizational Vitality

1. The school climate is a positive working environment. Procedures and policies that have created and sustained the environment and are clearly described are consistent with the school's mission.

   Rating (circle one)   (E - 5) G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

2. The school conducts regular, systematic evaluations of instructional programs and features of the school organization and uses the data collected to make improvements.

   Rating (circle one)   (E - 5) G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

3. The school uses a formal school improvement planning process to make ongoing improvements.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5 (G - 4) A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

4. School staff are cognizant of the findings and recommendations of major educational reform reports and national assessments and have made appropriate changes based on careful consideration of recent research.

   Rating (circle one)   E - 5   G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

5. The school has effectively overcome obstacles to educational excellence during the past 3 to 5 years while sustaining those conditions that have contributed most to the school's success.

   Rating (circle one)   (E - 5) G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

6. The major educational challenges the school must face in the next 5 years are clearly and realistically presented and reflect a careful assessment of future needs.

   Rating (circle one)   (E - 5) G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

7. The school provides convincing evidence that it should be recognized nationally.

   Rating (circle one)   (E - 5) G - 4   A - 3   BA - 2   P - 1   M - 0

Total points on Organizational Vitality (maximum 35) _34_

H. Special Emphases

1. A well-defined and up-to-date geography program is integrated in the school curriculum. Evidence supports the fact that students are achieving according to expectations and learning geography concepts.

	Outstanding		Excellent		Above Average
Rating (circle one)	(5)	4	3	2	1

2. The school has a comprehensive and well-defined visual and performing arts program that includes content that goes beyond art production at all levels. The arts have a prominent place in the core curriculum.

	Outstanding		Excellent		Above Average
Rating (circle one)	(5)	4	3	2	1

Total points on Special Emphases (maximum 10) _10_

APPENDIX D

**1991-92 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RECOGNITION PROGRAM
APPLICATION**

U.S. Department of Education

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS
1991-92 Elementary School Recognition Program

Nomination Requirements

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Elementary School Recognition Program is to identify and give public recognition to outstanding public and private elementary schools across the United States. Schools are identified on the basis of their effectiveness in meeting local, State, and the National Education Goals and other standards of quality applicable to elementary schools generally. An important consideration is the school's success in furthering the intellectual, social, physical, and moral growth of all its students. In seeking successful schools, the Program also welcomes schools that have overcome serious obstacles or problems and are making significant improvements.

For a school to be recognized, there must be clear evidence that its students are developing a solid foundation of skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as reasoning and problem solving. Further, the instructional program should provide all students with high-quality instruction appropriate to their age and ability in literature, history, geography, science, the arts, and other subjects the school, the district, or the State deems important. In addition, there must be convincing evidence that school policies, programs, and practices foster the development of sound character, a sense of self-worth, democratic values, ethical judgment, and self-discipline.

For any school to be judged deserving of recognition, there should be strong leadership and effective working relationships among the school, parents, and others in the community. The school should have an atmosphere that is orderly, purposeful, and conducive to learning and character development. The school should ensure high-quality instruction and the professionalism of its teachers. There must be a strong commitment to educational excellence for all students and an outstanding record of progress in sustaining the school's best features and solving its problems.

Once a school's eligibility to participate has been determined (see pages iv and 3-5), information provided by a school on each of the following Conditions of Effective Schooling will guide the selection of schools for recognition: A. Leadership, B. Teaching Environment, C. Curriculum and Instruction, D. Student Environment, E. Parental and Community Support, F. Indicators of Success, and G. Organizational Vitality. A copy of the criteria used by the Review Panel in making their judgments on each of these conditions is attached to this nomination package (see pages 20-23).

There are no fixed standards to be met in the areas listed above. Rather, the quality of each school will be judged in the context of how successfully it is meeting its own goals and how well its programs are tailored to local needs. Nevertheless, for a school to be judged deserving of national recognition, it must show significant progress in meeting State and the National Goals and must have attained a standard of overall excellence that is worthy of respect and emulation by schools elsewhere of similar size and characteristics. Schools selected to receive the Blue Ribbon Schools Excellence in Education award will be looked to for exemplary practices for the four-part AMERICA 2000 Education Strategy announced by the President to support the achievement of the National Education Goals.

In 1991-92, special emphasis is being given to unusually effective programs in history and mathematics (H. Special Emphases). Content-rich programs in history should be continuous throughout all grades, beginning in kindergarten, and develop children's growing appreciation of people and events from the past and their significance in children's lives today. Such programs may be integrated with the school's literature curriculum; offered as the core of the school's social studies curriculum; and offered through courses in local, state, national, and world history for children in middle and upper elementary grades. These programs should be recognized as a major part of the school's total curriculum and designed in such a way as to: 1) widen children's horizons to the whole universe of space and historical time, even from their earliest school years; 2) use the power of superbly written biographies, myths, legends, folktales, and historical stories to capture children's attention and

imagination and introduce them to the great human adventure of which they too are a part; 3) develop children's capabilities of "historical empathy"--of seeing the world through other people's eyes; 4) enlarge children's vision of lives well-lived and of their own human potential through biographies of men and women from all cultures and ethnic groups whose contributions and achievements "made a difference" and who can serve as role models for children today; 5) support children's developing understanding of historical time, chronology, historical causation, and explanation; 6) develop children's basic understandings of important historical people and events in local, state, national, and world history; and 7) develop children's appreciation for the significance of the past to their own lives and to unfolding events in their local communities, the nation, and the world today.

Special attention will also be paid to schools that offer content-rich programs in mathematics. Such programs 1) view mathematics as a means of connecting a symbolic system with the real world; 2) actively involve children in doing mathematics; 3) emphasize the development of children's mathematical thinking and reasoning abilities; 4) are conceptually oriented; 5) view mathematics as practical and useful; 6) include a broad range of content; and 7) make appropriate and ongoing use of calculators and computers. Problem situations establish the need for new ideas, motivate students, and serve as the context for mathematics in the content-rich program. Communication with and about mathematics and mathematical reasoning permeates these programs.

Schools selected for recognition that have particularly effective programs in history and/or mathematics will receive special honors. Failure to qualify for honors in these two subject areas will not jeopardize a school's chances to be recognized as an exemplary school. However, all schools are required to address both questions H1 and H2.

THE NATIONAL GOALS FOR EDUCATION

- By the year 2000, every child will start school ready to learn.

- By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

- By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

- By the year 2000, U.S. students will be the first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

- By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

- By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Joint Statement by the President and the Governors of the United States of America February 26, 1990

AMERICA 2000: AN EDUCATION STRATEGY

*Better and more
accountable
schools*

1.   **For today's students, we must radically improve today's schools, all 110,000 of them—make them better and more accountable for results.**

*A New
Generation
of
American
Schools*

2.   **For tomorrow's students, we must invent new schools to meet the demands of a new century--a New Generation of American Schools, bringing at least 535 of them into existence by 1996, and thousands by decade's end.**

*A nation
of
students*

3.   **For those of us already out of school and in the work force, we must keep learning if we are to live and work successfully in today's world. A "Nation at Risk" must become a "Nation of Students."**

*Communities
where
learning
happens*

4.   **For schools to succeed, we must look beyond their classrooms to our communities and families. Schools will never be much better than the commitment of their communities. Each of our communities must become a place where learning can happen.**

*Statement by the President
of the United States of America
April 18, 1991*

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. The school must be an elementary school including some combination of grades preK-8. The elementary components of preK-12 schools are eligible for consideration. Middle schools are eligible, provided they did not participate in the 1990-91 Secondary School Recognition Program. Middle schools must decide whether they will participate in the Elementary or the Secondary School Recognition Program and limit their participation to only one program.

2. Private schools must have been in operation for at least 5 years. There is no minimum period of operation for public schools.

3. The school must not have received recognition during the 1989-90 Elementary School Recognition Program. (Schools recognized in 1989-90 will be eligible again in 1993-94.)

4. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) must not have issued a letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or that there is a districtwide violation that may affect the nominated school. A letter of findings should not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation(s).

5. The nominated school or district must not be refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a districtwide compliance review.

6. The Department of Justice must not have a pending suit against a school district alleging that the nominated school, or the district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

7. The school must meet at least one of the three student achievement eligibility thresholds described on pages 3-4 of the nomination package.

REVIEW PROCESS

1. Chief State School Officers nominate public schools for consideration at the national level. (Each State is allowed a number of nominations reflecting the population of its State.) The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) nominates private schools. Officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DODDS) nominate their schools.

2. Public and private school nominations are forwarded by the appropriate above-referenced agency to the U.S. Department of Education by December 1, 1991, where they are examined for eligibility and completeness.

3. Nomination forms are reviewed by a National Review Panel, consisting of public and private school educators, college and university faculty and administrators, State and local school board members, parents, State and local government officials, the press, the medical profession, and representatives of labor, business, and the general public. CAPE recommends Review Panel members who are representative of the varied interests of the private school community. In 1991-92, scholars and teachers of history and mathematics will also be invited to serve as Review Panel members. No U.S. Department of Education officials serve on the Panel.

4. The Review Panel meets in Washington, D.C., to recommend schools for site visits. These Stage I recommendations are based solely on the information in the nomination form. Special attention is paid to assigning schools, particularly private and special types of schools, to reviewers with relevant experience. Middle and junior high schools will be reviewed by Panel members with specific experience in the middle grades, rural schools by rural school specialists, inner-city schools by those experienced in comparable settings. Panel members do not review nominations of schools from their own States or with which they have had prior personal or professional involvement.

   A group of five Panel members then reviews action on all nominated schools in a State or private school community, e.g., Episcopal schools, where none has been recommended for a site visit. They also review nominations referred by other Review Panel members because of any unusual circumstances. This group has the authority to confirm or reverse the original recommendation. They assure that each participating State and private school community receives a minimum of one site visit, but no other geographic or numeric formulae are used to guide the selection of schools for site visits.

5. Two-day visits are conducted, by a team of two, at each school that has been recommended for a site visit. Site visitors are educators with extensive public and private school experience. Many have been involved in long-term school improvement efforts; some have experience as evaluators in programs such as this one or as members of accreditation teams. Others, drawn from many fields outside of education, have a working knowledge of schools and a strong commitment to educational excellence. In 1991-92, history scholars and experts in mathematics education will also be invited to serve as site visitors. In the case of private schools, one member of each site visit team is experienced in the particular type of private school being visited. No U.S. Department of Education officials serve as site visitors.

   The role of the site visitor is to verify the accuracy of information in the nomination form and to get answers to specific questions posed by the Review Panel. Site visitors follow carefully prepared guidelines and criteria in conducting their on-site reviews. During their school visits,

a substantial portion of time is spent in classroom observations. They also meet with school and district administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents, and community members. Site visitors then prepare written reports and forward them to the Department of Education.

6. The Review Panel meets a second time to review all of the schools that received site visits. These Stage II reviews are based on site visitors' verification of information in the nomination package, the answers to specific Panel questions, and site visitors' firsthand reports on the quality of the instructional program and school climate. The Review Panel recommends the final group of schools for recognition by the Secretary of Education. The same group of five Panel members then performs a role similar to that described in the second paragraph of #4 above, excepting that there are no geographic or other formulae to guide the selection of schools for recognition. Once a decision has been reached, no appeals are permitted.

7. Representatives of each recognized school, including the principal or school head, are invited to Washington, D.C., for a White House recognition ceremony.

TIMELINE

Event	Date
Orientation for State Liaisons in Washington, D.C.	April 26, 1991
Public School Nomination Package Due to SEAs, BIA, and DODDS	November 1, 1991*
Private School Nomination Forms Due to CAPE	November 1, 1991*
Public and Private School Nominations Due to U.S. Department of Education	December 1, 1991**
First Review Panel Meeting	January 12-16, 1992
Announcement of Site Visits	January 27
Orientation of Site Visitors in Washington, D.C.	February 9-11
Site Visits	February 17-April 10
Site Visit Reports Due to U.S. Department of Education	Two Weeks From Date of Visit or April 17, Whichever Comes First
Second Review Panel Meeting	April 26-29
Notification of Schools Completed	May 15
National Recognition Ceremony, Washington, D.C.	September 1992

* Postmarked on or before that date.

** Must be received by that date.

PREPARING THE NOMINATION PACKAGE

Overview

This nomination package is designed to provide a profile of your school and to offer you an opportunity to comment on factors especially important to your local community. It is divided into three parts.

