Parental Attitudes and Opinions of Central City School District #133

David Daum

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in Educational Administration at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

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PARENTAL ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS OF CENTRAL
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT #133
(TITLE)

BY

David Daum

THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Specialist in Educational Administration
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1990
YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

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DATE

April 30, 1990
DATE
PARENTAL ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS OF CENTRAL CITY SCHOOL

DISTRICT #133

By

David Daum

B.A., Eastern Illinois University, 1976
M.A., Southern Illinois University, 1984

Field Study

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Specialist in Educational Administration in the Graduate School, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston Illinois, 1990
Parental Attitudes

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1.
Abstract

The accountability of the nation's schools is an area of great public concern. A useful tool that a school district may use in becoming more accountable to the public is a parent opinion inventory. The inventory may serve as one step in the process of bridging the gap between public expectations of the school district and its actual performance. This study measured the opinions of fifty-seven parents about the performance of the Central City school district. The opinions were determined by a fifty-one item inventory issued to parents in grades kindergarten through grade eight. Recommendations, based upon inventory results, were developed for each performance item on the inventory. Overall results indicate strong parental support for the present performance of Central City school.
Overview of the Problem

Considerable attention is being focused on our nation's school systems. The public is asking serious questions in regard to the performance of its schools. The public questions whether or not schools are doing an adequate job in teaching students in academic as well as non-academic areas. It questions whether or not the schools are meeting the standards expected by the community. In finding the answers to these and other important questions, opinions of parents play an integral role.

Additionally, school reform is presently taking place in many states, including Illinois. These reforms have been the result of the changing needs of society and the failure of the public schools to satisfy the expectations of the public. In an effort to solve the perceived problems in our schools, one must first identify the problems before they can be addressed. One of the roles of members of the public is that of problem identification. Problem identification is a matter of perception. Should the
public perceive an educational institution as having a particular problem, it may serve the best interest of the educational community and the community-at-large to treat any negative perception as a potential problem and not a mistake in perception.

Statement of the Problem

Central City School is a kindergarten through eighth grade school with all students housed in a single building. The school district operates with one administrator who functions as both principal and superintendent. The school district serves as a feeder school for the Centralia High School District. The economic base of the school district is largely comprised of small retail and manufacturing businesses.

By means of an inventory, this study seeks to explore the attitudes and opinions of parents and students enrolled in the Central City School District. The inventory is designed to measure parental opinions about the performance of the school district in seven categories of its operation. The inventory to be used is the Parent Opinion Inventory (part A), which is published by the National Study of School Evaluation.

The reliability score for the inventory is .94. No validity scores for the inventory have been
Parental Attitudes 5

compiled. According to the National Study of School Evaluation (1988),

The Parent Opinion Inventory is valid to the extent that it represents the opinions and beliefs of parents concerning their schools. This domain will vary from school-to-school but by and large will focus on selected conditions, operations, etc. within the school. The focal points presented in the inventory have been identified by a large group of school administrators, parents and university faculty members.

The items in the inventory have been devised to reflect parental responses to these focal points and are valid to the extent that they do indeed assess parents' opinions and beliefs about the principal conditions and operations of their school. (p. 5)

Measuring the opinion of the public about public school performance may well become a major tool in evaluating school districts throughout the country. Through various polls and other sources of information, the public is increasingly becoming aware and concerned about the job performance of public schools.
Limitations of the Study

The data was collected from sixty parents of students from the district. This sample size provided limited results as to opinions of various aspects of school operation. The sample size used in this study represented a number that was slightly above a 20% sampling which was the minimum desired sampling suggested by the National Study of School Evaluation. The study employed a tool to measure parental perceptions and did not solicit the perceptions of students, board members, or those members of the public who did not have children enrolled in the school district. The public was limited to the parental public as suggested by the administrators manual of the survey tool. It was not the purpose of this study to compare one school district with another, but only to collect data so as to point out possible strengths and limitations of the school district in order to work toward improvement.

Definition of Terms

1. Parent/School Relations - The level of active parental involvement in various aspects of school operations such as being informed of student progress, and of educational issues as well as having their
concerns reflected in the decisions made by school officials.

2. Instructional Outcomes - The level at which the school is providing instruction in the basic academic areas as well as instruction in moral and ethical responsibilities.

3. School Problems - This category would include problems such as discipline, vandalism, alcohol and drug use, and absenteeism.

4. Program Factors - A variety of factors that effect the total educational program of the school i.e. teacher competency, school facilities, introduction of new instructional materials.

5. Student Activities - Social development of students through clubs, athletics, and other school events.

6. Support Services - Services provided to the students i.e. counseling, health, transportation, and media services.

7. Psychosocial Climate - The working relationship between teachers and students.
Review of Literature

Measuring opinions of public school performance has become a major tool in evaluating school performance throughout the country. The annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools is an often-used measuring device in assessing the performance of the public school districts. Through various polls and other sources of information, the public is increasingly becoming aware and concerned about the job performance of public schools. Boschee (1986) stated:

The Phi Delta Kappa Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools is a reliable source of information however, it only alerts us to educational concerns on the national level that may or may not parallel a local community's attitudes toward the public schools. A local survey can tell school administrators and boards of education how their community feels about specific educational issues and can reveal the community members' level of awareness of school problems. (p. 115)
According to Garwin (1988) parents want to be educated about the unique needs of their children, and once these are known, they become willing to support programs that are designed to meet these needs. Garwin stressed that those involved in school planning for middle school level need to give careful attention to the perception of parents and what they think is important. In rank order of frequency, Garwin found in his studies the following concerns were most often addressed by parents at the middle-school level:

1. When my child goes to school, more than anything else I want to know that he/she is safe!
2. I want to be sure that my child knows at least one adult well enough to go to if support is needed.
3. I want to know that the school is concerned about helping my youngster develop constructive friendships.
4. I expect the school to provide my youngster with opportunities to get involved in activities.
5. When my youngster comes home from school, I want to know that he/she has had enough good experiences to want to return the next day.
6. I want to know that the middle school is teaching them what they will need to be prepared for high school.

