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## Factors associated with school effectiveness

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## Factors associated with school effectiveness

### Abstract

Educators are faced with contradictory messages from the American public regarding public education. On the one hand, the public views the schools as inferior institutions responsible for or contributing to a host of social, economic, and political ills. On the other hand, the public regards the schools as the major, and sometimes the only, institution capable of solving any number of national calamities AIDS, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, highway deaths, low voter turnouts -- the list goes on and on. Being both the problem and the solution, public education carries a heavy burden -- also a tremendous opportunity.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH  
SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

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by

Tom Menke

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Educators are faced with contradictory messages from the American public regarding public education. On the one hand, the public views the schools as inferior institutions responsible for or contributing to a host of social, economic, and political ills. On the other hand, the public regards the schools as the major, and sometimes the only, institution capable of solving any number of national calamities -- AIDS, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, highway deaths, low voter turnouts -- the list goes on and on. Being both the problem and the solution, public education carries a heavy burden -- also a tremendous opportunity.

People have high expectations for their schools and believe that schools can and should be places where all students can learn. Although taxpayers in general may not know much about education, they do know what they like. And they like students to learn.

Schools are expected to instruct students in the basic skills and teach attitudes and behaviors associated with good citizenship. They are assessed by the degree to which students demonstrate mastery of these expectations. In many communities, standardized tests scores have become the most commonly used means of assessing school effectiveness.

During the 1980's a prevalent theme in the many reform reports is the call for effective schools. Over the past 10 to 15 years a considerable amount of research has built up that helps to identify the characteristics of effective schools. One of the pioneer studies of school influences on achievement was done by George Weber (1971). In his investigation of four inner-city schools in New York City that were

performing above national norms on standardized tests. Weber identifies several factors contributing to their achievement at higher than expected levels. These were: the tone the principal set for the school; high expectations; quiet, pleasant learning atmosphere; acquisition of reading skills; evaluation of pupil progress; additional reading personnel; phonics instruction; and individualization of instruction. The last three items have not been confirmed by subsequent school effectiveness research.

Henry Dyer (1972) developed a procedure for predicting school effectiveness by using student socioeconomic status (SES) as well as current and past achievement test scores. He was able to calculate a measure of school effectiveness based on a prediction of the expected mean scores for a school and the discrepancy between predicted scores and actual scores. By factoring in SES data, the assumption was that higher SES schools would achieve higher test scores than lower SES schools. This was generally true: but effective school advocates were quick to point out that this was not always true, since there were schools using Dyer's model that scored higher than predicted.

Robert Klitgaard and George Hall (1973) built on Dyer's work by identifying schools that were "statistically unusual" in that they were achieving well above expected or predicted levels. After reviewing data from schools in Michigan and New York, from New York City elementary schools, and schools participating in Project Talent and Project Yardstick, they concluded: "moving away from average effects in educational research and policy making does seem worthwhile. We have located schools and districts that consistently perform better

than their peers."

Wilbur Brookover and Lawrence Lezotte (1977) in their study of characteristics of six schools in Michigan with improving student achievement, compared schools on the basis of student SES and then scrutinized them to determine why some schools scored higher than others with similar student SES populations. Brookover et al. (1979) found that in schools with similar students, high achieving schools differed from low achieving schools in the following ways:

"Our data indicates that high achieving schools are most likely to be characterized by students feeling that they have control or mastery of their academic work, and the school system is not stacked against them. This is expressed in their feelings that what they do may make a difference in their success and that teachers care about their academic performance."

Michael Rutter (1979) and his associates followed students in 12 inner-city schools in London for five years. While holding SES constant in these schools, the researchers studied four student outcomes: achievement, attendance, behavior, and delinquency. All of the 12 schools had similar input variables, but the outcomes were quite different. The researchers identified seven characteristics under the control of teachers and administrators that accounted for the differences. These were: 1) academic emphasis, 2) skills of the teachers, 3) teachers instructional behaviors, 4) rewards and punishment, 5) student climate, 6) student responsibility and participation, and 7) staff responsibility and participation.

Stewart Purkey and Marshall Smith (1983), in their comprehensive review of school effectiveness research, present a "portrait" of an effective school, which includes organizational/structural variables and process variables. The organizational/structural variables are: 1. School-site management, 2. Instructional leadership, 3. Staff stability, 4. Curriculum articulation and organization, 5. School-wide staff development, 6. Parental involvement and support, 7. Schoolwide recognition of academic success, 8. Maximized learning time, and 9. District support.