Part I includes items to determine whether a school meets the eligibility criteria.

Part II seeks demographic information about the school district and the school.

Part III invites descriptions of the school in response to specific questions that pertain to Conditions of Effective Schooling and this year's special emphases.

The quality of the written document will have considerable influence on how the Review Panel evaluates your school. Complete descriptions of school policies, programs, and practices are essential ingredients of a successful school nomination. The nomination should, therefore, be well-written and carefully reviewed for content and style before being submitted. Failure to directly and concretely address each question can result in an unfavorable review even though the school's programs and practices are, in reality, quite excellent.

Recognized schools seeking recognition a second time must highlight changes and improvements since they were so honored. Throughout the nomination, they should explicitly document their progress since the earlier award and note any outreach efforts they have extended to other schools in sharing their successful strategies. Recognized schools should not assume reviewers have read their prior nomination form. Thus, they must take care to document all statements and claims as thoroughly as a school applying for the first time.

Technical Specifications

Please keep the following considerations in mind as you fill out the application form. If you fail to comply, your school may not be reviewed.

1. All responses must be typed, single spaced, with 1" margins on right, left, top, and bottom. Use normal spacing between lines. Print size must not be reduced smaller than 11-point computer font, which is the type used in this paragraph (for typewriters, 12-pitch elite type is acceptable).

   To minimize environmental impact, schools are encouraged to use both sides of the paper to photocopy their completed nomination package.

   Eight copies (the original plus seven) of the completed nomination package must be submitted.

2. Note that the cover sheet for this nomination requires the signatures of the principal, the district superintendent, and the president/chairperson of the local school board. These signatures indicate that each of the three individuals has reviewed the content of the nomination form, including the statement of eligibility, and has determined that it is accurate. (All of these signatures may not be applicable for private schools; please write N/A in the space where the position or its equivalent is not applicable.)

3. All nominations must be submitted through the respective State education department, BIA, DODDS, or in the case of private schools, through CAPE. There are no exceptions to this rule.

4. Paginate your submittal as follows:

Cover sheets	-	pp. 1-2
Part I	-	pp. 3-5
Part II	-	pp. 6-9
Part III	-	pp. 10-37

Using the above guidelines, number all pages/sides consecutively. Note that Part III is limited to 28 pages. This is a maximum, not a requirement.

5. Parts I and II and the Private School Addendum must be completed without any reformatting. Do not retype pages 1-9 and (for private schools) 24. The context statement and nomination abstract (pages 8-9) at the end of Part II are limited in length to the pages on which they appear.

No attachments to the nomination package will be reviewed (except for the Private School Addendum and Statement of Philosophy).

Completing Part III

6. The school must retype and underline each complete question in Part III, together with its corresponding number, e.g., A1, C3, G2. Only the question underlined in the nomination form need be repeated by the school; it must be repeated exactly as worded in the nomination form, and it must be underlined. The statements/prompts in italics that accompany underlined questions in the nomination are to guide responses and need not be repeated. Pay special attention to any such italicized requests for information, since reviewers will expect to find information directly relating to these structured queries.

Note that in H. Special Emphases, only the headings, i.e., H1. History and H2. Mathematics, should be repeated and underlined.

Note also that question F1 requires that your response be formatted in a particular way. Please adhere closely to the formatting guidelines for this question and provide all the relevant test details specified in the italicized prompts. Samples of suggested data display are provided on pages 18-19. In reporting test data, you may reduce font/type size, though the final copy should be no smaller than the size shown in the examples.

7. The school must decide how much space to allocate to each response within the overall limitation of 28 pages for Part III. Because many of the questions are closely related, it is suggested that to conserve space and avoid redundancy, once you have thoroughly described a particular approach or program or presented an important idea, that you clearly refer to that elaboration in related questions rather than repeat similar information.

8. Principals/school heads are strongly urged to invite a team of individuals, including parents and students, to assist in the preparation of the nomination package. Many of the questions will require research, discussion among staff, and several attempts at formulating effective responses. Inasmuch as submitting a nomination is intended to stimulate and recognize school improvement efforts, writing the application is ideally accomplished by those intimately involved in such efforts.

9.   The quality of the written presentation
     will influence the Review Panel's
     assessment. It is therefore important
     to designate a competent editor to
     assist with the final document. The
     second cover sheet requests the names
     and titles of those who participate in
     preparing the nomination form.

     The principal/school head, however, is
     responsible for checking the accuracy
     and completeness of the final
     document. She/he should personally
     ensure that all nomination questions
     have been fully answered; that
     formatting of the nomination complies
     with Program requirements; that
     photocopying has not resulted in
     missing or out-of-sequence pages; and
     that proper shipment of all 8 copies
     occurs according to the prescribed
     timeline.

10. The criteria the Review Panel will use
     in evaluating your responses are
     provided on pages 20-23.

Code _____
ED USE ONLY

1991-92 Elementary School Recognition Program   Cover Sheet

Congressional District_____ (All schools: Provide Congressional District as of 10/01/91.)

Name of Principal_____
(Specify: Ms.,Miss,Mrs.,Dr.,Mr.,Other)

Official School Name_____

School Address_____   School Tel. (   )_____

_____

_____

I have reviewed the information in this form, and to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____   Date_____
(Principal's signature)

Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable to you, write N/A in the space.

Name of Superintendent_____
(Specify: Ms.,Miss,Mrs.,Dr.,Mr.,Other)

District Name_____

District Address_____   District Tel. (   )_____

_____

_____

I have reviewed the information in this form, and to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____   Date_____
(Superintendent's signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson_____
(Specify: Ms.,Miss,Mrs.,Dr.,Mr.,Other)

Board Address_____   Board Tel. (   )_____

_____

_____

I have reviewed the information in this form, and to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____   Date_____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's signature)

Names of the people who assisted in preparing this nomination:

Name	Position/Title
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PART I -- ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three eligibility thresholds with regard to student achievement by which your school may be considered for recognition. The three eligibility thresholds are specified below as A, B, and C. Your school need satisfy only _one_ of these.

If your school is selected for a site visit, evidence of the information summarized in this section must be available for inspection by the site visitor. This information should also be consistent with the performance assessment data you present in your response to questions F1 and F2 in Part III (see pages 14-15).

Your State _may_ designate which of the following criteria you must meet for eligibility. Should the State not specify criteria, choose A or B below if you administer tests developed and normed at the national or State level.

For this purpose, results on State minimum competency tests are inappropriate. Whatever scores are included, you may choose to exclude scores for grades 1 and 2. If your school does not enroll grades above 2, e.g., you are a preK-2 primary school, you may choose to report under A, B, or C, as appropriate.

A.   **During each of the last three years, 75% or more of the students that were tested achieved at or above the 50th percentile in total mathematics and total reading. (Note: 65% of those tested is acceptable in any year in which there was an enrollment change of 15% or more, excluding first grade or the lowest entering grade above kindergarten for your school.) If you are eligible under this threshold, complete #1 and #2 below.**

1.   Indicate the percentage of students performing at or above the 50th percentile in each of the last three years for all elementary grades above grade 2 that were tested. Specify which grades were tested and what groups, if any, were excluded from the testing.

	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Total Mathematics	____%	____%	____%
Total Reading	____%	____%	____%

2.   Indicate (here) what instruments, subtests, editions, and levels were used to arrive at the above statistics. If different instruments were used at different grade levels, please indicate which grades were tested by a given test. Indicate the percent of the students at each grade that were tested.

B.   During the last three years, the percentage of students who achieved at or above the 50th percentile in total mathematics and total reading increased an average of 5% annually. In 1990-91, 50% or more of the students achieved at or above the 50th percentile. If you are eligible under this threshold, complete #1 and #2 below.

1.   Indicate the percentage of students performing at or above the 50th percentile in each of the last four years for all elementary grades above grade 2 that were tested. Specify which grades were tested and what groups, if any, were excluded from the testing.

	Baseline 1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Total Mathematics	____%	____%	____%	____%
Total Reading	____%	____%	____%	____%

2.   Indicate (here) what instruments, subtests, editions, and levels were used to arrive at the above statistics. If different instruments were used at different grade levels, please indicate which grades were tested by a given test. Indicate the percent of the students at each grade that were tested.

C.   The school can demonstrate exemplary progress and growth of students as a group as determined by a carefully worked out and fully documented system of evaluation. Please describe your system of evaluation, including the way in which individual results are aggregated and the standards used to judge success. Include any compelling evidence of unusual success. Be sure to provide full information in question F2 in Part III (page 15).

Please check the appropriate space for each of the statements below concerning your school's previous participation in the School Recognition Program and compliance with U.S. Office of Civil Rights requirements.

1. The school did not receive national recognition during the 1989-90 Elementary School Recognition Program.

    True_____   False_____

2. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has not issued a letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or that there is a districtwide violation that may affect the nominated school. (A letter of findings should not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation(s).)

    True_____   False_____

3. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a districtwide compliance review.

    True_____   False_____

4. The Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statues or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

    True_____   False_____

PART II -- SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

District *(Questions 1 and 2 not applicable to private schools; question 3 applies to all schools)*

1. Total number of students (preK-12)* enrolled in the district:_____

2. Number of schools in the district: _____Elementary schools
   _____Middle schools
   _____Junior high schools
   _____High schools
   _____TOTAL

3. Population category that describes the public school district within which your school is located:

   ____Large central city (in an SMSA** and population greater than or equal to 400,000)
   ____Mid-size city (in an SMSA** and population less than 400,000 but greater than 50,000)
   ____Suburban (in an SMSA** but not a large or mid-size city)
   ____Large town (not in an SMSA** and population greater than or equal to 25,000)
   ____Small town (not in an SMSA** and population less than 25,000 and greater than or equal to 2,500)
   ____Rural (population less than 2,500)

School *(To be completed by all schools)*

4. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in your school:

   _____preK*   _____2nd   _____5th   _____8th
   _____K   _____3rd   _____6th   _____Other
   _____1st   _____4th   _____7th
                                                        _____TOTAL

5. Racial/ethnic composition of   _____% American Indian or Native Alaskan
   the students in your school: _____% Asian or Pacific Islander
                                      _____% Black, not Hispanic origin
                                      _____% Hispanic
                                      _____% White, not Hispanic origin
                                 100.0 % TOTAL

6. Limited-English-proficient students in the school: _____% _____Total Number
   Number of languages represented:_____ Specify which:

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* Include pre-kindergartners only if your school and/or district operates preK programs.

** A standard metropolitan area (SMSA) includes a central city with a population of at least 50,000 or an urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000 with the neighboring area having a total of 100,000 or more inhabitants.

7. Students who qualify for free/reduced price lunch:_____% _____Total Number
If this is not a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or your school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate and explain how you arrived at it.

8. Students receiving special education services:_____% _____Number Served
Indicate below the number of handicapped students according to handicapping conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

_____Deaf	_____Other Health Impaired
_____Deaf-Blind	_____Seriously Emotionally
_____Hard of Hearing	Disturbed
_____Mentally Retarded	_____Specific Learning Disability
_____Multihandicapped	_____Speech Impaired
_____Orthopedically Impaired	_____Visually Handicapped

9. Describe any significant changes in the data reported in items 4-8 that have occurred during the past five years.

10. Indicate the full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members in each of the below categories. (An FTE is one full-time position; if, for example, the school's regular work week is 40 hours, and two assistant principals spend a total of 60 hours per week as administrators and the rest in teaching, the assistant principal position is 1.5 FTE's and .5 FTE's are assigned as teaching.)

	FTE	Number of Staff	
Administrators	_____	_____	
Classroom teachers	_____	_____	
Special resource teachers	_____	_____	
Subject area specialists	_____	_____	
Paraprofessionals	_____	_____	
Library/media professionals	_____	_____	
Counselors, psychologists, nurses	_____	_____	
Clerical	_____	_____	
Custodial personnel	_____	_____	
Food service personnel	_____	_____	
Security officers	_____	_____	Total Number
Others	_____	_____	of Part-Time
			Staff Members:
Total FTE's / Number of Staff	_____	_____	_____

Specify the types of special resource teachers and subject area specialists employed at your school, as well as the roles assigned to paraprofessionals.

11.   Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school?   _____

      If less than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school? _____

12.   **Context Statement:** Schools are judged within their own context rather than in direct comparison with all other schools. Describe the context of your school. Include, for example, the population it serves, socioeconomic conditions in the community, student mobility issues, historical milestones in the school's operation, school tradition, and the school's physical location and surroundings. Limit your statement to <u>this page</u>.