7. I want teachers to keep me informed on his/her progress.

8. When I visit the school, I want to feel welcome.

9. I'd like to know that the school is making every effort to keep parents informed about what to expect from youngsters over the years. (p. 55)

Chavkin and Williams (1987) stated,

American education is being asked to narrow its focus and to improve its effectiveness and its productivity. Administrators are necessary catalysts and leaders for accomplishing this mission. Thus, it is becoming necessary for administrators to expand their knowledge, skills, and understanding so as to be more effective in these catalyst and leadership roles. (p. 164)

Chavkin and Williams focused on the importance of enhancing parental involvement in elementary school systems. Survey instruments were used in their studies to establish a comprehensive base of information concerning parental involvement.

Survey tools can be important instruments in
gaining valuable parental perceptions of the operation of the school district and its level of successfulness. Smith (1985) established that unless parents work in a school or visit a school regularly, their attitudes about the school are developed through their children and through the communications they receive. According to Smith, children have consistently identified specific areas which make schools successful according to their perceptions. They are as follows:

1. Schools aren’t boring because of hands on activities.
2. Schools are orderly.
3. Teachers take personal interest of students.
4. Materials and books are attractive.
5. Students know what it takes to succeed in the attending school.

Surveys can serve as an important component of communication between the school and the community. As indicated by Gallup (1986), the closer the contact public school parents have with their local schools the more favorable their perception of the schools. As a result, public school parents grade their local schools substantially higher than public schools nationally.

The need and the desire for parents to become educated about the operations of their local school
district is evident as a result of recent school reform measures and a nationwide media blitz. Survey instruments can provide an important link between parents and the school district by establishing what perceptions and expectations exist. Gathering accurate information about the performance of the school district based upon public perception is essential to accountability. Survey instruments are therefore an important component in measuring the accountability of the school district.

Uniqueness of the Study

Although considerable attention has been focused on the annual Gallup Poll of the Public's attitudes toward schools, the assessment of an individual school district based on the Gallup Poll could possibly be inaccurate. Despite the common problems that public schools face, nationwide sampling may be of limited use. In referring to the previously mentioned Gallup Poll, Boschee (1987) stated, "findings present substantial evidence that local school officials and school decisionmakers should not make schools decisions and/or formulate policy based on data from the national poll" (p. 121).

Assessment of the public's opinion about the local school district may be effectively measured by using a
survey tool such as the one used in this study. The assessment of the public's opinion about the level of performance in a variety of school operations at Central City may provide the school district with valuable information which is specifically applicable to the school district.
Design of the Study

General Design of the Study

The purpose of this field study was to measure and analyze the opinions of parents about the performance of their school in seven categories of school operations. The data in this field study was collected with the use of a survey instrument in a non-laboratory environment.

The instrument used in this study to measure parental opinions of the Central City School district is the "Parent Opinion Inventory" which has a copyright of 1988 and is issued by the National Study of School Evaluation (see Appendix A).

The instrument is composed of fifty-one questions that fall into subscales as follows: Parent/School Relations, Instructional Outcomes, School Problems, Program Factors, Support Services, and Psychosocial Climate. Each of the fifty-one items on the inventory had five possible responses which are as follows: Strongly agree, Agree, No opinion, Disagree, Strongly agree.

Sample and Population

The school district that has been the subject of the research draws the majority of its enrollment from a town with a population of slightly above 1500
citizens. The population is composed of mostly white laborers with a mean income of $15,987 per family. Of the 1500 citizens, 237 of them are below the poverty level. Of the total population, 329 had completed high school, while thirty-six people had completed four or more years of college.

Sixty parents of students enrolled in the Central City School district were chosen to complete the inventory. The parents were chosen on a systematic basis. With the enrollment of the school hovering slightly below 300 students, the parents of every fifth person selected from the enrollment cards were chosen as subjects. The enrollment cards from which the subjects were chosen included grades kindergarten through grade eight.

Selecting subjects in the above manner was designed to provide a 20% sampling of the school population. The sampling percentage and method of selecting the subjects was recommended in the instructions of the inventory tool used in this study.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The instrument used is designed to represent the opinions and beliefs of parents concerning their schools. The focal points of the subscales on the inventory were identified by a group of school
administrators, parents, and university faculty members. Each of the subjects used in the study was contacted by telephone prior to receiving the inventory. During the phone conversation, the purpose of the inventory was explained to each subject and they also received an explanation as to how they were chosen to participate as subjects. A request was also made by the surveyor for the cooperation of the subjects by completing the inventory and returning it to the surveyor. The children of the subjects were then given the inventories along with an attached form letter explaining that the inventory was for ascertaining information in conjunction with a class at Eastern Illinois University that the surveyor was enrolled. This was done in order to avoid a possible misconception that the school district was issuing the inventories.
Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The results to the "Parent Opinion Inventory" are presented in seven subscales of school operations with each item in the subscale analyzed. The items of the survey as well as each subscale are analyzed using a Lickert-type scale with five points given to each strongly agree response, four points assigned to each agree response, three points assigned for each undecided response, two points for a response of disagree, and one point for each strongly agree response. The average score is then calculated for each item and for each subscale. Conclusions and recommendations are made for each of the fifty-one individual inventory items from which the subscales are composed.