The process variables are: 1. Collaborative planning and collegial relationships, 2. Sense of community, 3. Clear goals and high expectations commonly shared, and 4. Order and discipline.

With reference to the process variables, Purkey and Smith note: "the new school climate must develop over time as people begin to think and behave in new ways. The process is certainly not mystical or terribly complex, but it would seem to demand an organic conception of schools and some faith in people's ability to work together toward common ends".

Research on effective schools has not been without its critics (See Cuban 1983; Stedman 1987 and 1988). For example, Purkey and Smith (1983), after reviewing the research, state: "We find it is weak in many respects, most notably in its tendency to present narrow, often simplistic, recipes for school improvements derived from non-experimental data". However, they go on to say: "Theory and common sense, however, do support many findings of school effectiveness research". What research has clearly demonstrated is that some schools



are better than others with similar populations. And some schools serving lower socioeconomic students achieve much higher than expected. Although there are variations in the school effectiveness research, five factors seem to be consistent across studies. They are: 1. Strong instructional leadership by the principal, 2. Clear instructional focus, 3. High expectations and standards, 4. Safe and orderly climate, and 5. Frequent monitoring of student achievement.

Apparently, these factors interact with one another to produce a good school (Gage 1978). All must coexist for significant positive results to occur. Therefore, those who undertake school improvement using the effective schools model must advance on multiple fronts simultaneously in order to achieve maximum benefits.

Aside from the research, the most persuasive rationale for the five factor school effectiveness model is that practitioners can embrace the ideas. Unlike some other school improvement models, this one is relatively simple; it makes common sense. And what makes the model appealing to school boards is that its advocates have not tied their claims of higher achievement to demands for higher funding levels.

A legitimate question can be raised as to whether these five factors actually cause a school to be effective or whether they are hiding other equally potent factors. Further research may provide an answer to this question. The fact remains that these five factors appear to have a definite influence on effective schools.

Is the statement, "show me an effective school and I'll show you

an effective principal" (Steller, 1988) a valid one? What are the qualities that make an "effective" principal? Researchers and policy-makers are vitally interested in the answer to these questions since they may provide the most direct means to school improvement. In practical terms, it may mean that a school system would decide to devote considerable time and money to recruiting "effective" principals or to allocate most of its staff development resources for training "effective" principals.

Research has not yet provided a definitive answer to what makes an "effective" principal. For some the definition of an "effective" principal is one who gets results, one whose school is performing well. The principalship has been rediscovered by the media, the public, and the education establishment for what it has always been -- the bottom line for improving schools. Strong and committed principals are not satisfied with the status quo. They envision what changes need to be made and they get them done. Principals welcome this image of influential leader. Having the spotlight on them empowers dedicated principals to strive to be even better and gives deserved recognition to those who already are doing a good job.

Effective principals are at the center of curricular and instructional improvements within their schools. Yet there is currently a shortage of instructional leaders in the principalship. Gordon Cawelti (1987), executive director of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, has proposed a simple formula for instructional leadership: "Clear Goals + Strong Incentives + Appropriate Skills = Instructional Leadership."

Chester Finn, Jr. (1987), assistant secretary, U. S. Department of Education, is critical of how principals are currently selected and trained: "Unfortunately, the means by which American school principals are selected, trained, and certified are often ill-suited to the employment of savvy, bold and enterprising leaders." He goes on to state that "A great school almost always boasts a cracker jack principal . . . they do possess a fierce determination that 'what should be shall be', and they radiate an infectious enthusiasm for excellence." If given just one action to upgrade schools, Finn would hire the best principals possible and give them wide ranging responsibility. The selection of top-notch principals and assistants can go a long way toward creating more effective schools. Finn is right on target when he says: "The principalship is probably the single most powerful means for improving school effectiveness."

Richard Andrews and Roger Soder (1987) confirmed earlier research that effective schools have principals who exhibit strong instructional leadership. The effective principal's instructional leadership has a singular thrust -- to ensure that all students learn. Mastery of the basic subject matter is the measure of success for the school, the faculty, and the principal. The influence of the principal on curriculum and instruction is clear cut.

Effective principals often operate outside regular channels in order to achieve their goal of raising student achievement. Principals need to function both within district guidelines and to work to increase student achievement. Yet principals who demonstrate that they

are strong instructional leaders capable of producing results have much greater leeway to bend the rules. Sometimes, a superintendent will even look the other way rather than reprimand an effective principal who works around the system. Van Cleve Morris (1987) describes the situation as: "the measure of a school principal is his or her ability to produce results."