13. **Nomination Abstract:** Summarize the strengths of your school, focusing on what it is that makes your school a unique and successful place worthy of national recognition. Highlight any innovative uses of time, space, staffing, organizational structures, and modern technology that might inform the establishment of the "New Generation of American Schools" envisioned in the AMERICA 2000 Education Strategy. Limit your abstract to this one page.

Part III
CONDITIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING

Note: *In responding to the questions in Part III, provide specific details and examples to maximize reviewers' understanding of what your school is really like. Some of the questions will entail the need for public schools to acknowledge the important role of district-level staff and/or make reference to policies mandated by your State. Nevertheless, since the individual school is generally considered the site of reform, or education's action-and-accountability unit, the unique contribution of your building-level staff and the flexibility your school enjoys in implementing programs and policies should be readily discernible in your answers. All schools, whether public or private and regardless of grade span, must respond to all questions. It is appropriate to cross-reference answers to avoid redundancy.*

A. Leadership

A1. **What are the goals and priorities for the school and its students?** *Be specific. Indicate how and by whom school goals and priorities are developed, how often they are reviewed, and how they are communicated to staff, students, parents, and the wider community.*

A2. **How do the principal and other school leaders inspire staff, parents, and students to accomplish the school's goals?** *Describe the principal's leadership and vision. Provide concrete examples of how school leadership ensures that policies, programs, and resources focus on the achievement of the school's goals and priorities.*

B. Teaching Environment

B1. **What opportunities exist for teachers to be involved in decisionmaking?** *Draw examples from decisionmaking about curriculum, instruction, discipline policy, teacher and program evaluation, and other activities. Provide specific details on the nature and results of teachers' involvement.*

B2. **What provisions are made to enable staff to engage in collegial planning and implementation of educational programs at your school?** *Describe the nature and extent of such collaboration.*

B3. **What are your school's formal procedures for supervising and evaluating teachers?** *Describe building-level implementation of district policies, identifying any features specific to your school. Include information on the person(s) involved, the frequency of evaluation, the form and amount of feedback to the teacher, and examples of how the information is used.*

B4. **How are beginning teachers and those new to your building supported and their skills strengthened?** *Describe both formal and informal methods for initial orientation and ongoing support. Specify recruitment and selection procedures.*

B5.   **How does your school support and encourage the recognition of excellent teachers?** *Describe both formal and informal methods.*

B6.   **What opportunities are provided to expand or alter teachers' roles to enhance their effectiveness with students and to improve job satisfaction?** *For example, such activities might include student and peer coaching/mentoring, teacher experimentation with new instructional methods or advanced technologies, conducting seminars or workshops for other teachers, or responsibility for schoolwide programs or events. Comment on your teacher turnover rate during the last three years.*

B7.   **What is the process by which you ensure that staff development opportunities are congruent with the defined goals and priorities of your school?** *Describe specific staff development programs in terms of how much time is required, how many staff participate, and where and when the programs are offered. List teachers' recent professional growth activities in subject-matter areas. In keeping with the National Goals and AMERICA 2000, address specifically the five core subjects of English, mathematics, science, history, and geography.*

C. Curriculum and Instruction

C1.   **How is your school organized to reflect differing student needs and the school's goals and priorities?** *Address such topics as student placement, instructional grouping, class size, and use of time. Explain how placement is determined and what role testing plays in your placement practices. Describe how students are able to move among groups.*

C2.   **The National Goals call for strengthening subject-matter content in five areas: English, mathematics, science, history, geography. What is your curriculum in each of these subject areas?** *Include in your discussion of each subject area (1) the amount of time devoted to its teaching each day/week; (2) instructional strategies and allowances for differences in students; (3) the manner and degree to which higher-order and critical thinking skills are addressed; (4) ways in which curricular areas are integrated; (5) ways in which technology is being used as an instructional tool; and (6) enrichment activities for all students.*

a. **English**	*Includes reading, literature, writing, oral communications; coordinate your response with C4.*
b. **Mathematics**	*Coordinate your response with H2.*
c. **Science**	
d. **History**	*Coordinate your response with H1.*
e. **Geography**	

C3.   **What other subject areas play essential roles in your schoolwide curriculum goals?** *Select two subject areas you feel should be highlighted because of their central importance to your school's goals and priorities, or the high quality, uniqueness, and special significance of the subjects. Provide the same kind of information for these two subject areas as in question C2. You may wish to choose from subjects such as the arts; foreign languages; health, safety, and physical education; religion (private schools); or any others.*

C4. **What specific instructional strategies does your school employ to ensure that students learn to write effectively?** *Address such topics as teaching writing throughout the curriculum, assessing writing, and motivating students to improve their writing.*

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C5. **How is your instructional program adapted to the needs of special populations, such as special education, Chapter 1, limited-English-proficient, and students in need of remediation?** *Describe your instructional strategies and programs, and indicate how students are identified and monitored for progress. Provide evidence that these programs are effective, and explain how the students are integrated with the total student body. Organize your response as follows:*

      a. **Special education students**   .
      b. **Students requiring Chapter 1 services, LEP students, and students in need of remediation**

C6. **What special opportunities do you provide for advanced study or enrichment for unusually talented or motivated students?** *Describe a sample of the opportunities you provide. Indicate the number and composition of students who participated in each during the 1990-91 academic year.*

C7. **What role does the school library/media center play in supporting instruction and enabling students to become information literate?** *Describe what specific services are offered and how they are integrated with curriculum and instruction. Indicate how, and the extent to which, the library/media center accomplishes the following: (1) promotes reading and access to high-quality children's literature; (2) teaches students to use library resources for information retrieval and independent research; and (3) uses technology in innovative, cost-efficient ways that motivate learning. Include any usage data available.*

C8. **What regular building-level procedures do you follow for evaluating your instructional programs?** *Address how information is analyzed and used to improve the instructional program. Identify any substantial changes made in the past three years as a result of program evaluation.*

D. Student Environment

D1. **National Goal 1 states that "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." What role does your school play in helping to ensure that children entering your school are prepared to participate successfully in formal schooling?** *(For the purpose of this nomination, the dimensions of readiness include: physical well-being, emotional maturity, social confidence, language richness, and general knowledge.) Describe how your school facilitates the transition of students from preschool or home into kindergarten, or from another school into yours. Address such topics as (a) outreach and exchange with preschool providers or other schools; (b) the school's role in the provision of integrated services; (c) parent education; and (d) use of school entrance assessments.*

D2.   **What specific programs, procedures, or instructional strategies do you employ to develop students' interest in learning and to motivate them to study?** *Explain what special incentives and consequences you provide and how you measure their effectiveness.*

D3.   **What opportunities do students have to build sustained relationships with counselors, teachers, or other adults?** *Describe specific programs or strategies, and explain how you measure their effectiveness.*

D4.   **What specific programs, procedures, or instructional strategies do you employ to identify, counsel, and assist potential dropouts or other at-risk or underachieving students?** *In your discussion, indicate the number of students served.*

D5.   **What extracurricular activities are available for students?** *Describe how participation is encouraged, what percentage of students participate, and the extent to which participation is representative of the overall student body.*

D6.   **What is your school's discipline policy?** *Describe your school's programs and procedures to develop a disciplined environment conducive to learning.*

D7.   **By what means does the school prevent the sale, possession, and use of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, by its students on and off school premises?** *Describe the components of your substance-abuse program. Provide evidence of the effectiveness of these policies and procedures, including community efforts for drug-free schools.*

D8.   **What opportunities exist for students to influence classroom and school policy?** *Explain how students are involved in solving classroom and school problems and influencing higher-level decisions. Provide specific examples. Indicate the extent of student participation and the degree to which participants are representative of the overall student body.*

D9.   **How do school programs, practices, policies, and staff foster the development of sound character, democratic values, ethical judgment, good behavior, and the ability to work in a self-disciplined and purposeful manner?** *Describe what opportunities your school provides for students and staff to be involved in activities that demonstrate and promote good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility.*

D10.   **How is your school preparing students to live effectively in a society that is culturally and ethnically diverse and an economy that is globally competitive?** *Provide examples from curriculum, student activities, staff development, and school practices. Be sure to address how you ensure that all students are helped to master content and skills designed to equip them for the future world of work.*

E. Parent and Community Support

E1.   **How are parents encouraged to be involved with the school?** *Discuss the ways in which parents are involved as decisionmakers, teachers, learners, resources, supporters, and advocates. Include your policy on school visits by parents, as well as the frequency with which such visits are made. Indicate the percentage of parents involved and the degree to which they are representative of your student body.*

E2.   **How does your school communicate student progress and overall school performance to parents and the broader community?** *In addition to report cards, explain how the school notifies and consults with parents about student progress. Describe how the school encourages (a) parent feedback on their children's achievement and (b) parent and community reaction to the school as a whole.*

E3.   **What strategies does the school use to encourage parents to provide a supportive learning environment in the home and to inform parents about other learning opportunities?** *Discuss the ways in which the school involves all parents in their children's learning in the home, including policies and preparation related to homework.*

E4.   **How does the school support the needs of families?** *Discuss examples such as extended day scheduling; linkages to preschool programs; referrals to community services, adult education, nutrition and physical and mental health programs; and transportation options.*

E5.   **What opportunities does your school provide for meaningful collaboration with other educational institutions and community groups?** *Provide specific examples of actual participation with such groups as universities, regional educational consortia or service centers, business and industry, and community health and service organizations. Indicate which collaborative venture has proved most valuable. Consider the school's role in promoting learning opportunities outside the school, such as computer camp, summer academic programs, athletic clinics, exchange programs, community arts workshops, and other community-based enrichment.*

F. Indicators of Success

F1.   **What formal procedures does your school have for assessing and reporting student achievement?** *Provide results from tests developed and normed at the national or State level for the grade levels tested in each of the past three years. Results from minimum competency tests are not appropriate.*

Present your data as follows: (1) indicate test name and edition/publication year; (2) specify grade to which test was administered; (3) indicate number of students in grade and percentage of students reflected in the scores; (4) report scores in terms of national or State percentiles (of the mean) or standard scores, providing information to allow meaningful interpretation; (5) provide subtest scores, e.g., scores for reading comprehension, total reading, mathematics problem

solving, total mathematics; (6) note test level per grade and indicate if out-of-level testing; (7) give testing month and norms used for scoring; and (8) specify what groups, if any, were excluded from the testing.

Note: Be sure to explain any pattern of increase or decline in test scores. Take special care to present and interpret your data in a way that is <u>readily understandable to non-testing experts</u>. Format your data in a manner consistent with the samples provided on pages 18-19 or in some equally effective display form. Font/type size <u>may be reduced</u> for test data display purposes, though results should be clearly readable and the print no smaller than the size shown in the examples.

F2.   <u>What performance-based measures or other assessments does your school use for assessing and reporting progress?</u> *Include in your response measures such as criterion-referenced tests, portfolios, student writing, analyses of individual learning plan student gains, or other measures used at your school. Be very specific in describing how these measurement practices produce evidence that students are making progress. Where possible, report results for the last three evaluation periods, taking care to <u>explain any pattern of increase or decline in student performance</u>.*

F3.   <u>What was your school's performance last year in the following areas?</u> *For the purposes of this question, both excused and unexcused student absences should be counted as <u>absent</u>. Similarly, any teacher out for personal or sick-day leave should be counted as <u>absent</u>.*

<u>Daily student attendance</u>	_____%
<u>Daily teacher attendance</u>	_____%
<u>Number of individual students involved in</u>	
<u>serious disciplinary incidents</u>	_____

Explain any special circumstances that affected student attendance. Define what your school considers a "serious disciplinary incident," and discuss how you resolved those incidents reported above. If absenteeism or serious disciplinary incidents have changed by more than 10% in the last five years, describe the changes and the reasons for them.