The subscales and the order in which they are presented are: (a) Parent/School Relations, (b) Instructional Outcomes, (c) School Problems, (d) Program Factors, (e) Student Activities, (f) Support Services, and (g) Psychosocial Climate. The results for each item on the inventory are presented in tables on the following pages, followed by a discussion of results, conclusions, and recommendations.
Parental Attitudes

Parent/School Relations

Children's Progress Reports (Item 3) (see Table 1)

Results and conclusions. A total of 36.8% of the parents surveyed strongly agreed that progress reports were adequate. Those who agreed that progress reports were adequate totaled 45.6% while 3.5% were undecided. Eight and eight tenths percent disagreed on this item while 1.8% strongly disagreed with progress report adequacy. Over 82% were satisfied with the present use of progress reports.

Recommendations. Central City School should continue to maintain its present policy concerning its use of progress reports to parents.

Parents are Informed of Educational Policies (Item 4)

Results and conclusions. Overall, parents were satisfied with how they were being informed with 17.5% who strongly agreed and 66.7% who agreed. A total of 5.3% were undecided and 5.3% also disagreed. No one strongly disagreed with the current practice in this area.

Recommendations. Central City should maintain its present practice of informing parents about educational policy.

Parent's Concerns and Their Reflection on School Decisions (Item 5)
Results and conclusions. The majority of those polled felt that school decisions reflected their concerns. Those who strongly agreed totaled 10.5% while 57.9% agreed. The undecided equalled 17.5% on this issue while 5.3% disagreed and 1.8% strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Central City school should continue its present practices of involving the parents and addressing their concerns with the school's decisions.

Community is Actively Involved in School Operation (Item 6)

Results and conclusions. Most respondents felt favorable about this area with 10.5% strongly agreeing and 43.9% agreeing about the community's involvement. A total of 12.3% were undecided while almost one-fourth (22.8%) disagreed in terms of community involvement. Those who strongly disagreed totaled 1.8%.

Recommendations. Central City School should pursue new avenues to enhance the feeling of involvement by the public. A monthly newsletter sent to parents would be beneficial in establishing communication between parents and the school. Also, a public relations committee composed of parents, and
Parental Attitudes

Teachers may be useful in developing ways to enhance the feeling of community involvement.

For the Most Part, I am Satisfied with our School (Item 27)

Results and conclusions. Respondents were very favorable in that 19.3% strongly agreed, 64.9% agreed while only 3.5% were undecided and 7% disagreed.

Recommendations. Central City should continue its present course in its general conduct considering the overall evaluation of parental satisfaction.

It is Easy to get an Appointment to See a Teacher (Item 43)

Results and conclusions. Those who were surveyed responded with 50.9% strongly agreeing and 40.4% agreeing while no one was undecided, disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Teachers should continue the way they schedule appointments with parents and continue to be easily accessible for parents.

It is Easy to Meet with Administration (Item 44)

Results and conclusions. Of those surveyed, 35.1% strongly agreed with this item while 54.4% agreed. A total of 8.8% were undecided and no one disagreed or strongly disagreed.
**Recommendations.** The administration of Central City School should continue to provide access to the public as is presently done.

The results of The Parent/School Relations subscale presented in the previous paragraphs showed general support for the methods and policies used by the Central City School to foster strong relationships between school staff and parent's. The establishment of a public relations committee and the use of a monthly newsletter to parents could prove useful in developing an even stronger sense of community involvement. The overall average score for this subscale was 3.96 (see Appendix B).
Table 1

Subscale 1: Parent/School Relationships

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Strongly Agree – SA = 5
Agree – A = 4
Undecided – U = 3
Disagree – D = 2
Strongly Disagree – SD = 1
Instructional Outcomes

Our School is Helping Students to Cope with a Rapidly Changing Society (Item 7) (see Table 2)

**Results and conclusions.** This item elicited very positive responses with 7% strongly agreeing, and 63.2% agreeing while a total of 19.3% were undecided on this issue. Only 5.3% of the respondents were in disagreement, while 3.5% strongly disagreed.

**Recommendations.** Although the majority of those surveyed responded favorably, a large percentage of parents were undecided on this issue. As a result, it is recommended that more effort be made by the faculty and other school officials to inform parents about how the school is preparing students to deal with current problems and those of the future.

Our School is not Helping Students Understand World Problems (Item 8)

**Results and conclusions.** The scores on this item are scored inversely. Central City School showed a weakness in this area according to the parents polled with 3.5% strongly agreeing and 52.6% agreeing, 24.6% being undecided, 10.5% disagreeing, and 1.8% strongly disagreeing.

**Recommendations.** The faculty and administration of Central City School should determine how best to
Increase the emphasis on instruction about world problems. Consideration should also be given as to how to provide better communication to parents about current instruction in this area.

**Our School is Doing a Good Job in Teaching Students the Language Arts (Item 9)**

**Results and conclusions.** A total of 22.8% of the parents strongly agreed with this issue and 61.4% agreed. Those undecided equalled 8.8% while 3.5% disagreed and 1.8% disagreed strongly.

**Recommendations.** The results indicated a general satisfaction with the language arts program and therefore no recommendations are required.

**Our School is Doing a Good Job in Teaching Students Mathematics (Item 10)**

**Results and conclusions.** With 17.5% strongly agreeing and 61.4% agreeing with this item, support for the math program seems strong. The remaining respondents were 5.3% undecided, 5.3% disagreed, and 3.5% strongly disagreed.

**Recommendations.** The math program should continue its current practices.

**Our School is Doing a Good Job in Teaching Students the Sciences (Item 11)**
Results and conclusions. Good parental perceptions are indicated by 14% strongly agreeing and 52.6% agreeing. 10.5% of the respondents were undecided and 14% disagreed while no parents strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Although the majority of those polled felt the program was adequately instructed, a review of the present science curriculum by the faculty and school officials should be undertaken to strengthen the present science program.