The literature on effective schools is replete with examples of principals espousing their visions to the faculty, students, and the community as they embark on a new path of excellence. Persell and Cookson (1982) describe such principals as having a vision of what their school should be like. In essence, "strong leadership is the capacity to mobilize available resources in order to implement policies that lead to desired outcomes." Vision and good intentions alone are not sufficient to produce an effective school. The principal must do something to translate ideas into actions. Persell and Cookson (1982) tell us what effective principals do to make the difference. They reviewed more than 75 research studies and reports. From this review, they identified nine recurrent behaviors that good principals display. They are: 1) Demonstrating a commitment to academic goals, 2) Creating a climate of high expectations, 3) Functioning as an instructional leader, 4) Being a forceful and dynamic leader, 5) Consulting effectively with others, 6) Creating order and discipline, 7) Marshaling resources, 8) Using time well, and 9) Evaluating results.

Many researchers and advocates in the effective schools movement

emphasize the principal's ability to affect school climate. As Troisi (1983) states: "Effective administrative leadership is the key to establishing and maintaining a climate conducive to academic learning and achievement." Specifically, effective principals create climate where academic achievement is the primary goal. And policies and procedures are instituted to achieve that goal. In addition, effective principals provide the administrative support that allows teachers to concentrate on this primary goal. Effective principals have high energy levels and work hard to produce results. Lorri Manasse (1984) reports the conclusions of a study comparing high performing principals with average principals: "High performing principals are distinguished from average performers by their strong sense of themselves as leaders, their focused involvement in charge, and their highly developed analytic skills."

Success or failure in education ultimately rests with what happens in the individual school building. And the person who occupies the principal's office in that building is a major factor in the schools success or failure. The principal sets expectations for teachers, who in turn set expectations for students. The principal establishes the school's approach to monitoring student performance. The principal decides how parents can be involved in schoolwide activities.

Some remain unconvinced that effective schools must have principals who are strong instructional leaders. They claim that teachers can exert that kind of leadership. In effective schools,

teachers do provide instructional leadership: but it is most likely to be a shared leadership with the principal. This, of course, is a healthy and productive situation. Ideally, the principal and a number of teachers and other support staff should all be strong instructional leaders. But the principal remains the key to an effective school.

Arthur W. Steller (1988) states that in an effective school, the three keys to having a good instructional program are: 1) focus, 2) focus, and 3) focus. An effective school has a clear instructional focus that is understood and communicated widely. Everyone knows that the centerpiece of the school is instruction in the academics. The staff regularly articulate to parents and the public what it is they are doing and why. This communication builds trust and respect. Teachers and other adults within the school are aware of how their roles interact and build on one another. Teachers are better instructional planners when they know what content and skills came previously and what is to follow.

Many worthwhile activities can be distracting from the schools central focus on instruction. Principals and teacher must sometimes say "No" to yet another fund drive or the eighth poster contest of the year, when they interfere or conflict with the school's instructional goals. In effective schools a high proportion of adult conversation has to do with children or instructional matters. This is not to say that the staff do not have fun and share outside interests with one another, but they keep returning to the instructional issues and how to help youngsters achieve.

Staff in effective schools share the focus on instruction.

Usually a mission statement is written down and periodically reviewed by the staff. Whether or not there is a written statement, the staff can describe the shared mission of the school. Typically, goals and objectives are determined annually to provide even more direction for the year. A clear instructional focus helps teachers and administrators make daily judgements regarding what children should be learning and how it should be taught. When decisions have to be made about how to use available time and resources, it is shared understanding of the school's mission that provides perspective to extracurricular activities, assemblies, and school dances (Stedman, 1988). Having a clear instructional focus means that there is a common set of skills and content that students are expected to learn. A common curriculum with sequenced objects lets students and their parents know what is required to succeed in a grade or a course. And teachers know what they have to do to prepare students for success with their next teacher.

David Squires, William Huitt, and John Segars (1983), in reviewing the research on teacher behaviors associated with student achievement, reported that their review of the research on effective classrooms indicated that teachers can have an impact on student behaviors and student achievement. And teachers do that by planning, managing, and instructing in ways that keep students involved and successfully covering appropriate content.

Nicholas Troisis (1983), in his review of research dealing with

effective teaching and student achievement, concluded that effective teachers have well-organized and well-managed classrooms. Students know what is expected, what they are supposed to do, and what equipment, if any, they will need. Goofing off, tardiness and inattention do not occur in the classroom of an effective teacher. There is a purpose. The effective teacher keeps the kids riveted to learning.