F4.   <u>Which awards received by your school, staff, or students during the last five years are most indicative of school success?</u> *Limit your list of awards to <u>ten or fewer</u>. Explain the reasons for your choices.*

G. Organizational Vitality

G1.   <u>What kind of school improvement process is in operation at your school?</u> *Describe your efforts at school improvement, detailing your progress to date. Specify also the leadership roles in this process. For example, is it essentially a principal/staff initiative, a parent- or Board-driven agenda, or a district or Statewide effort?*

G2. **How has your school responded to recent educational research findings, national assessments of educational progress, and the National Goals?** *Provide specific details on any related changes that were implemented or are presently under consideration at your school.*

G3. **As you look back over the last five years, what conditions and/or changes have contributed most to the overall success of your school?** *You may wish to describe problems or impediments your school has faced and overcome.*

G4. **What do you consider the major educational challenges your school must face over the next five years?** *Address how you will ensure responsiveness to changing student needs.*

H. Special Emphases: History and Mathematics

Note: *In responding to questions H1 and H2, refer also to the descriptive material provided in the Introduction (pages i and ii).*

H1. **History.** *In describing your history program, please address the following as specifically as possible:*

■ *What opportunities does your school provide to extend children's understanding of people and times past? How do your teachers help children link today and yesterday? Today and times long ago?*

■ *What opportunities are provided for children to read and/or listen to biographies of men and women from the past?*

■ *Is your school's literature program coordinated with social studies to provide children opportunities to enjoy myths, legends, and stories from the past? Do these selections draw from many cultures--for example, classical Greece, Europe, China and Japan, Africa, Native American cultures, and so on? From American literature of the colonial, revolutionary, and early national periods? From the many ethnic groups comprising American society and their experiences in the building of America?*

■ *How are holidays used as an opportunity to deepen children's understanding of the historical figures and times they commemorate and to discuss the contributions of different ethnic groups?*

■ *What specific courses or units of study does your school offer in local, state, United States, and world history?*

■ *What distinguishes the history program in your school? The course offerings themselves, the ways these courses are organized, and the teaching resources provided? Collaborative opportunities with the humanities, especially literature? Innovative teaching approaches and student projects?*

■ *Toward what objectives are teachers working? What is the relative importance they place on such goals as (a) developing appreciation of people and events of the past; (b) developing children's "historical empathy"; (c) enlarging their vision of individual character and of lives well-lived; (d) supporting children's understanding of historical time, chronology, historical causation, and explanation; (e) developing basic understandings of important historical people and events; and (f) developing appreciation of the significance of the past to their own lives and to events in the world today?*

■ *To what extent does your program take advantage of local resources, such as visits to historical sites and museums? What other kinds of instructional resources enrich your history program?*

■ *How is your program evaluated, and how is the information used to improve the quality of teaching in history?*

■ *What is the evidence that school and district administrators, teachers, and the Board of Education (or Trustees, for private schools) place important priority on history as an essential core of the social studies program and of special significance in the personal and citizenship education of all students in your school?*

112. **Mathematics.** *In describing your content-rich program in mathematics, please address the following as specifically as possible:*

■ *How does your program enable students to use problem-solving approaches to investigate and understand mathematical content?*

■ *What opportunities for student communication about mathematical ideas and situations are included in your program?*

■ *How does your program assist students in gaining confidence in their ability to reason and justify their thinking in mathematics?*

■ *What opportunities are included for students to make mathematical connections?*

■ *What kinds of instructional resources are available in the program?*

■ *Who teaches mathematics? What kinds of staff development are part of your school's program?*

■ *How much instructional time is set aside for mathematics each day (week)?*

■ *How is the expertise of experienced teachers recognized and utilized in your mathematics instruction program?*

SAMPLE FORMATS FOR DISPLAYING ASSESSMENT DATA

__Example #1__

PERRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
ITBS Median Scores (in National Percentiles)

	Total Reading			Total Language			Mathematics Problems			Total Mathematics		
	1989	1990	1991	1989	1990	1991	1989	1990	1991	1989	1990	1991
Grade 1 Level 7	40	40	40	46	57	61	42	58	46	46	64	46
Grade 2 Level 8	69	50	66	78	77	77	66	64	84	78	79	86
Grade 3 Level 10	53	41	56	69	67	67	44	44	47	55	51	63
Grade 4 Level 10	52	56	59	66	72	62	45	58	60	50	71	65
Grade 5 Level 11	39	64	58	60	73	56	43	58	50	50	69	57

The above data were accompanied by the full test name and form identification; edition year; testing month and norms used for scoring; number of students in each grade tested and percentage of students reflected in the scores; and information concerning what groups were excluded from the testing. (In other words, the school provided all the pertinent details requested in paragraph 2 of question F1.) The school then went on to discuss a) special circumstances that affected the performance of one of the cohort groups (students enrolled in grade 2 in 1989) over the three-year period, and b) the performance of its students compared with that of the school district and the State.

__Example #2__

ASH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Stanford Achievement Test (Percentiles of the Mean)

	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
1991	Ash	Dist.	Ash	Dist.	Ash	Dist.	Ash	Dist.	Ash	Dist.
Reading Comprehension	95	81	96	85	96	79	99	82	95	80
Total Reading	95	79	94	82	95	79	98	82	96	81
Total Language	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	95	78	98	83	95	81
Mathematics Applications	93	76	93	76	94	73	95	78	90	76
Total Mathematics	94	78	87	77	94	72	92	78	91	77
1990										
Reading Comprehension	94	84	94	85	98	84	93	82	98	83
Total Reading	92	84	94	84	97	83	91	82	98	82
Total Language	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	97	84	92	82	98	82
Mathematics Applications	92	79	91	77	91	80	89	76	98	81
Total Mathematics	92	80	92	77	90	79	88	76	98	81
1989										
Reading Comprehension	93	83	96	84	91	79	98	82	93	74
Total Reading	94	82	95	84	90	79	98	83	96	74
Total Language	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	90	78	99	81	96	75
Mathematics Applications	90	76	92	79	84	75	97	80	91	71
Total Mathematics	91	77	93	78	85	76	97	80	91	74

As in Example #1, the above data display was accompanied by all the test details specified in question F1. Ash Elementary School also discussed how these results compare with the State's overall performance over the three years.

Example #3

FORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
IGAP Median Raw Scores - Grade 3

|	1989			1990			1991		
•	Ford	Dist.	State	Ford	Dist.	State	Ford	Dist.	State
Reading	312	313	250	401	358	250	460	400	280
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A	373	353	250	403	375	265

The above display, showing results on a State-developed test, were accompanied by the relevant test details requested in question F1, and the maximum score possible on the sub-tests was provided. Ford Elementary presented a similar data display for each grade tested.

Example #4

NORTHWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Cohort Longitudinal Progress: Grade 4, 1989
CTBS (Percentiles of the Mean)

Legend

── Reading Comp.

---- Total Reading

● Total Language

·◆· Math Applications

○· Total Math

1989 N = 198   1990 N = 175   1991 N = 157
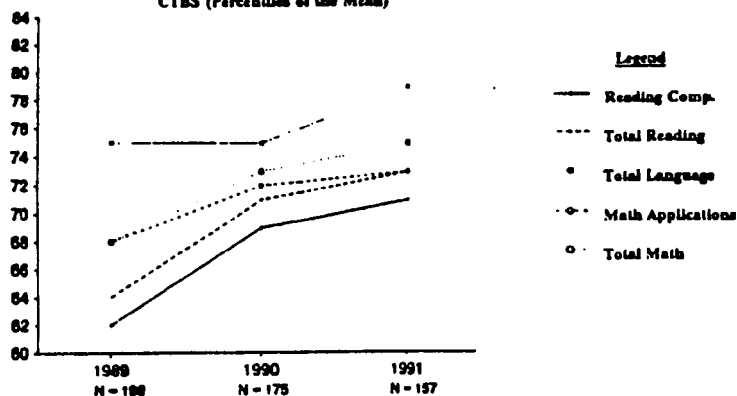
The above example tracks the progress of only those Northwood students who were enrolled in 4th grade in March 1989 and continued to attend the school through the March 1991 CTBS administration. These data were provided in addition to the reporting of all grades' CTBS scores as in Example #1 and the accompanying test details requested in question F1. The above format is an effective way to display performance assessment data when a school seeks to a) exclude effects of student mobility from test results; and/or b) show steady progress in performance outcomes over time.

Example #5

JAMES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
State Criterion-Referenced Test

80%
goal

KEY: ☐ pretest
☐ posttest
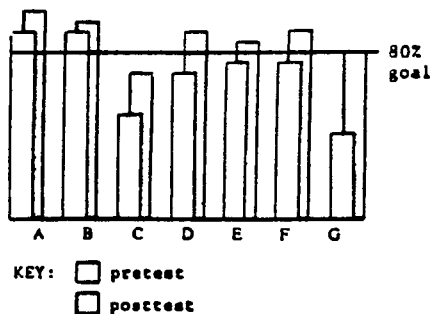
This display was accompanied with the test name and addition/publication year; similar data for each subtest; the times at which pre- and posttesting occurred; an explanation of how the school's goals (mastery levels) were determined; the average number of test items per objective; the percent of students tested and an explanation concerning groups not tested; and a general discussion of how the school's overall performance compared with other schools in the district and State.

CONDITIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING

1991-92 Review Panel Criteria

Note: *This list of criteria is for information purposes only, to assist schools in providing clear, concise, concrete, and complete responses to the questions and italicized elaborations listed in Part III of the nomination. This is a draft version of the wording of the criteria. Any minor changes in the wording of the criteria in the final review instrument will not alter how the criteria are to be interpreted. The final review instrument will rate each of the below criteria as follows: Exemplary, Strong, Promising But Insufficient Evidence, Not Exemplary, and Insufficient or No Evidence.*

A. Leadership

_____ **A1.** Goals and priorities appear appropriate for the school and are clearly articulated. Goals and priorities are developed with input from the school's major constituents, formally reviewed and revised regularly, and effectively communicated to staff, students, parents, and the wider community.

_____ **A2.** The principal and staff have a clear vision for the school and its students. This vision is operationalized in terms of specific objectives and the policies, programs, and resources needed to accomplish the school's goals and priorities. School leadership has created a sense of shared purpose among faculty, students, parents, and community to accomplish the school's mission.

B. Teaching Environment

_____ **B1.** Teachers are substantively involved in decisions about curriculum, instruction, discipline policy, teacher and program evaluation, and other activities. Teacher input is instrumental in the operation of the school.

_____ **B2.** Staff collaborate in instructional planning and delivery. They routinely have opportunities for meaningful interaction and are encouraged to work collaboratively.

_____ **B3.** Teachers are formally and informally supervised and evaluated on a regular basis by designated individuals, provided with useful feedback, and monitored to ensure that evaluations effect improvement.

_____ **B4.** Special provisions are made for the support and training of beginning teachers and those new to the school. Recruitment and selection procedures appear appropriate to the school.

_____ **B5.** The recognition of excellent teachers is supported and encouraged both formally and informally at the school level and beyond.

_____ **B6.** A variety of opportunities are provided to expand or alter teachers' roles to enhance effectiveness with students, improve job satisfaction, and reduce teacher turnover.

_____ **B7.** A significant number of staff members participate in staff development activities directly related to school priorities and in programs aimed at strengthening subject-matter expertise in the five core subjects.

C. Curriculum and Instruction

_____C1. Differing student needs and the school's goals and priorities are reflected in school and
• classroom organization. Student placement and instructional grouping, as well as the role
testing plays in both, are reasonable and fair. Students have flexibility of movement among
instructional/academic groups as their skills and interests change. Class size and use of time
seem appropriate.

C2. Ongoing curriculum development has resulted in a rigorous and rich curriculum offered for
all students in:
_____ a. English
_____ b. Mathematics
_____ c. Science
_____ d. History
_____ e. Geography

C3. The school has highlighted two subject areas that clearly contribute to schoolwide curriculum
goals and priorities.
_____ a. Subject: _____
_____ b. Subject: _____

_____C4. The school has implemented specific strategies for ensuring that students learn to write
effectively and an assessment process to measure progress.

C5. Special programs are provided by the school to adapt the academic program to meet the
needs of specific groups of students. The identification and placement of students is
equitable, and the school attempts to integrate these students with the total student body.
Individual progress is closely monitored, and there is clear evidence that strategies/programs
are effective. Suitable programs are provided for the following groups of students:
_____ a. Special education students.
_____ b. Students requiring Chapter 1 services, limited-English-proficient students, and
students in need of remediation.

_____C6. A variety of advanced study or enrichment opportunities are provided for unusually talented
or motivated students. If participating students do not represent student body diversity, a
defensible explanation has been provided.

_____C7. The library/media center is an integral component of the school's overall instructional
program and plays a key role in developing students' information literacy.

_____C8. Regular, systematic, building-level program evaluation efforts result in identifiable
instructional improvement.

D. Student Environment

_____D1. School policies, practices, and outreach services ensure that children entering the school can
participate successfully in formal schooling.