Our School is Doing a Good Job of Helping Students Understand Their Moral and Ethical Responsibilities (Item 12)

Results and conclusions. Central City School did not receive the level of support that it had in previous items in this subscale. Only 8.8% of the parents strongly agreed with this item, and 42.1% of the parents agreed while 17.5% were undecided. A total of 15.8% disagreed with this item and 3.5% strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Although the percentage of the respondents in the strongly agree category and the agree category is somewhat lower than previous items, the approval rate was still quite high. Further discussion of this topic between faculty and
administration through the establishment of a curriculum committee would be useful in addressing possible methods of improvement in this area.

Our School's Program Helps Students to Understand and Get Along with Other People (Item 13)

Results and conclusions. Seven percent of those surveyed strongly agreed with this item while 52.6% agreed. Those undecided equalled 17.5% while 14% disagreed and 3.5% strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Although the majority of the parents thought the school provided good social training for students, discussion of this topic should take place between faculty and school administration to explore ways to improve in this area.

Health Classes Include Adequate Attention to Both Mental and Physical Health (Item 14)

Results and conclusions. Five and three tenths percent of the parents strongly agreed and 52.6% agreed with this item. A large percentage of 28.1% were undecided with 10.5% disagreeing and no one strongly disagreeing. The high percentage of undecided may be the result of low interest in this area of curriculum by the parents which may reflect their lack of desired information.
Recommendations. It is recommended that the teachers make effort to communicate to the parents health related activities that are part of the school's curriculum.

Our School Is Doing a Good Job in Teaching Social Studies (Item 15)

Results and conclusions. Fourteen percent of the respondents chose the strongly agree category while 61.4% chose the agree category. Fourteen percent of the respondents were also undecided with this item while 1.8% both responded in each of the disagree and strongly disagree categories.

Recommendations. Because a large percentage of those surveyed had favorable opinions about this item, no recommendations can be made other than to continue present practices.

The Curriculum Adequately Prepares Students Planning to Continue Their Education to More Advanced Levels (Item 16)

Results and conclusions. Respondents were favorable in their opinions of this item with 7% strongly agreeing and 57.9% agreeing while only 8.8% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed. A fairly large percentage of the respondents (21.1%) were undecided in their opinions of this item.
Recommendations. Because of the importance of this item in the overall public view of the school’s curriculum, additional attention should be given to determine why so many of those polled were undecided. An additional survey may be helpful in gaining information concerning this item.

In Virtually all of Their Coursework Students See a Relationship Between What They are Studying and Their Everyday Lives (Item 23)

Results and conclusions. A very small percentage of 1.8% of the parents strongly agreed with 26.3% agreeing. A large percentage of 36.8% were undecided indicating possible doubt in the relevance of certain curriculum areas. A total of 21.1% of the respondents disagreed with this item which also indicated a possible area of review while 1.8% of those surveyed strongly disagreed with this item.

Recommendations. A curriculum review committee should be established to consider improvements to the curriculum. In addition, conducting a survey of the students reactions to various course offerings would be useful in guiding curriculum decisions.

The School’s Priorities for Expenditures of Funds are Appropriate (Item 50)
Results and conclusions. The results on this item were favorable with 5.3% strongly agreeing and 68.4% agreeing. Fourteen percent of the parents were undecided while 5.3% disagreed and 1.8% strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Continue present priorities in the expenditure of school funds, but through the use of a previously mentioned newsletter general financial information about the school district could be included to enhance public understanding of school expenditures.

All Things Considered. Students are Learning about All They can from Their School Experiences (Item 51)

Results and conclusions. Parental opinions were favorable overall with 14% strongly agreeing and 56.1% agreeing. Those who were undecided equalled 12.3% with 8.8% disagreeing and 3.5% strongly disagreeing.

Recommendations. Central City School should continue its overall policies in regard to this item.

In this subscale of 13 items concerning instructional outcomes, the scale average score was 3.61, but it also had the highest standard deviation of any of the subscales in this study of 6.51 (see Appendix B). Most of the areas of instruction showed strong support by the parents, but there were a number of areas that could be improved to reduce the level of
Indecision. Further work in the area of providing information to the public in certain instructional areas by the use of a newsletter was recommended. In addition, the establishment of a curriculum committee and the review of the present curriculum in the areas addressed by the items in this subscale was suggested.
Table 2

Subscale 2: Instructional Outcomes

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Strongly Agree - SA = 5
Agree - A = 4
Undecided - U = 3
Disagree - D = 2
Strongly Disagree - SD = 1
Parental Attitudes

School Problems

Discipline is not a Serious Problem in our School (Item 18) (see Table 3)

Results and conclusions. The respondents to this item showed a fairly high level of disagreement with 35.1% and 3.5% strongly disagreeing. 3.5% strongly agreed with this item while 36.8% agree and 15.8% were undecided. It can be concluded that discipline is still on the minds of parents as a critical issue.

Recommendations. Although the results indicate concern about discipline problems in our school, it is the researchers perception and the perception of those of other staff members that discipline problems are being handled more effectively in the past two years with the employment of a new superintendent/principal. Because attitudes are slow to change, it may take a longer period of time before the positive attitude of staff members and the students is acquired by the parents. It is recommended to continue present discipline procedures for another year and then survey the parents about school discipline to determine if attitudes of parents have changed or whether a review the policies and procedures is required to make improvements.
Students' use of Alcohol and/or Drugs in our School is not a Serious Problem (Item 19)

**Results and conclusions.** Parents showed very favorable opinions with this item with 14% strongly agreeing and 45.6% agreeing that drugs and alcohol are not serious problems. A total of 19.3% of the parents were undecided while 10.5% disagreed and 5.3% strongly disagreed.