When teachers work together (Gage, 1978), the established curriculum becomes the glue that makes the instructional programs one piece. In effective schools the teachers review the curriculum as a total group or by grade levels. If a curriculum guide does not exist, they create an informal one by exchanging good practices they have used to accomplish the instructional objectives that all children are to master.

In effective schools (Klitgaard, 1973), teamwork helps to reinforce all components of the curriculum. Teachers coordinate homework assignments so that they are balanced throughout the week. Parents know what the homework expectations are and how homework relates to classwork. Teachers plan field trips cooperatively to broaden the curriculum beyond classroom walls.

Faculty meetings in an effective school are occasions to highlight the instructional focus and to celebrate successes -- large or small. Encouragement and support from one's peers keep the focus on instruction (Morris, 1987). The faculty lounge becomes a place for mutual assistance.

In effective schools the strong instructional focus becomes



apparent in the teacher evaluation plan. When recruiting, administrators should let candidates know that a strong instructional focus is expected and is reflected in the evaluation procedures used.

Effective schools can serve as models for how to achieve a clear instructional focus. We know what the elements of a strong instructional focus are. They include a strong sense of mission, an emphasis on academic achievement, a common curriculum, focused teachers behaviors, teacher teamwork, and an evaluation system that reflects the instructional focus (Steller, 1988). Achieving a strong instructional focus takes time. It cannot happen by edict. When it is achieved, a school is on its way to becoming an effective school.

Lawrence Lezotte (1980) states: "If teachers, principals, and other members of the school social system hold high expectations for students, the students will learn what is expected. If students are expected to learn less, they will learn less." In effective schools, there is the expectations that all children can learn, and the staff believes they can get all children to learn. The sheer power of this belief is what can transform a low-achieving student body into achievers. The self-fulfilling prophecy intensifies when the significant others in a child's life -- parents, teachers, coaches, relatives -- collectively send the message, "You can do it," and the child responds to this attention with a similar belief.

Arthur W. Steller (1988) states: "Anyone who has spent time in a faculty lounge knows that not all teachers believe all children are

capable. Boys are not supposed to do as well as girls in the primary grades. Girls are not supposed to do as well as boys in high school math and science. Minority students present more discipline problems in the classroom and on the playground. Such prejudices and biases of society at large are bound to wind-up in the classroom. And they can be unconsciously reinforced to the point that they become true in the teacher's mind, not to mention the effect they have on students' self-images. Independent or unruly students are viewed as having less potential than compliant students, even when they may be more creative. A student's lack of social graces, poor grooming, or non-standard English can influence the way a teacher responds and what expectations the teacher holds for the student. Labeling youngsters with IQ scores, special education classifications, and various grouping practices can contribute to the lowering of expectations. In fact, some teachers think they are doing a favor by lowering expectations for students they perceive as less able."

Teachers often are not aware that they are reinforcing poor self-concepts in their students. However, they do so through subtle cues and repeated insinuations, which communicate the message that certain youngsters are not going to achieve. Over time these youngsters begin to believe it and stop trying. Teachers can modify these behaviors that communicate low expectations once they are aware of them. Whether or not teachers believe all children can learn is less important than behaving as if all children can learn. The distinction is important (Steller, 1988). Teachers who consistently

behave as if all children can learn will eventually change their attitudes to be consistent with their behavior. Teacher behaviors that promote higher expectations are known, observable, and transferable. They can be observed in effective schools. They can be learned in a staff development program or by peer coaching.

In effective school classrooms, all children have many opportunities to participate. Effective teachers use questioning techniques, such as giving the question to the whole class before calling on someone, making sure every student gets a turn, waiting longer for low-achieving student to respond, using higher-order questions to stimulate thinking. These are pedagogical skills that all teachers can acquire (Lezotte, 1980).

"Feedback is the breakfast of champions (Steller, 1988)" is a popular slogan in the effective school classroom. Everyone is a champ because everyone gets plenty of feedback. Feedback is not just dishing out warm fuzzies. Wrong answers are corrected, not ignored. Students in effective classrooms are given precise feedback about their work. They know exactly what is right, what is wrong, and what they need to do to improve. Students appreciate such honesty. Likewise, an effective teacher wants feedback from the principal and will respond to good coaching using the feedback. In effective schools every student receives significant and meaningful amounts of the teacher's time. No favorites are played. Every student is aware that in this teacher's room the password is work and the key to success is to be actively engaged in the lesson. "Engaged time" is a

current buzzword; but good classroom teachers have been doing it for years.