_____D2. The school uses incentives, motivational programs, and/or special instructional strategies to
help develop and sustain students' interest in learning.

_____D3. Opportunities to build sustained relationships with counselors, teachers, or other adults are varied and readily available. Programs are in place to provide counseling and advisement, and these approaches are systematically reviewed for effectiveness. A significant number of students representative of the student body take advantage of these opportunities.

_____D4. Effective procedures are employed for identifying, counseling, and assisting potential dropouts and other at-risk and underachieving students. A significant number of these identified students are served.

_____D5. A variety of extracurricular activities are available for students. Participation is encouraged, and a substantial number of students representative of the student body regularly take part.

_____D6. A sound, well-articulated discipline policy encourages students to behave in an orderly fashion without excessive constraints.

_____D7. The use of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, by students at and away from school is discouraged through an effective substance abuse program and broad-based community efforts.

_____D8. Students play an active role in influencing classroom and school policy. Student input is valued, and student participation in problem solving is representative of the student body.

_____D9. School programs, practices, policies, and staff foster the development of sound character, democratic values, ethical judgment, good behavior, and the ability to work in a self-disciplined and purposeful manner.

_____D10. The school effectively employs curricular and other strategies to prepare students to live productively and harmoniously in a society that is culturally diverse and globally competitive.

E. Parent and Community Support

_____E1. The school provides evidence of various types of parent involvement. A substantial number of parents are involved, and they are representative of the student body.

_____E2. Student progress and overall school performance are regularly communicated to parents through formal and informal means, and a mechanism is in place to receive feedback from parents and the community.

_____E3. The school encourages and helps parents to provide a supportive learning environment in the home and informs them about other learning opportunities.

_____E4. The school makes a concerted effort to support the diverse needs of families.

_____E5. The school provides specific evidence of valuable collaboration with other educational institutions and community groups to support school activities and programs, promote learning outside the school, and provide integrated services to children and their families.

F. Indicators of Success

F1. Through the use of tests developed and normed at the national or State level:
_____   a.   The school reports student achievement results in a manner readily interpretable.

_____   b.   Student outcomes are more positive than those reported in schools with similar demographic characteristics.

_____   c.   Improvements in student outcomes have been realized over the past three years, or results are consistently outstanding.

_____ F2.   Through the use of performance-based measures or other non-traditional assessments, the school provides convincing evidence of student achievement.

_____ F3.   Student and teacher attendance and the number of students involved in serious disciplinary incidents compare favorably with those of similar schools.

_____ F4.   The school, staff, and students have received a variety of noteworthy awards and recognition over the last five years indicative of school success.

G. Organizational Vitality

_____ G1.   A school improvement planning process is in place, with evidence of leadership, support, and progress.

_____ G2.   School staff are cognizant of the findings and recommendations of major educational reform studies, national assessments, and the National Goals and have implemented or are considering related changes.

_____ G3.   The school has effectively introduced changes and/or overcome problems and impediments to educational excellence over the last five years while sustaining those conditions that have contributed most to its success.

_____ G4.   Major educational challenges the school must face in the next five years are realistically understood and reflect a careful assessment of changing student needs.

H. Special Emphases: History and Mathematics

_____ H1.   A comprehensive, rigorous history program constitutes the core of the social studies program. (To receive a rating of "Exemplary" for this item, the school's response must have addressed all the essential features of an exemplary history program, as described on pp. i-ii of the nomination package, and presented evidence, in response to all the nomination questions itemized on pp. 16-17, that the school's history program is outstanding.)

_____ H2.   The school provides a content-rich program in mathematics that encompasses the standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and stimulates interest and achievement among all students. (To receive a rating of "Exemplary" for this item, the school's response must have addressed all the essential features of an exemplary mathematics program, as described on p. ii of the nomination package, and presented evidence, in response to all the nomination questions itemized on p. 17, that the school's mathematics program is outstanding.)

PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

The purpose of this Addendum is to obtain additional information from private schools relevant to the sections of the nomination package noted below. *

Cover Sheet

Date of Founding:_____

Private school
association(s):_____
(Give p͟r͟i͟m͟a͟r͟y͟ religious or independent association o͟n͟l͟y͟)

Does your school have nonprofit, tax exempt (501(c)(3)) status? ____Yes ____No

Part II -- School Characteristics

5.   Briefly describe your school's efforts to achieve a racially and economically diverse, multicultural student enrollment.

7.   ■ What are your 1991-92 tuition rates? (Do not include room, board, or fees)

$_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
PreK	1st	3rd	5th	7th
$_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
K	2nd	4th	6th	8th
				$_____
				Other

■ What is your educational cost per student? $_____
   (School budget divided by enrollment)

■ What is the median value of all forms of financial aid? $_____

■ What percentage of your annual budget is devoted to
   scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?   _____%

■ What percentage of students receive scholarship assistance?   _____%
   (Including tuition reduction)

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* Do not retype this page.

APPENDIX E

1990-91 ANNUAL STATUS REPORT
ON THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION (1990-1991)

Prepared by:
Dr. Wayne Teague, Superintendent
State Department of Education

Dr. Maurice Persall, Assistant State Superintendent
Office of General Administrative Services

Dr. Rex Jones, Director
Division of Computer Services

Reference: Original action adopted by the State Board of Education on July
12, 1988. Amended August 10, 1989. [Action Item No. I-1-c.]

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT ON THE
CONDITION OF EDUCATION
SYSTEM CLUSTER LIST

CLUSTER 1S (6 total)
CITY SYSTEMS:
Auburn
Cullman
Homewood
Mountain Brook
Muscle Shoals
Vestavia Hills
COUNTY SYSTEMS:
None

CLUSTER 1L (8 total)
CITY SYSTEMS:
Decatur
Dothan
Hoover
Huntsville
COUNTY SYSTEMS:
Baldwin
Houston
Jefferson
Shelby

CLUSTER 2S (28 total)
CITY SYSTEMS:
Albertville
Alexander City
Andalusia
Arab
Athens
Brewton
Fort Payne
Guntersville
Haleyville
Hartselle
Jacksonville
Jasper
Midfield
Oneonta
Opp
Oxford
Pell City
Scottsboro
Tarrant
Winfield
COUNTY SYSTEMS:
Cleburn
Coffee
Colbert
Covington
Dale
Lamar
Randolph
Washington

CLUSTER 2L (18 total)
CITY SYSTEMS:
Enterprise
Florence
Gadsden
Opelika
Tuscaloosa
COUNTY SYSTEMS:
Autauga
Calhoun
Elmore
Etowah
Lauderdale
Madison
Marshall
Mobile
Monroe
Montgomery
Morgan
St. Clair
Tuscaloosa

CLUSTER 3S (29 total)
CITY SYSTEMS:
Attalla
Carbon Hill
Daleville
Demopolis
Elba
Eufaula
Fairfield
Florala
Geneva
Lanett
Ozark
Piedmont
Russellville
Sheffield
Sylacauga
Tallassee
Thomasville
Troy
Tuscumbia
COUNTY SYSTEMS:
Bibb
Cherokee
Clay
Coosa
Fayette
Franklin
Geneva
Henry
Tallapoosa
Winston

CLUSTER 3L (16 total)
CITY SYSTEMS:
Anniston
Birmingham
Phenix City
COUNTY SYSTEMS:
Blount
Chambers
Chilton
Cullman
Dekalb
Escambia
Jackson
Lawrence
Lee
Limestone
Marion
Talladega
Walker

CLUSTER 4S (17 total)
CITY SYSTEMS:
Linden
Roanoke
Talladega
COUNTY SYSTEMS:
Barbour
Bullock
Choctaw
Conecuh
Crenshaw
Greene
Hale
Lowndes
Marengo
Perry
Pike
Russell
Sumter
Wilcox

CLUSTER 4L (7 total)
CITY SYSTEMS:
Bessemer
Selma
COUNTY SYSTEMS:
Butler
Clarke
Dallas
Macon
Pickens

INTRODUCTION

In 1988, the state Board of Education responded to the calls for greater accountability in Alabama's schools by adopting 20 "accountability resolutions." These resolutions have been a tremendous catalyst in the school reform movement of this state.

The Annual Status Reports are the result of one of those accountability resolutions. The board, believing the public needed more complete information on its schools, called for detailed reports to be distributed annually at the local level. The information in these reports is produced exclusively from data provided by local education agencies.

We are now in the third year of these status reports, publishing information on the 1990-91 school year. As in previous years, the reports consist of a system report and reports on each school within a system.

However, this is the first year that school systems can begin to make meaningful comparisons of their own performance from year to year. This is accomplished through the Performance Measures section of the system report.

Many of the items measured in this section are important because they are found in Alabama's new Performance-Based Accreditation System (PBAS), initiated by another of the accountability resolutions. Under PBAS, school systems will be graded on their adherence to many new standards, including performance standards. The importance of other items has been noted in various studies on education improvement.

For additional comparisons, systems have been placed into eight homogeneous groups, or clusters, based on enrollment and the socioeconomic conditions of the community served by the system. In this way, a school system can be compared with others of similar wealth and size. State averages are also included for comparison.

STATE SUMMARY

The following tables are designed to show the changes in student performance and enrollment in advanced courses between 1989-90 and 1990-91. Within each cluster, these tables also reveal the percentage of systems showing an increase or decrease in enrollment or performance. Because the data are grouped into clusters, care should be exercised not to generalize the results and apply the trends to each individual system.

Stanford Achievement Test — High and Low AAC

The Achievement Ability Comparison, or AAC, uses the Otis/Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) in conjunction with the Stanford Achievement Test to view a student's score in relation to other students of the same measured ability. Nationally, 23 percent of the students taking the Stanford and the OLSAT are classified in the low AAC group, 54 percent are in the middle group and 23 percent are in the high group. The Stanford Achievement Test and the OLSAT are given to Alabama students in the fourth and eighth grades.

As the following tables indicate, from 1989-90 to 1990-91 seven of the eight system clusters showed an increase in the percentage of eighth-graders with a high AAC. Likewise, seven of the eight clusters had a decrease in the percentage of eighth-graders with a low AAC during the period.

The changes in the percentage of students with a high AAC by cluster in grade four were similar to those in grade eight. Once again, seven of the eight clusters showed an increase in the percentage of students with a high AAC. However, all clusters showed a decrease in the percentage of fourth-graders with a low AAC.

The conclusion is that more students are doing better on the Stanford Achievement Test relative to their ability, and fewer students are doing poorly, regardless of the economic condition of their school system.

Percent High AAC - Grade 8
1989-90 and 1990-91
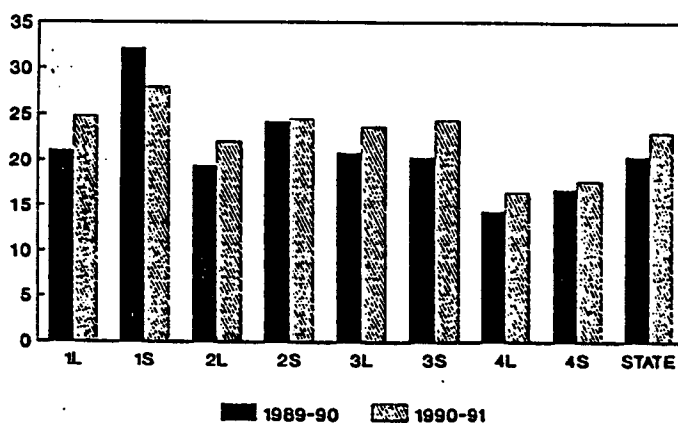
| | 1989-90 | 1990-91 |

Percent High AAC - Grade 4
1989-90 and 1990-91
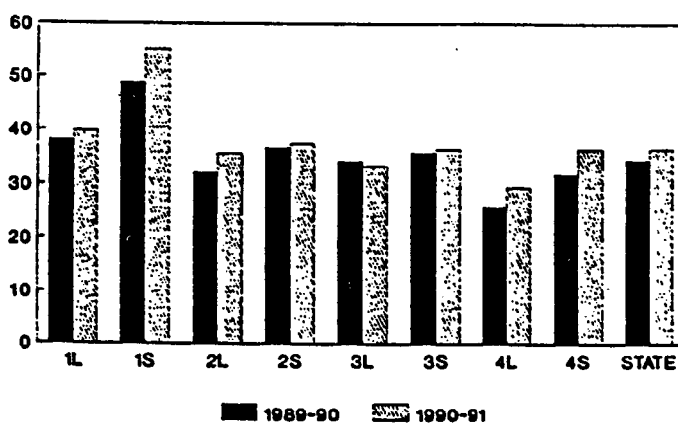
| | 1989-90 | 1990-91 |