**Recommendations.** Drug-education programs should be expanded in the school. Training for teachers should be provided in the area of substance abuse and its identification.

Vandalism is a Serious Problem in our School (Item 20)

**Results and conclusions.** The results of this item are reversed in the direction of positive favor. The majority of those polled felt that vandalism was not a problem. Twelve and three tenths percent strongly disagreed with this item, 59.6% disagreed while 15.8% were undecided. Three and five tenths percent both agreed and strongly agreed with this item.

**Recommendations.** Because the results indicate that vandalism is not currently a problem, no recommendations can be made.

Outsiders do not Pose a Threat to Students in our School (Item 21)
Results and conclusions. Outsiders do not appear to be a major concern to the parents surveyed. A total of 24.6% strongly agreed with this item and 43.9% agreed. Also, 12.3% of the parents were undecided and 8.8% strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. No recommendations can be made presently.

Student Absenteeism is not a Problem at our School (Item 22)

Results and conclusions. A total of 3.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 1.8% disagreed while no one strongly disagreed. Also, 33.3% of the respondents were undecided.

Recommendations. Information regarding absenteeism should be included in a monthly newsletter to parents.

The five previous items in this subscale had a scale average score of 3.54 with a standard deviation of 2.69 (see Appendix B). The results of this subscale seem to indicate a favorable opinion in most subscale items with little variance in individual responses from the mean. Recommendations for the previous items included a future survey of parents regarding discipline problems, drug education for staff members,
and providing absenteeism information in a monthly newsletter.

Table 3

**Subscale 3: School Problems**

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</table>

Strongly Agree - SA = 5
Agree - A = 4
Undecided - U = 3
Disagree - D = 2
Strongly Disagree - SD = 1
Program Factors

Students have Sufficient Amounts of Homework to Promote Achievement in Their Courses (Item 17) (see Table 4)

Results and conclusions. The parents had a very positive response on this item with 14% strongly agreeing and 64.9% agreeing. Only 8.8% of the respondents were undecided, while 7% disagreed and 3.5% strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. With almost 79% of those taking the poll responding favorably, the present practices of the faculty should continue concerning the assignment of homework.

The Total Educational Program Offered to Students is of High Quality (Item 24)

Results and conclusions. The results of this item was also very favorable in that 12.3% strongly agreed and 54.4% agreed while only 14% were undecided. Seven percent of the parents disagreed and no one strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Because the overall view of this item was very positive, no drastic changes can be recommended at this time, but the establishment of a curriculum committee as previously mentioned should be considered for the near future.

In General, our Teachers are Competent (Item 26)
Results and conclusions. The results showed strong support for the competency of the teachers with 19.3% strongly agreeing and 68.4% agreeing with the item. Only 8.8% of the respondents were undecided, and 1.8% disagreed with no one strongly disagreeing.

Recommendations. Although legal consideration would dictate changes when appropriate, the high positive regard for the competency of the teachers in the district supports a posture that no apparent change is needed at this time.

Marks on Assignments and Course Grades Receive the Right Amount of Emphasis (Item 28)

Results and conclusions. Again, very strong support was evidenced by the results of this item. Ten and five tenths percent strongly agreed with this item and 71.9% agreed. Also, 10.5% were undecided and 3.5% disagreed while no one strongly disagreed with this item.

Recommendations. Because the minimal level of disagreement and the high level of support with the grading system, the present system should continue.

The Total Number of Instructional Topics ls Adequate (Item 29)

Results and conclusions. Although the parental support for this item was good with 5.3% in strong
agreement and 68.4% in agreement, a fairly large percentage were undecided about the adequacy of the program (19.3%). The high percentage of the undecided may reflect the lack of knowledge about the school's curriculum with the exception of the traditional subjects. Only 1.8% of the respondents disagreed with this item and no one strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Assuming there is a lack of knowledge by the parents about curriculum areas, the dissemination of information about these areas would be useful. This could either be done through P.T.O. meetings or monthly newsletters.

The Amount of Educational Change (Introduction of New Materials and Methods of Teaching) is About Right (Item 30)

Results and conclusions. A total of 5.3% of the parents strongly agreed while 63.2% agreed with the item. Also, 15.8% of the parents were undecided and 8.8% disagreed while no one strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Because of the difficulty in analyzing "change", and the overall positive response, no recommendations can be made.

Building Facilities (Work Space, Furnishings, etc.) are Adequate to Support the Instructional Program (Item 47)
Results and conclusions. The overall positive response on this item was somewhat expected since major renovations have been done to the school building within the past five years. A total of 8.8% of those polled strongly agreed with this item and 77.2% agreed. A total of 3.5% were undecided and 3.5% disagreed with no one in strong disagreement.

The School's Programs Adequately Meet the Needs of Special Students (Learning Disabled, Gifted, etc.) (Item 49)

Results and conclusions. A large percentage of 24.6% strongly agreed with this item with 40.4% agreeing. Of the respondents, 19.3% were undecided on this issue with 7% disagreeing and 3.5% strongly disagreeing.

Recommendations. Although there was overall support for this item, it would be helpful for the school to occasionally disseminate information about special programs being offered to the students.

All Things Considered. Students are Learning about all They can from Their School Experiences (Item 51)

Results and conclusions. Support for this item was again very strong with 14% of the parents in strong agreement and 56.1% in agreement. A total of 12.3% of
the respondents were undecided, 8.8% disagreed, and 3.5% strongly disagreed.