When little is expected, often little is taught, and even less is learned. Although some students may be able to compensate for low expectations, most will come to see themselves as they are seen -- as the scholastically downtrodden (Steller, 1988). High expectations are uplifting and empowering both to teachers and students. Generating high expectations is easier when educators truly believe all students can learn. Most important, however, is that teachers exhibit those behaviors known to raise expectations. When teachers behave as if all students can master the curriculum, students rise to the expectation and achievement moves up.

School climate includes the total atmosphere. It's that feeling one gets after spending an hour in a school talking with staff, walking the halls, going into classrooms, and visiting other learning areas. Some schools have a warm atmosphere; others are cold like ice. Students seem to know what the school personnel value by the way they are treated.

The influence of school climate on raising student achievement is well documented by researchers. In an effective school, the prevailing climate is one in which all students can learn. Basic skills take precedence in every classroom. Teachers are confident of their abilities to have students master the curriculum. Students sense that adults are concerned about academic performance. The principal and the staff model desired behaviors. Uniform high standards and expectations are communicated regularly. Everyone shares

in the responsibility for school improvement. Decision making is usually a joint effort between administration and staff. Discipline policies are enforced consistently. The environment is safe, orderly, positive, and businesslike.

The climate of the physical facility is the easiest to assess, but its importance often is overstated. Students can learn and teachers can teach in well-maintained older structures just as well as they can in brand new buildings. Thick carpets, air conditioning, and new furniture are not as important for learning as is an atmosphere that radiates care. Many school districts, financially unable to update older buildings, nevertheless have good learning going on in those buildings. A floor that is clean and uncluttered, even though it has worn tiles, makes a statement every day to those who walk it (Steller, 1988).

James Comer (1980) makes the point that when students or adults feel that they are physically at risk, little teaching or learning takes place. A preliminary condition for learning is a safe school environment. In contrast to violence-prone schools, discipline in effective schools is applied consistently throughout the school. Everyone knows what the rules are and what the consequences are for breaking them. Individual differences are not a factor when it comes to disciplining students who break the rules; all are treated the same. All teachers assume responsibility for maintaining order, regardless of whether the offender is assigned to them. Students know that faculty are in charge -- in the hallways, the restrooms, the playground, as well as in the classroom.

Teachers make clear what is and is not appropriate behavior. Consistency in the enforcement of discipline results in a climate where students know what is expected of them. They come to class every day and are ready to work when the bell rings. The climate is not oppressive or punitive, simply orderly. This businesslike atmosphere contributes to the success of an effective school.

Principals in effective schools know that education is a people business, which requires an entire staff of dedicated professionals working together to ensure that all students learn. Teamwork and collegiality must prevail. The principal must alternate between the roles of coach and quarterback to keep the team on course to achieve that goal. Business and industry have rediscovered the value of manipulating the culture as a way of increasing productivity (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). Effective schools have rediscovered this, too. It is the culture that makes people behave as they do. Establishing a positive, safe, and orderly school culture will result in positive student outcomes.

What is meant by the term "effective" is subject to varying interpretations. However, for most the term "effective" means achieving agreed-on learning objectives (Morris, 1987). The method most often used by effective schools to assess progress on achieving the objectives is some form of standardized testing or other criterion-referenced measure.

Most school districts conduct standardized testing in the basic skill areas on an annual basis. Unfortunately, too few of them use the results as a basis for modifying instruction. Without changing

the instructional program, standardized test scores are likely to remain the same year after year. Effective schools do not wait until the annual tests scores are in to adjust instructional practices. In these schools teachers regularly monitor student progress using commercial test or other assessment instruments they have designed. They are prepared to make instructional adjustments on a daily or weekly basis, depending on the results of the monitoring process. In other words, they manage their instruction (Steller, 1988).

A school or districtwide instructional management system increases the likelihood that students will master the basic curriculum. According to the American Association of School Administrators (1983) the four common components of effective instructional management are:

- 1) A set of guiding statements or goals that give directions and provide reference points for measuring results;
- 2) A means of assessing initial instructional needs and entry levels for diagnosing appropriate placements and grouping patterns;
- 3) An organizational structure and instructional delivery process capable of providing alternatives and flexible uses of resources; and
- 4) A feedback method for monitoring and recording progress and evaluating actual results compared with goals.