Percent Low AAC – Grade 8
1989-90 and 1990-91
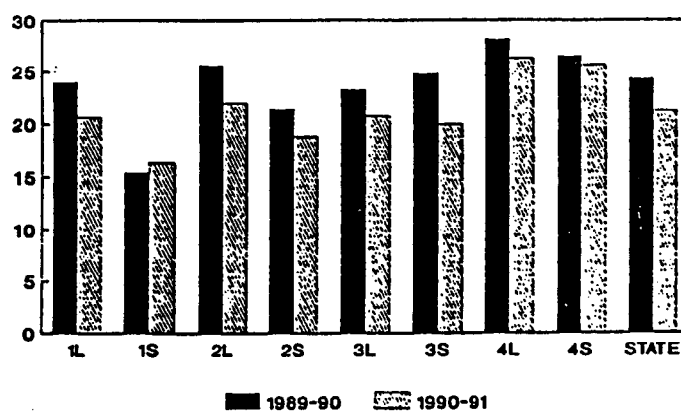
■ 1989-90　▨ 1990-91

·Percent Low AAC – Grade 4
1989-90 and 1990-91
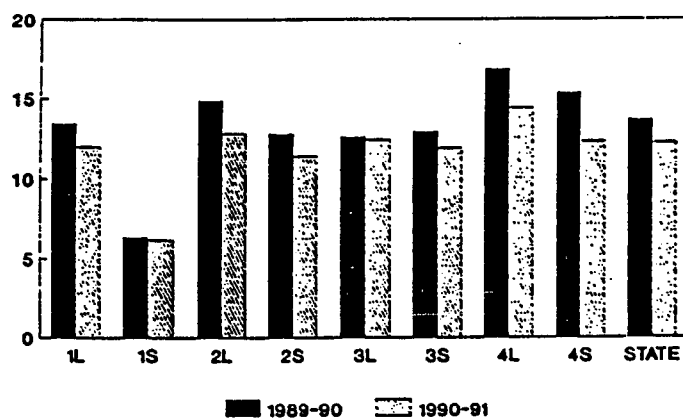
■ 1989-90　▨ 1990-91

Advanced Mathematics Enrollment

Statewide, the number of students enrolled in advanced math courses increased by 2 percent from 1989-90 to 1990-91. The following table shows that seven of the eight clusters posted an increase in this area, with Cluster 4L being the only exception. It is interesting to note that Cluster 4S, which comprises the smallest and least wealthy systems in the state, had one of the greatest increases in advanced math enrollment.

Percent Enrolled in Advanced Mathematics
1989-90 and 1990-91
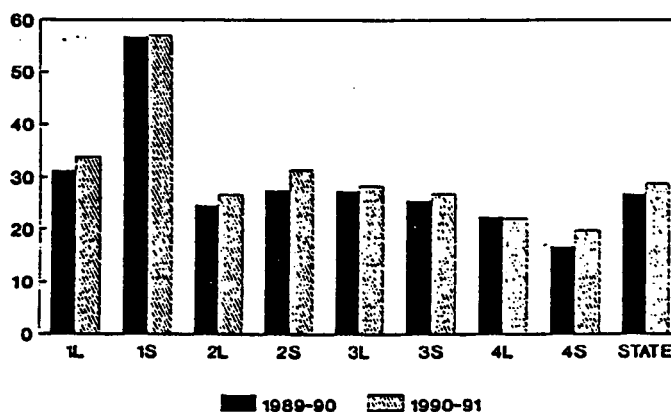
Advanced Science Enrollment

Corresponding to the increases in advanced math enrollment, the percentage of students enrolled in advanced science courses has increased statewide by more than 3 percent. The table below indicates that all clusters experienced an increase from 1989-90 to 1990-91 except for Cluster 4L, which remained virtually the same.

Percent Enrolled in Advanced Science
1989-90 and 1990-91

■ 1989-90   ▨ 1990-91
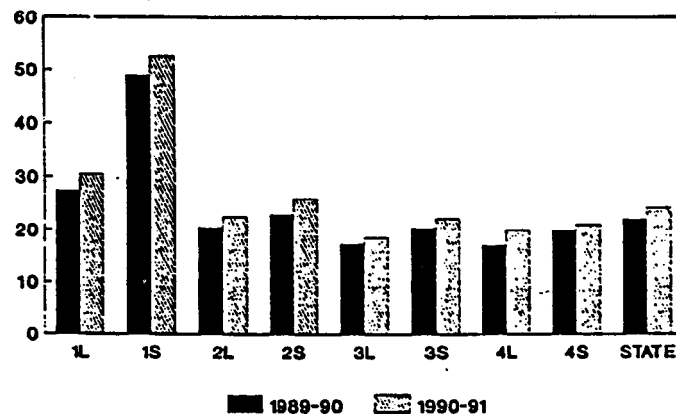
Foreign Language Enrollment

The percentage of Alabama students enrolled in foreign language classes increased by 2 percent during the two-year period. As shown in the following table, six of the eight clusters experienced this increase. However, of the two clusters showing a decrease, one already had a foreign language enrollment of nearly 50 percent.

Percent Enrolled in Foreign Languages
1989-90 and 1990-91

1989-90   1990-91
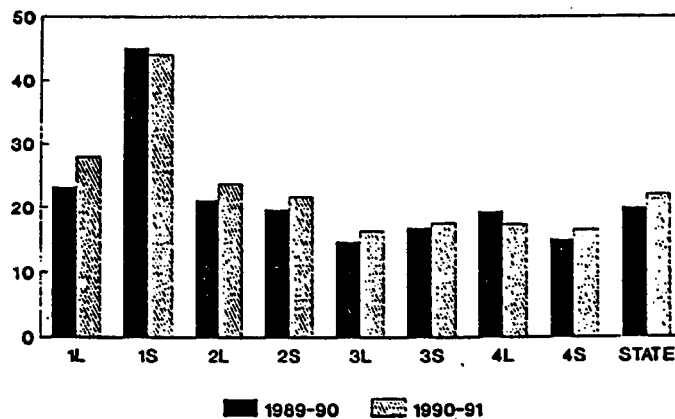
Advanced Diploma Graduates

As a result of recommendations in *A Plan For Excellence: Alabama's Public Schools* and actions taken by the state Board of Education, schools in Alabama began offering the advanced diploma starting with the ninth grade students in 1985-86. Among the requirements for the advanced diploma are two units of foreign language, three units of mathematics, four units of social studies and three units of science.

The table below reveals that the state experienced a 2 percent increase in advanced diploma graduates between 1990 and 1991, and all eight clusters evidenced growth in this area. It is significant that more than half of the graduates in Cluster 1S received an advanced diploma.

Percent Advanced Diploma Graduates
1989-90 and 1990-91

■ 1989-90   ▨ 1990-91
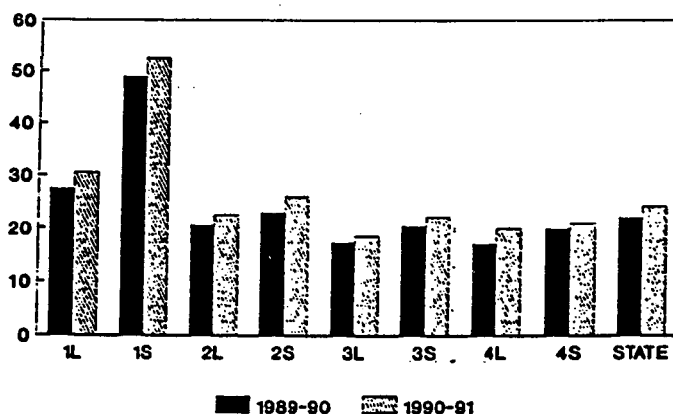
Conclusion

As can be seen from the preceding graphs, Alabama's students have made great strides in eight areas educators around the country now use to gauge academic improvement. These indicators allow educators and the public to easily see whether school systems have improved over the previous year and over a base year.

The degree of improvement from 1989-90 to 1990-91 can be seen in the table below. Out of the 129 school systems, 106 systems, or 82 percent, showed improvement in at least four of the eight areas. Furthermore, every system showed improvement in at least two academic areas. While no system showed improvement in more than six of the eight areas, Alabama's public schools will continue in their pursuit of academic excellence.

Systems Showing Improvement

Number of Areas (1-8)
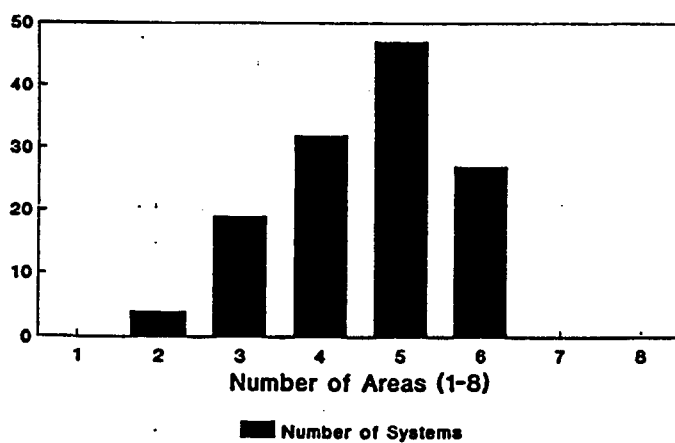
■ Number of Systems

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION

SYSTEM REPORTS

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - SYSTEM

SYSTEM INFORMATION		SYSTEM	STATE
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	-	6	
FTE OF CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL	-	195	
NUMBER SPEC ED STUDENTS (DEC 1 COUNT)	-	435	
NUMBER GIFTED STUDENTS (DEC 1 COUNT)	-	215	
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	-	3.048	
NUMBER OF STUDENTS TRANSPORTED	-	1,847	
NUMBER OF ATTENDANCE DAYS	-	175	
AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	2,914	
PERCENT AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	94.4%	94.9%
PERCENT WHITE	-	98.8%	62.7%
PERCENT NON-WHITE	-	1.2%	37.3%
PCT ENRL ELIGIBLE FOR FREE/REDUCED LUNCHES	-	26.7%	43.9%

·ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - PERFORMANCE MEASURES

			CURRENT YEAR	AVERAGE* FOR PREV YRS	DIFFERENCE IN CURRENT YR AND AVG
THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS (EXCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS) SCORING HIGH AAC AND THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS (EXCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS) SCORING LOW AAC ON THE STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TESTS.					
BASIC BATTERY HIGH AAC	- GRADE 04		30.7%	30.4%	.3%
BASIC BATTERY LOW AAC	- GRADE 04		10.2%	10.0%	.2%
BASIC BATTERY HIGH AAC	- GRADE 08		30.6%	22.9%	7.7%
BASIC BATTERY LOW AAC	- GRADE 08		11.4%	20.6%	-9.2%
THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS (EXCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS) CORRECTLY ANSWERING THE PERCENTAGE OF ITEMS ON THE ALABAMA BASIC COMPETENCY TESTS REQUIRED TO MEET THE STATE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS.					
READING	- GRADE 03		79.1%		
MATHEMATICS	- GRADE 03		78.4%		
LANGUAGE	- GRADE 03		69.9%		
READING	- GRADE 06		70.0%		
MATHEMATICS	- GRADE 06		75.2%		
LANGUAGE	- GRADE 06		68.0%		
READING	- GRADE 09		75.0%		
MATHEMATICS	- GRADE 09		49.8%		
LANGUAGE	- GRADE 09		50.2%		
THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS (EXCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS) PASSING THE ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION EXAMINATION (AHSGE) ON THE FIRST ATTEMPT.					
READING	-		100.0%	98.6%	1.4%
MATHEMATICS	-		97.0%	95.8%	1.2%
LANGUAGE	-		97.0%	94.7%	2.3%

* THIS COLUMN IS BLANK WHERE DATA FOR PREVIOUS YEARS IS EITHER UNAVAILABLE OR INAPPROPRIATE.