**Recommendations.** Central City School should continue its present program practices.

General support for this subscale of program factors was very strong with few recommendations of major change. In order to reduce the lack of knowledge about current school programs, it would be beneficial as previously stated to develop a practice of disseminating information about current curriculum practices. Also beneficial, would be the establishment of a curriculum committee to periodically review the curriculum for possible needed changes. The average subscale score was 3.80 with a standard deviation of 3.91 (see Appendix B).
Table 4

**Subscale 4: Program Factors**

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</table>

Strongly Agree - SA = 5
Agree - A = 4
Undecided - U = 3
Disagree - D = 2
Strongly Disagree - SD = 1
Parental Attitudes 42

**Student Activities**

*Appropriate Emphasis Is Placed on the Social Development of Students (Item 31) (see Table 5)*

**Results and conclusions.** Seven percent of the parents surveyed were in strong agreement with the item and 66.7% agreed. In addition, 12.3% were undecided, 10.5% disagreed with only 1.8% in strong disagreement.

**Recommendations.** General support for this item was evident, but consideration of this topic should be included in discussion in a curriculum development meeting to determine areas in which improvement is needed.

*The Activities Program (Clubs, Drama, etc.) Is Sufficient to Meet the Needs of Students (Item 32)*

**Results and conclusions.** Although 17.5% of those polled indicated strong agreement with this item, and 43.9% were in agreement, 17.5% were also undecided. A total of 17.5% of the respondents were undecided while 14% disagreed and 3.5% strongly disagreed.

**Recommendations.** A parent/student survey should be conducted to establish the needs and desires that the parents and students have of the activities program.
Students' Participation in School Activities is an Important Aspect of Their Education at Our School (Item 33)

Results and conclusions. Extremely strong support was shown by those polled with 24.6% in strong agreement and 64.9% in agreement while only 5.3% were undecided and no one disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Continue current level of student involvement in school activities.

The Role of, and Emphasis on, the Athletics Program is about Right (Item 34)

Results and conclusions. Again, support was very strong with 5.3% in strong agreement and 73.7% in agreement. Ten and five tenths percent were undecided with 5.3% in disagreement and no one in strong disagreement.

Recommendations. Central City School should continue its present athletic program.

The Expenses Involved in School Activities (e.g., Costumes, Instruments, Insurance, etc.) are Keeping Some Students from Participating (Item 35)

Results and conclusions. Although the largest percentage of those surveyed were in agreement with this item with 3.5% in strong agreement and 45.6% in agreement, a fairly large percentage were in
disagreement with 28.1% and 3.5% in strong disagreement. A total of 14% of the respondents were undecided.

**Recommendations.** A review of current costs for students involved in school activities should be undertaken by the Board of Education to determine if there may be some method to offset expenses for the students.

In the items presented by the survey in this subscale, parental support was adequate in most of the items with the exception of item numbers 32 and 35. As indicated by the recommendation in those items, consideration needs to be given by the school's decision-makers as to how to inform the public about current educational programs and how to make the cost of items for school activities less prohibitive. The average score for this subscale was 3.67 with a standard deviation of 2.31 (see Appendix B).
Table 5

Subscale 5: Student Activities

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Strongly Agree - SA = 5
Agree - A = 4
Undecided - U = 3
Disagree - D = 2
Strongly Disagree - SD = 1
Support Services Items

Services Provided by our Counseling and Guidance Program are Adequate for My Son's/Daughter's Needs (Item 36) (see Table 6)

Results and conclusions. Although 8.8% of those polled strongly agreed with this item and 31.6% agreed, a large percentage of 36.8% were undecided. This is probably because Central City does not presently have any counselors and their role in the school setting would not likely be well understood by many parents. Also, 14% of the parents were in disagreement with this item and 7% were in strong disagreement.

Recommendations. It would prove useful to conduct a needs assessment to establish if there is truly a need for counseling services in Central City School.

Health Services at School are Adequate (Item 37)

Results and conclusions. Parental support for the health services presently provided was very strong with 7% strongly agreeing and 73.7% agreeing while only 5.3% were undecided. In addition, 8.8% of those surveyed were in disagreement while 3.5% were in strong disagreement.

Recommendations. Central City School should continue its present practices regarding its health services program.
Parental Attitudes

The Media Center (Library of Books, Audiovisual Tapes, etc.) Plays a Central Role in Learning (Item 38)

Results and conclusions. A large percentage of 21.1% strongly agreed about the importance of the media center as well as 57.9% being in agreement. Twelve and three tenths percent were undecided while 5.3% of the respondents disagreed and no one strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. No recommendations are needed with this item.

The Basic to-and from School Transportation Services Meet the Students Needs (Item 39)

Results and conclusions. Transportation services were very favorable to the public with 28.1% in strong agreement and 59.6% in agreement. Of the respondents, only 1.8% were undecided in their views and the identical percentage occurred in the disagree category. A total of 3.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Central City should continue it current level of transportation services.

The Lunch Program is Appropriate for Our Student’s Needs (Item 40)

Results and conclusions. A total of 31.6% of the parents strongly agreed and 54.4% agreed with the item. Only 3.5% of the parents were undecided and 5.3%
disagreed. Overall support for this program was very favorable.

Recommendations. Central City School should continue present lunch program.

Our School is Well Maintained (Clean. Repaired. Supplied, etc.) (Item 41)

Results and conclusions. Of the respondents, 36.8% strongly agreed that the school was well maintained and 56.1% of the parents were in agreement. No one was in strong disagreement with this item or in disagreement. Only 1.8% of the parents were undecided in their views.

Recommendations. Presently Central City School has two full-time custodians and one half-time custodian. This level of employment should be maintained at this time.

Build Facilities (Work Space, Furnishings, etc.) are Adequate to Support the Instructional Program (Item 47)

Results and conclusions. A total of 8.8% of the parents surveyed indicated strong agreement in that the facilities are adequate and a total of 77.2% were in agreement. Also, 3.5% were undecided and 3.5% disagreed that the facilities are adequate while no one strongly disagreed.
Recommendations. The perception of the building facilities is that they are adequate. Other than to maintain the present structure, no other recommendations can be made.