Good teachers long have used their own informal instructional management systems on a daily basis in their classrooms (Gage, 1978). The advantage of a schoolwide instructional management system is that it is shared by all teachers and, thus, serves as a benchmark for assessing progress on a school or districtwide basis, as well as for individual student progress.

Measurement of results is often resisted by teachers, especially when the scores are made public. They fear that the scores may be misinterpreted or be used to criticize the school and its teachers. The staff of effective schools harbor few such apprehensions and oftentimes publicly predict a year in advance what their scores will be. If teachers are to be accountable for student learning, then there must be some way to assess student progress and the total educational program.

A relative newcomer to the list of effective school factors is active involvement of parents. The early research on school effectiveness did not include this factor. Additional research has confirmed the importance of active parent and community involvement in effective schools. The more parental involvement, the higher the student achievement (Henderson, 1987).

Parents are key players in motivating their children to succeed in school. They are what researchers call "significant others" who along with teachers set expectations for children. Parents also reinforce the positive school climate and instructional focus of an effective school. For example, parents can control the amount of time devoted to television watching in order that homework is completed. Obviously, homework also can involve parents, if only in providing a time, place, and supervision to see that it gets done.

David Stevenson and David Baker (1987) in a recent study of parental involvement found that better-educated mothers "invest" more in their children's educational activities and have more contact with teachers. And this "investment" results in better performance of



their children beginning at an early age.

Investment of parental time as a factor in achievement is reinforced in a study by the Gallup Organization for Family Circle (April 1988) magazine. Interviews were conducted with extremely successful people, their parents, and demographically similar parents (who did not necessarily have successful children). The main findings were that attentive fathers, frequent conversations between parents and children, free time for kids at an early age, and respect for children's interests and goals contributed to success. Whether it's mom, dad, or both, the involvement of parents is often fostered by the local parent-teacher association in conjunction with the school. Participating in PTA programs and coming to activities at school can provide a comfort zone for parents and educators to work together to enhance children's learning.

Educators striving to have effective schools must have active parent involvement. When parents are involved in the educational process, they become contributors to four of the factors associated with effective schools: setting high expectations, fostering school climate, providing instructional focus, and even monitoring student achievement. That is why effective school researchers and practitioners have added parental involvement as another factor associated with effective schools.

School effectiveness research has had its critics, who question the validity of some of the data and the simplicity of the model. Admittedly, some of the research does not meet the methodological requirements of carefully controlled studies. Rather, it is

descriptive or correlational research; it does not show cause and effect. Some of the critics' concerns have been mitigated with more recent studies. Nevertheless, the criticism has been healthy and serves as a reminder to effective schools advocates that all the answers are not in.

Even though effective schools research is descriptive and not casual, the basic tenets of the effective schools research remain intact. As more programs are implemented and further research is conducted, there will likely be refinements and modifications. Perhaps, someday research will even show cause -- and -- effect relationships. Ralph and Fennessey (1983) make a powerful point with their statement: "The effective schools perspective has an important place in educational thinking, but it has been mistakenly identified as a scientific model. We believe it is really a rhetoric of reform."

Clearly, the effective schools research does not provide a recipe for resolving school problems, although some reformers have advocated such a view. However, it does provide sufficient evidence as an approach to improving student achievement to warrant serious consideration by educators.

School effectiveness as a conceptual and operational model will continue to evolve. More research is needed. Purkey and Smith (1983), among others, have called for longitudinal studies tracking school and student performance. While more research may fill in more of the blanks, Ron Edmonds (1979) cautions, "There has never been a time in the life of the American public school when we have not known all we

needed to in order to teach all those whom we choose to teach."

The school effectiveness movement has spread from elementary to secondary schools, inner-city to rural schools, and from individual schools to entire school districts. More schools are investing time and resources to implement the effective schools principles. As the movement has gained momentum, more students are improving their achievement levels. They include not only the educationally limited --the poor, minorities, non-English speaking-- but also white middle-class students. The school effectiveness model is applicable to all students.

At times school effectiveness resembles a revival movement directed at restructuring how schools operate. Much of the rhetoric of restructuring is directed at school governance issues: school effectiveness is directed at improving the learning of children. Educators should capitalize on the momentum of school effectiveness.

The public is demanding excellence in education, and the schools are responding in many positive ways. The danger we face in the drive for excellence is that we may inadvertently push excellence and equity for all children. In this country we can accept nothing less.

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