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL REPORTS

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - SCHOOL

SCHOOL INFORMATION		SCHOOL	SYSTEM	STATE
GRADE ORGANIZATION (1990-91)	-	06-08		
GRADES STATE ACCREDITED (1990-91)	-	06-08		
GRADES SAC ACCREDITED (1990-91)	-	06-08		
NUMBER OF PORTABLE CLASSROOMS	-	0		
NUMBER OF MICRO COMPUTERS	-	26		

STUDENT INFORMATION

ENROLLMENT	-	734		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT TRANSPORTED	-	60.9		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT GIFTED	-	9.9		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT SPECIAL EDUCATION	-	9.5		
AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	694		
PERCENT AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	94.3	94.4	94.9
AVG CLASS SIZE DEPARTMENTALIZED(4-6)	-	24	24	25
AVG CLASS SIZE CORE COURSES(7-12)	-	24	24	24

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (SPEC ED PGM)	-	5.0		
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (REGULAR PGM)	-	31.0		
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS	-	2.0		
NUMBER OF COUNSELORS	-	2.0		
NUMBER OF OTHER CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL	-	1.0		
PCT CERT PSNL PAID FOR ADVANCED DEGREES	-	80.5	73.8	81.3
CLASSROOM TEACHERS PER ADMINISTRATOR	-	18.0	21.2	18.3
STUDENTS PER CLASSROOM TCHR (REG PGM)	-	23.7	22.2	22.1
STUDENTS PER ADMINISTRATOR	-	367.0	381.0	335.0

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TESTS	SCHOOL
THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS (EXCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS)....................GRADE 08	
BASIC BATTERY - HIGH AAC	30.6
BASIC BATTERY - MIDDLE AAC	58.0
BASIC BATTERY - LOW AAC	11.4

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - SCHOOL

SCHOOL INFORMATION		SCHOOL	SYSTEM	STATE
GRADE ORGANIZATION (1990-91)	-	09-12		
GRADES STATE ACCREDITED (1990-91)	-	09-12		
GRADES SAC ACCREDITED (1990-91)	-	09-12		
NUMBER OF PORTABLE CLASSROOMS	-	0		
NUMBER OF MICRO COMPUTERS	-	75		

STUDENT INFORMATION

		SCHOOL	SYSTEM	STATE
ENROLLMENT	-	804		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT TRANSPORTED	-	69.0		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT GIFTED	-	12.1		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT SPECIAL EDUCATION	-	11.7		
NUMBER OF GRADUATES	-	171		
AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	782		
PERCENT AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	93.0	94.4	94.9
PERCENT GRADUATES WITH STANDARD DIPLOMA	-	65.5	65.5	72.0
PERCENT GRADUATES WITH ADVANCED DIPLOMA	-	32.2	32.2	24.2
AVG CLASS SIZE CORE COURSES(7-12)	-	23	24	24
PCT ENROLLMENTS IN ADV MATH(9-12)	-	21.9	21.9	28.9
PCT ENROLLMENTS IN ADV SCIENCE(9-12)	-	18.9	18.9	23.9
PCT ENROLLMENTS IN FOREIGN LANG(9-12)	-	26.2	26.2	22.5
PCT ENROLLMENTS IN ADV PLACEMENT(11-12)	-	11.2	11.2	18.2

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

		SCHOOL	SYSTEM	STATE
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (SPEC ED PGM)	-	6.3		
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (VOC ED PGM)	-	9.6		
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (REGULAR PGM)	-	35.6		
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS	-	2.0		
NUMBER OF COUNSELORS	-	2.0		
NUMBER OF OTHER CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL	-	2.0		
PCT CERT PSNL PAID FOR ADVANCED DEGREES	-	71.3	73.8	61.3
CLASSROOM TEACHERS PER ADMINISTRATOR	-	25.8	21.2	18.3
STUDENTS PER CLASSROOM TCHR (REG PGM)	-	22.6	22.2	22.1
STUDENTS PER ADMINISTRATOR	-	402.0	381.0	335.0

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION EXAMINATION	SCHOOL

THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS (EXCLUDING SPECIAL
EDUCATION STUDENTS) PASSING ON FIRST ATTEMPT

READING	100.0
MATHEMATICS	97.0
LANGUAGE	97.0

AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING PROGRAM

COLLEGE PREPARATORY EXAMINATION

AVERAGE COMPOSITE SCORE	20.0
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	102
AVERAGE COMPOSITE SCORE - CORE CURRICULUM	21.1
NUMBER OF STUDENTS - CORE CURRICULUM	52

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - SCHOOL

SCHOOL INFORMATION			SCHOOL	SYSTEM	STATE
GRADE ORGANIZATION	(1990-91)	-	OK-02		
GRADES STATE ACCREDITED	(1990-91)	-	OK-02		
GRADES SAC ACCREDITED	(1990-91)	-	NONE		
NUMBER OF PORTABLE CLASSROOMS		-	0		
NUMBER OF MICRO COMPUTERS		-	11		
STUDENT INFORMATION					
ENROLLMENT		-	406		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT TRANSPORTED		-	41.1		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT SPECIAL EDUCATION		-	23.6		
AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE		-	390		
PERCENT AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE		-	95.7	94.4	94.9
AVG CLASS SIZE SELF CONTAINED(1-3)		-	25	24	22
PERSONNEL INFORMATION					
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (SPEC ED PGM)		-	2.0		
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (REGULAR PGM)		-	20.0		
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS		-	1.0		
NUMBER OF COUNSELORS		-	.5		
NUMBER OF OTHER CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL		-	1.0		
PCT CERT PSNL PAID FOR ADVANCED DEGREES		-	77.6	73.8	61.3
CLASSROOM TEACHERS PER ADMINISTRATOR		-	22.0	21.2	18.3
STUDENTS PER CLASSROOM TCHR (REG PGM)		-	20.3	22.2	22.1
STUDENTS PER ADMINISTRATOR		-	406.0	381.0	335.0

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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• ACHIEVEMENT (TESTING) DATA IS NOT   •
• DISPLAYED FOR THIS SCHOOL DUE TO THE •
• GRADE ORGANIZATION.                 •
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ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - SCHOOL

SCHOOL INFORMATION		SCHOOL	SYSTEM	STATE
GRADE ORGANIZATION (1990-91)	-	03-05		
GRADES STATE ACCREDITED (1990-91)	-	03-05		
GRADES SAC ACCREDITED (1990-91)	-	NONE		
NUMBER OF PORTABLE CLASSROOMS	-	0		
NUMBER OF MICRO COMPUTERS	-	17		

STUDENT INFORMATION

ENROLLMENT	-	400		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT TRANSPORTED	-	51.8		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT GIFTED	-	7.8		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT SPECIAL EDUCATION	-	13.8		
AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	384		
PERCENT AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	95.9	94.4	94.9
AVG CLASS SIZE SELF CONTAINED(1-3)	-	26	24	22
AVG CLASS SIZE SELF CONTAINED(4-6)	-	28	24	26
AVG CLASS SIZE DEPARTMENTALIZED(4-6)	-	28	24	25

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (SPEC ED PGM)	-	3.0		
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (REGULAR PGM)	-	16.0		
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS	-	1.0		
NUMBER OF COUNSELORS	-	.5		
NUMBER OF OTHER CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL	-	1.0		
PCT CERT PSNL PAID FOR ADVANCED DEGREES	-	79.1	73.8	61.3
CLASSROOM TEACHERS PER ADMINISTRATOR	-	19.0	21.2	18.3
STUDENTS PER CLASSROOM TCHR (REG PGM)	-	25.0	22.2	22.1
STUDENTS PER ADMINISTRATOR	-	400.0	381.0	335.0

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TESTS   SCHOOL

THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS (EXCLUDING SPECIAL
EDUCATION STUDENTS)...................GRADE 04

    BASIC BATTERY - HIGH AAC   33.3
    BASIC BATTERY - MIDDLE AAC   59.2
    BASIC BATTERY - LOW AAC   7.5

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - SCHOOL

SCHOOL INFORMATION		SCHOOL	SYSTEM	STATE
GRADE ORGANIZATION (1990-91)	-	03-05		
GRADES STATE ACCREDITED (1990-91)	-	03-05		
GRADES SAC ACCREDITED (1990-91)	-	NONE		
NUMBER OF PORTABLE CLASSROOMS	-	0		
NUMBER OF MICRO COMPUTERS	-	18		
STUDENT INFORMATION				
ENROLLMENT	-	324		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT TRANSPORTED	-	73.5		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT GIFTED	-	4.3		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT SPECIAL EDUCATION	-	14.2		
AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	308		
PERCENT AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	95.5	94.4	94.9
AVG CLASS SIZE SELF CONTAINED(1-3)	-	27	24	22
AVG CLASS SIZE SELF CONTAINED(4-6)	-	20	24	26
AVG CLASS SIZE DEPARTMENTALIZED(4-6)	-	23	24	25
PERSONNEL INFORMATION				
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (SPEC ED PGM)	-	4.0		
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (REGULAR PGM)	-	16.0		
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS	-	1.0		
NUMBER OF OTHER CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL	-	1.0		
PCT CERT PSNL PAID FOR ADVANCED DEGREES	-	59.1	73.8	61.3
CLASSROOM TEACHERS PER ADMINISTRATOR	-	20.0	21.2	18.3
STUDENTS PER CLASSROOM TCHR (REG PGM)	-	20.3	22.2	22.1
STUDENTS PER ADMINISTRATOR	-	324.0	381.0	335.0

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TESTS   SCHOOL

THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS (EXCLUDING SPECIAL
EDUCATION STUDENTS)....................GRADE 04

    BASIC BATTERY - HIGH AAC   27.1
    BASIC BATTERY - MIDDLE AAC   58.8
    BASIC BATTERY - LOW AAC   14.1

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - SCHOOL

SCHOOL INFORMATION			SCHOOL	SYSTEM	STATE
GRADE ORGANIZATION	(1990-91)	-	OK-02		
GRADES STATE ACCREDITED	(1990-91)	-	OK-02		
GRADES SAC ACCREDITED	(1990-91)	-	NONE		
NUMBER OF PORTABLE CLASSROOMS		-	0		
NUMBER OF MICRO COMPUTERS		-	11		

STUDENT INFORMATION

		SCHOOL	SYSTEM	STATE
ENROLLMENT	-	380		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT TRANSPORTED	-	61.3		
PERCENT ENROLLMENT SPECIAL EDUCATION	-	19.5		
AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	352		
PERCENT AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	-	94.0	94.4	94.9
AVG CLASS SIZE SELF CONTAINED(1-3)	-	22	24	22
AVG CLASS SIZE DEPARTMENTALIZED(K-3)	-	12	12	18

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

		SCHOOL	SYSTEM	STATE
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (SPEC ED PGM)	-	1.7		
FTE CLASSROOM TEACHERS (REGULAR PGM)	-	19.0		
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS	-	1.0		
NUMBER OF COUNSELORS	-	1.0		
NUMBER OF OTHER CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL	-	1.0		
PCT CERT PSNL PAID FOR ADVANCED DEGREES	-	67.5	73.8	61.3
CLASSROOM TEACHERS PER ADMINISTRATOR	-	20.7	21.2	18.3
STUDENTS PER CLASSROOM TCHR (REG PGM)	-	20.0	22.2	22.1
STUDENTS PER ADMINISTRATOR	-	380.0	381.0	335.0

ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (1990-91) - STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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•••••••••••   PLEASE NOTE   ••••••••••••
••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
• ACHIEVEMENT (TESTING) DATA IS NOT     •
• DISPLAYED FOR THIS SCHOOL DUE TO THE  •
• GRADE ORGANIZATION.                   •
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APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

Describe your school:

1. Why did you choose to apply for the Elementary School
Recognition Program?

2. Since your recognition, what benefits have you gained from the
program?

3. What aspects of your school do you feel made you a state and/or
national winner?

4. How were parents and community notified of the school's
selection? What were their reactions?

5. Since having been selected as an Alabama exemplary school, what
has changed in your school?

6. Tests scores were a pre-requisite for application. Since your
recognition have test scores risen, declined or stayed the same?

7. Do you feel that the test scores are an accurate assessment of a
successful school?

8. How do you define success or a successful school?

9. Has participating in the Elementary School Recognition Program
made you a more successful/effective school?

10. What advice would you give another school that is considering
applying for the Elementary School Recognition Program?

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

<u>Why did you choose to apply for the Elementary School Recognition</u>
<u>Program?</u>

<u>School one</u>:

The decision to apply was my (principal's) decision. It was a challenge. We had a great team effort, a cooperative effort. My teachers are given a lot of leeway, and this was an attempt to recognize the teachers. I was hoping, and my hopes were fulfilled.