School Personnel Involve Community Services (e.g., Welfare, Mental Health, Law Enforcement) to Help Meet Students Needs (Item 48)

Results and conclusions. Ten and five tenths percent of the parents surveyed strongly agreed with this item and 63.2% were in agreement while 17.5% were undecided. No one responded in the strongly disagree category or the disagree category.

Recommendations. Central City School should continue its cooperation with local civic groups and build more involvement whenever possible.

As a result of the perception of the majority of the parents polled, few recommendations could be made in the "Support Services" subscale. The only significant recommendation in this area was to do a needs assessment to determine if there is truly a need for counselling services at Central City School. The subscale average score was 3.89 with a standard deviation of 3.52 (see Appendix B).
Table 6

Subscale 6: Support Services

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Strongly Agree - SA = 5
Agree - A = 4
Undecided - U = 3
Disagree - D = 2
Strongly Disagree - SD = 1
Psychosocial Climate

Students Show Respect for Each Other (Item 1) (see Table 7)

Results and conclusions. This item indicated that parental opinions toward respectful student behavior was less than desirable. While only 5.3% of the parents strongly agreed that students were respectful to each other, 28.1% were in agreement. A total of 15.8% were undecided, but a very large percentage of 42.1% were in disagreement with this item. A total of 5.3% of the parents strongly disagreed.

Recommendations. Although the researcher thinks the new superintendent of Central City School makes very good effort in promoting student respect, continued emphasis should be placed on this in every aspect of school programing. Inservice to promote mutual student respect would be beneficial as well as placing the topic of student respect on the agenda of both faculty meetings and teacher association meetings. The establishment of a parent/teacher committee to explore possible methods to enhance student respect would be beneficial.

The Students and Teachers have a Good Working Relationship with Each Other (Item 2).
Results and conclusions. The parental perception of student/teacher relationships appears to be very positive with 12.3% in strong agreement and 59.6% in agreement. A total of 8.8% were undecided regarding this item with 10.5% in disagreement and 1.8% in strong disagreement.

Recommendations. Although student/teacher relations seem to be very adequate, I would recommend that this topic be included in future discussion about effective classroom instruction during faculty meetings or inservice training.

Our Students are Seldom Motivated to do their Best Work (Item 25).

Results and conclusions. The results of this item are reversed in direction of positive favor. Parental perception of this item was not favorable as indicated by the data. Five and three tenths percent of the parent's opinions were strongly favorable with 14% of the parents viewing the item as favorable. Forty-nine and one tenth percent of the parents viewed this item with agreement while 14% of the parents were undecided which indicates an unfavorable view. Also, 12.3% of the parents strongly agreed which is also a negative view.
Recommendations. Since this survey was conducted, motivational posters have been placed around the school to increase student awareness about the importance of quality of work. Also, specific inservice training should be provided for the teachers to learn motivational techniques to be incorporated in the classroom. In addition, motivational techniques used in the classroom is an area of teacher performance which should be examined during teacher evaluations.

The Morale of Students is Good (Item 42).

Results and conclusions. The results were favorable overall with 12.3% strongly agreeing and 61.4% agreeing with this item. Only 8.8% of the parents were undecided and 5.3% disagreed with no one disagreeing.

Recommendations. The level of morale seems to be very good so no recommendations can be made presently.

Teachers are Concerned about My Son/Daughter as an Individual (Item 45).

Results and conclusions. The results from this item were very favorable with 26.3% indicating strong agreement and 52.6% in agreement. A total of 8.8% of the parents were undecided with only 5.3% in disagreement and no one in strong disagreement.
Recommendations. The acknowledgement of the results of this item by the board and administration and conveyance to the staff of the positive perception of the parents may further reinforce the positive effort by the instructional staff.

**School Rules and Regulations Affecting Students are Reasonable (Item 46).**

Results and conclusions. The vast majority of those polled felt that the school rules were reasonable with 24.6% in strong agreement and 66.7% in agreement. In addition, 1.8% of the parents were undecided with no one in disagreement and 1.8% in disagreement.

Recommendations. No recommendations for change is necessary because of the current level of support for the Administration and the Board of Education.

Parental opinions toward the items on the previous subscale again appear to be favorable with the exception of item number 25. Concerning this item, more effort through staff inservice or faculty meetings should be given to focus on this apparent problem. The subscale average score was 3.66 (See Appendix B).
Table 7

**Subscale 7: Psychosocial Services**

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<td>1.8%</td>
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</table>

Strongly Agree - SA = 5
Agree - A = 4
Undecided - U = 3
Disagree - D = 2
Strongly Disagree - SD = 1
Summary of the Study

This Field Study was conducted by the researcher to determine parental perceptions of Central City School in seven areas of school performance. The survey instrument was completed by fifty-seven parents of the students in grades kindergarten through eighth. The instrument was sent home with the students of the parents selected to participate so the surveys could be completed in their home setting. Students returned completed surveys to the researcher. No names were attached to the surveys in an effort to increase anonymity in hopes of increasing the honesty in the answering of the survey items. The researcher compiled the data and attempted to draw conclusions from the results of each survey item with recommendations also being made for each item.

The major recommendations made in the various subscales were as follows: (a) establish a public relations committee for the school, (b) utilize a monthly newsletter, (c) set up a curriculum committee, (d) administer a survey in the future to parents about discipline, (e) provide drug education training for teachers, (f) disseminate information about the curriculum to parents, (g) review current educational programs and their costs, (h) build more involvement
between the school and civic groups, (1) provide inservice for teachers about motivational techniques.
The purpose of this survey is to assist in learning more about our school's instructional program. Your opinions and attitudes are of vital importance to this assessment.

This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. The answers you give will be completely confidential. Do not sign your name or identify yourself in any way.

Remember that your opinions and attitudes will assist school personnel in making better decisions regarding improvement in the school.

Directions

The following statements describe a wide variety of conditions related to the operation of our schools. We want to know to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement. Therefore, indicate your opinion by marking each statement as follows:

Circle the SA if you STRONGLY AGREE with the statement
A if you AGREE but not strongly
U if you are UNDECIDED
D if you DISAGREE
SD if you STRONGLY DISAGREE

(NOTE: If you have been given an answer sheet, make these marks as described on the answer sheet; if not, you may mark the letters to the right of the statement.)

Example: Our community is proud of its schools. SA A U D SD

In this case the parent AGREES with the statement, but not strongly, so A was circled.

Turn to the next page and begin.

The Parent Opinion Inventory, Part A, is packaged separately and may be purchased in quantity from the National Study of School Evaluation.

NATIONAL STUDY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION
5201 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, Virginia 22041

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PARENT OPINION INVENTORY
PART A

Circle the SA if you STRONGLY AGREE with the statement
A if you AGREE but not strongly
U if you are UNDECIDED
D if you DISAGREE
SD if you STRONGLY DISAGREE

1. Students show respect for each other. SA A U D SD
2. The students and teachers have a good working relationship with each other. SA A U D SD
3. Reports concerning our students' progress are adequate. SA A U D SD
4. Parents are informed of educational policies. SA A U D SD
5. The concerns of parents are reflected in decisions affecting our school. SA A U D SD
6. Our community is actively involved in all aspects of school operations. SA A U D SD
7. Our school is helping students to cope with a rapidly changing society. SA A U D SD
8. Our school is not helping students to understand world problems. SA A U D SD
9. Our school is doing a good job in teaching students the language arts (reading, writing, grammar, etc.). SA A U D SD
10. Our school is doing a good job in teaching students mathematics. SA A U D SD
11. Our school is doing a good job in teaching students the sciences. SA A U D SD
12. Our school is doing a good job of helping students understand their moral and ethical responsibilities. SA A U D SD
13. Our school's program helps students to understand and get along with other people. SA A U D SD
14. Health classes include adequate attention to both mental health and physical health. SA A U D SD
15. Our school is doing a good job in teaching social studies (history, geography, government, etc.). SA A U D SD
16. The curriculum adequately prepares students planning to continue their education to more advanced levels. SA A U D SD
17. Students have sufficient amounts of homework to promote achievement in their courses. SA A U D SD
18. Discipline is not a serious problem in our school. SA A U D SD
19. Students' use of alcohol and/or drugs in our school is not a serious problem. SA A U D SD
20. Vandalism is a serious problem at our school. SA A U D SD
21. Outsiders (e.g., unenrolled teens, peddlers, etc.) do not pose a threat to students in our school. SA A U D SD
22. Student absenteeism is not a problem at our school. SA A U D SD
23. In virtually all of their coursework students see a relationship between what they are studying and their everyday lives. SA A U D SD
24. The total educational program offered to students is of high quality. SA A U D SD
25. Our students are seldom motivated to do their best work. SA A U D SD
26. In general, our teachers are competent. SA A U D SD
27. For the most part, I am satisfied with our school. SA A U D SD
28. Marks on assignments and course grades receive the right amount of emphasis. SA A U D SD
Circle the SA if you STRONGLY AGREE with the statement
A if you AGREE but not strongly
U if you are UNDECIDED
D if you DISAGREE
SD if you STRONGLY DISAGREE

29. The total variety of instructional topics is adequate.  
30. The amount of educational change (introduction of new materials and methods of teaching) is about right.  
31. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the social development of students.  
32. The activities program (clubs, drama, etc.) is sufficient to meet the needs of students.  
33. Students' participation in school activities is an important aspect of their education at our school.  
34. The role of, and emphasis on, the athletics program is about right.  
35. The expenses involved in school activities (e.g., costumes, instruments, insurance, etc.) are keeping some students from participation.  
36. Services provided by our counseling and guidance program are adequate for my son's/daughter's needs.  
37. Health services at school are adequate.  
38. The media center (library of books, audiovisual tapes, etc.) plays a central role in learning.  
39. The basic to-and-from school transportation services meet the needs of students.  
40. The lunch program is appropriate for our students' needs.  
41. Our school is well maintained (clean, repaired, supplied, etc.).  
42. The morale of students is good.  
43. It is easy to get an appointment to see a teacher.  
44. It is easy to get an appointment with the administrators.  
45. Teachers are concerned about my son/daughter as an individual.  
46. School rules and regulations affecting students are reasonable.  
47. Building facilities (work space, furnishings, etc.) are adequate to support the instructional program.  
48. School personnel involve community services (e.g., welfare, mental health, law enforcement) to help meet students' needs.  
49. The school's programs adequately meet the needs of special students (learning disabled, gifted, etc.).  
50. The school's priorities for expenditures of funds are appropriate.  
51. All things considered, students are learning about all they can from their school experiences.
Parental Attitudes

Appendix B

SA : 5 POINTS, A : 4 POINTS, U : 3 POINTS
D : 2 POINTS, SD : 1 POINTS, BLANKS : 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>parent school</th>
<th>instruct outcomes</th>
<th>school problems factors</th>
<th>student activity</th>
<th>support service</th>
<th>psycho climate</th>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.97</td>
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</table>

*Number of items: number of items in a subscale*
*Scale average total: scale total / number of subjects*
*Standard deviation: standard deviation for a subscale*
*Scale reliability: reliability for a subscale*
*Scale average score: scale average total / number of items in the scale*
References