<u>School two</u>:

I (principal) chose to apply because of the recognition it would give for the teachers and parents who had worked hard for 3 to 4 years to make this school a reality. We wanted to be recognized for that. We felt we had something good here. It is unique in some respects, and we had such a close-knit family and community that we wanted to try for it.

<u>School three</u>:

We felt like we had a good school. We were encouraged to apply by our central office, but the final decision was ours.

<u>School four</u>:

I (principal) felt like we were a top-notch school and that we could qualify. We thought we could win. I sent around a sheet to the teachers for their input, and there was 100% agreement.

<u>Since your recognition, what has your school gained from this</u>
<u>experience?</u>

<u>School one</u>:

Pride from within.

We have not been boastful about the recognition. There aren't any big signs,

it's not on our stationery. Parents know it, and the teachers know it. These little children, I doubt if they know it, but they do love their school, and they are loved here.

School two:

This is probably the most in-depth self-study you can ever do.

We were surprised, ourselves, at the things that were going on in the school--many things we weren't even aware of. People are so busy, you don't always see what everyone else is doing.

Since that time it has formulated and helped us congeal our philosophy and programs, and we realized that these are the things that make it work.

It gave us a new look and something to build upon.

We knew that some of the things we were doing were working well for us and that we needed to continue them. We've had lots of visitors, and, in many respects, our school has become a model. Almost any of the latest research of what works you can see demonstrated here by someone, and, as a result of that, we have many visitors to our program. That in itself is a morale boost.

School three:

Being recognized reaffirmed some of what we already knew--that we were doing what was good for kids. It was a boost to the faculty's morale and it showed our parents and students that when you work hard to reach your goals, you can make a difference, and people notice.

This was the hardest self-study we have done. Hardest from the standpoint that you really have to look at what you are doing and why you are doing it. It really makes you ask yourself, "Do we really do what we say we do?"

<u>School four</u>:

We saw our strengths and weaknesses. Also, you develop a closeness. Sometimes during the school year everyone almost becomes a separate entity, but when you do something like this, it is a time commitment that draws the staff together. It unified the goals and sharpened the focus. It's time consuming but a real unifying thing.

It shows us where we are and where we can improve. Nobody stands still. We had a chance to read other reports, and it gave us ideas. It gives us something to reach for. When the team visits, and if they decide we are a Blue Ribbon School, that's only a springboard, because we are still going to become better every year in the way we treat children.

When you entertain new people coming into the community, like yesterday when a new pediatrician came into town, that's a real good way to show that, yes, we do have a model school, and that this is a good place to live and raise your children. Our Chamber of Commerce gets a lot of information from us for prospective industries and individuals. The fact that we have been nominated is something for our Chamber of Commerce Director to share with these people.

<u>What aspects of your school do you feel made you a state and/or national winner?</u>

<u>School one</u>:

The team effort. Every aide, every teacher, everyone in this school goes the second and third mile.

Teachers are here after hours, on weekends, and they give so much more than they have to.

It is a wonderful team.

School two:

The positive recognition that students, staff, and parents receive.

Parental involvement was a big part of it.

Test scores were higher each year, and we attributed this to the confidence of the students and the high expectations that we have, and I think those were the kinds of things that came out in the report--the interaction between the staff and the students.

School three:

A commitment to our students.

Teachers who care about more than academics. We have high expectations for all of our students, but we mix those high expectations with love, and I think that makes a good formula for success.

Our parental involvement was a strength. We don't necessarily have parents in the school every day, but when we need volunteers and we ask, they're there. We don't want parents in the school every day just to be able to say that we have parents in the school every day. But when parents or other volunteers are here they make a big difference.

School four:

We met the state and Southern Association standards. But you have to do something over and above those requirements. you have to have a program designed for every child from the most gifted to the child who needs the most remediation.

The right combination of faculty. We have the ones right out of college, some older people, and people who are very innovative. All of those coming together in

the right combination create a program that is just very good.

The major strength that came through the application was a staff commitment to excellence. We're such a strong team, and the community is part of that team.

How were the parents and community notified of the school's selection? What was their reaction?

School one:

Once we found out, word spread fast. Naturally, we were excited, the parents were excited, everyone was excited. There were the ceremonies and recognition with the school board, the city council, and the mayor. They were nice. But since then, we haven't been boastful. Those that are important to us, our children, parents, and teachers, know what kind of school we have.

School two:

Big celebration. We had a big ceremony. It was good for everybody because we tried to involve everyone. People were very proud. We were the first and still the only school in the district to be recognized, and we're still getting some mileage out of it.

School three:

We had a program at school--more like a party. We invited parents and the local businesses who have helped us make a difference. Then there was the recognition by the board and the city council. Everyone was very proud and very happy. We still are. But we still have plenty of room to grow.

School four:

Big bash. We had a gathering for the mayor, city council, parents, and lots of people at the school. Everybody was so excited. This is a small town, so

everybody knew.

> Since you have been selected as an Alabama exemplary school, what has changed in your school?

School one:

At the time we were recognized,we were a kindergarten through fifth-grade school. Then there was a board decision to consolidate the fourth and fifth grades at two schools into a new school. It was because of growth. We have so many little ones. We strive to continue to do our best. I would say that we are much more whole language. We were doing some of it then, but much more so now.

School two:

We have continued to change because the things that worked 5 years ago don't necessarily work today. We have made many changes. An example would be that we have tried to do a lot of research and practice using portfolio assessment. We have realized that there are many ways to assess students. We are doing much more interdisciplinary teaching.

School three:

I'm not sure that the things that have changed have changed because of our recognition. Being recognized made us aware of many things that we were doing which were successful. But things change over time, and you have to stay current with the research and with what is best for kids. We have tried to maintain up-to-date technology and teaching practices. We would have done that anyway. But having been recognized, more people expect it out of us now. We have a reputation to keep.

School four:

Flexible scheduling for the library, the enhancement lab for language arts, and we have become one of seven demonstration sites for physical education in the state. We have added new staff members in chapter one and with our disability lab.

Test scores were a prerequisite for your application. Since your recognition, have test scores risen, declined, or remained about the same?

School one:

Our test scores have always been good and they have remained so since our recognition.

School two:

Scores went up for about 2 years and then they leveled out. Since our recognition, we have changed tests, and the conversion is about where we expected it to be. We are still above the state and national averages.

School three:

Our test scores prior to the application were above the state and national average and have stayed there. We don't put a lot of emphasis on test scores just to impress people.

School four:

Our test scores have been in the top 10 statewide and have remained that way.

Do you feel that these test scores are an accurate assessment of a successful school?

School one:

Far too much emphasis is put on test scores. That isn't to say that a certain body of knowledge isn't necessary to prepare a child. That isn't taking away from

that. But we go far beyond test scores. There is too much memorization. I want more thinking than memorization.

<u>School two</u>:

It's a measure but I don't put a whole lot of stock in tests, at all. Tests are very limited in what they can measure, particularly for at-risk students. There are some statistics that show that 95% of our drop-outs are kinesthetic learners, and you can't measure that on standardized tests. It's a good measure for some and not so good for others. It does let us know some of our weaknesses and some strengths, but we don't base our whole curriculum on tests.

<u>School three</u>:

Test scores are only one assessment and they are part of what a successful school is all about--teaching kids necessary skills. It's what the public wants to see, unfortunately. But we don't put a lot of weight on test scores. All we ask of our students is that they do their best everyday, give us 100% effort, and to be proud of the school and their efforts. But there is so much more than an NCE score or a stanine or percentile score from a standardized test.

<u>School four</u>:

We put a lot of emphasis on academics, and our test scores show that. Test scores are a concrete way of showing what a good job we do. But we do lots of things that don't show up on tests.

<u>How do you define success or a successful school?</u>

<u>School one</u>:

As a school, I walk through these rooms and little children come up to me and share what they have learned, what they have written, all their hugs. I know I'm

successful because I have happy learners. It's not something that test scores show.

Reaching your goals.

<u>School two</u>:

A successful school is where the learning environment is designed for the child, and the child and the parent can participate in that plan.

A school that is flexible and not rigid. We can't expect every child to learn in the same ways, and an effective school uses a variety of techniques that would be available to that student every day.

There would be a positive climate that all persons are met with respect and the expectations are high but very positive. Teachers and students are recognized often and not just at the end of the year.

<u>School three</u>:

A successful school is a school that is meeting the needs of its students.

A school that has happy students who know what they are learning is useful information that will help them along the way.

Success or being successful is being able to leave school every day knowing that you have done everything that you can do for kids, that you haven't taken the easy way out. Because if you do these things, you are going to work hard to reach your goals and you are going to see smiles at school most of the time.

<u>School four</u>:

If you set your goals and you reach them, or come close, that's success.

If you maintain that happiness and joy in what you are doing, then that's success.

In terms of the school, I don't see us being there yet, so maybe success is a

springboard for greater things.

Has participating in the Elementary School Recognition Program made you a more effective/successful school?

School one:

I think it has made us aware that we have a reputation to live up to.

I tell teachers, "Don't ever think you've arrived. Don't ever think you've learned it all. And if you are doing things the same way you did them last year then you're not standing still, you're regressing." You have to constantly look for ways to improve, and I feel that's our attitude here for the whole school.

School two:

The whole process makes you very conscious of all the areas we have talked about, climate, expectations, etc. It makes you aware of goals at all time. You don't get sidetracked on little things because you always have that goal in front and it's in your mind. It allows everybody to be a dreamer and still put feet to that. That's probably what the program did for us, to say we are doing a good job and that there are some reasons for that, and we have to keep those reasons in focus.

School three:

The program made us realize that we were doing some good things but that we still had room to grow. When we were recognized at the state level but did not receive a site visit, we said, "OK, we reached this level and now it's time to see if we can go higher." You can't help but learn when you complete the application and you learn about yourself because you make the decisions about what to include and what to leave out. We're still growing, and probably the most important thing that the program has done for us is make us realize that there is a reason to keep focused

on what we say that we are going to do for kids.

School four:

The program showed us where we were and where we could improve. Nobody stands still. It sharpened our focus. Sometimes you see pieces like parts to a puzzle but when you complete the application, you see the total picture.

What advice would you give to a school that is considering applying for the Elementary School Recognition Program?

School one:

I would say, "Go for it." You will learn so much in the process. And whether you get it or not, you will learn. You look inwardly. The questions make you look at yourself so clearly, and it can't do anything but help you.

School two:

Make sure you are doing a good job before you apply. Be sure you are doing all the things that are important to kids because the application itself is very easy because we didn't have to think up things to put down. We just wrote what we did. And if you're doing it, it's easy to tell. You've got to be doing some things. You can't just be status quo. If you're status quo, forget it.

School three:

Completing the application is worthwhile, and it will have value whether the school is recognized or not. People need to understand that this will take time. Be sure that you have someone who is a good writer and someone who can edit and type. But above all, before you even begin to complete the application, be sure that you are doing things that are good for kids, that go above and beyond what an average school would do. Average schools don't get recognized and probably don't

grow each year.

School four:

I would promote people just to complete the application. I think the values of filling it out are worth it. The rewards, win or lose, for your school are worth it. You just never give up if you don't get it. You keep striving. It directs your focus, and as a school team, you have a vision or focus at all times.

Is there anything that has not been asked that you would like to tell me about?

School one:

I think what parents tell me about the school, that the minute you walk into the school that there is an attitude, a feeling about the building or accepting each child. Children aren't afraid here. We have wonderful participation, wonderful volunteers, and I think that's the secret.

School two:

It was just a positive experience for us. It was not work. It was worth it, of course.

School three:

It was a good experience. It made our school family feel good about the way we treat kids and about what we do on a daily basis.

School four:

If you're doing a report for Southern Association, then there are certain things that you must prove. This is a different kind of thing. It asked where your enrichment creative and innovative ideas were, and I think it was good for the staff, good for the parents, and good for the community to find all the over and above

things that we do. It would be surprising to any school if they sat down and in every area they listed the things they do for children. They would be proud, and if it were not so much trouble, they would apply.

GRADUATE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM
DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM

Name of Candidate ___John Michael Slivka___

Major Subject ___Educational Leadership___

Title of Dissertation ___Alabama Exemplary Schools 1989-90, 1991-92:___

___A study of their characteristics___

Dissertation Committee:

_____ , Chairman   _____

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Director of Graduate Program _____

Dean, UAB Graduate School _____

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