PERCEPTIONS OF RURAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS:

THE USE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES

PROPOSED BY PHI DELTA KAPPA TO RETAIN

AT-RISK STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

By

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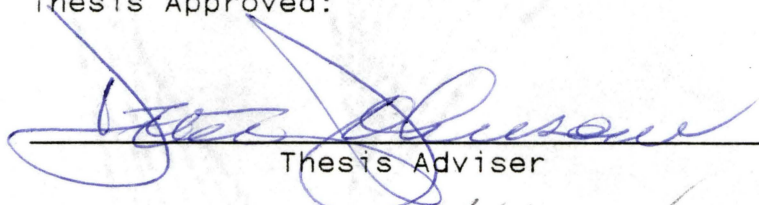The University of Oklahoma
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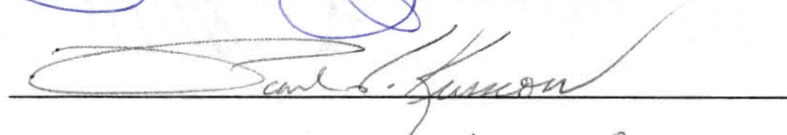Central State University
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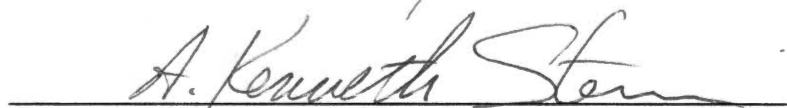in partial fulfillment of
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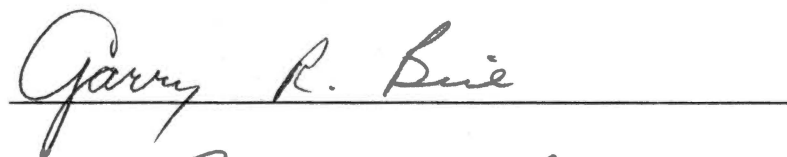the degree of
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first major national report of the 1980's calling for educational reform was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983), under the title A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. From this report, the public became outraged and demanded academic excellence in response to this country's loss of leadership in world industrial and technological markets. Academic excellence was to be achieved through a back-to-basics approach and a centralized policy that replaced professional autonomy in the local school (Frymier, J., 1989).

Later in the 1980's, the call for educational reform evolved to a decentralized approach where the professionals in the local school were the key decision makers. The chief issues for reform tended to focus on these areas:

1. The development of collegial participatory environments in schools

2. The use of flexible time/schedules

3. A curriculum that focused on students' understanding on what they learn--knowing "why" as well as "how"

4.   An emphasis on higher-order thinking skills for all students (Michaels, 1988, p. 3)

The Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986) in <u>A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century</u>, stressed that more professional autonomy for educational decisions was a minimum requirement for teacher effectiveness. The Task Force emphasized the necessity of creating a professional environment for teaching. According to this report, educational professionals should be valued for their expertise and judgment; the organizations in which they worked should emphasize collegial relationships. However, the Task Force noted that the school environment was characteristically bureaucratic. The decisions and rules that affected teacher behavior were made by others.

The aforementioned Governors' 1991 Report on Education (1986) advocated that states implement the following strategies for at-risk students:

1.   Provide early-childhood education for all disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds, kindergarten for all five-year-olds, and extra help for students who were falling behind. The report also recommended reducing class sizes in kindergarten through third grade and setting up alternative programs.

2.   Establish day care and after-school care in schools.

3.   Set up home programs to teach first-time, low-income parents how to play with and care for their infants, as well as be provided with information on successful parenting techniques.

4.   Allow parents to choose the elementary and/or high school their child would attend, even if the school was in another district.

5.   Convert to year-round calendars.

6. Train new teachers to use technology, such as computers and robotics, as classroom tools.

7. Tie principals' salaries and promotions to the results they obtain in their schools, and fire those who show repeated failures.

Bennett (1986), in <u>First Lessons: A Report on</u>
<u>Elementary Education in America</u>, made several
recommendations for improving the education of young
children in specific curriculum areas:

1. All elementary students can and must be taught to read.

2. Writing must be part of the whole curriculum, and not just language arts.

3. Elementary schools must teach science, which includes hands-on experimental activities.

4. Mathematics should emphasize problem-solving.

5. Substantial instruction in history, geography, and civics should begin at the kindergarten level.

6. Instruction in the arts should be integral parts of every elementary school.

7. Elementary students should gain a basic understanding of the uses of computers.

8. Health and physical education should be integral parts of every elementary school.

9. Every elementary school should have a library.

In spite of the reform efforts, issues pertaining to the
at-risk student remained problematic. Therefore, Phi Delta
Kappa determined to accomplish a national collaborating
research project with 100 local chapters of at-risk
students. Educational professionals who represented
PDK chapters in widely separated regions of the United
States used the same research questions, instruments, time

frame, and data collection procedures (Frymier, 1989).

In February, 1988, educators across this country were appointed to serve on a PDK coordinating committee of "A Study of Students At Risk." This committee met three times between March and June, 1988, to conceptualize research problems and to develop instruments and procedures to accomplish a collaborating research project:

> Working together, many chapters of Phi Delta Kappa
> could accomplish a significant study of a significant
> issue in education. Such a project would require
> each participating chapter to establish a research
> team, to undergo a training program, to collect
> data, and to transmit those data to a coordinating
> committee...(Frymier, J., 1989, p. 3).

Education professionals who contributed their time and expertise to the research effort made it possible to collect data across the United States in uniform ways. Standardization of instruments, standardization of time frame, and standardization of data collection procedures meant that simultaneous replication as an idea was fully realized (Frymier, 1989).

> ...analysis of all data by one person at one place
> is a deviation from the idea of replication as
> generally practiced in science. That is, even
> though the same problem was studied in different
> communities, that one person might err, deliberately
> or unknowingly. In that way, the confidence that
> generally accrues to research findings as a result
> of independent replication was not ensured.
>   To guard against such a possibility, researchers
> at 19 chapters of Phi Delta Kappa received all of
> the data sets from all of the chapters. Those
> researchers were encouraged to analyze the data
> sets in whatever ways seemed appropriate and
> reasonable to them. (Frymier, J., 1989, pp. 50-51).

Therefore, all data collected were analyzed two ways: separately by each chapter, and accumulatively for all

chapters (Frymier, J., 1989).

Statement of the Problem

The educational problem investigated in this study was the apparent scarcity of elementary school data available from rural areas regarding the effectiveness of strategies intended to retain students identified "at-risk" in school. "We know more about who has dropped out, and why, than we know about effective school efforts to prevent students from dropping out" (Phi Delta Kappa, Dropouts, Pushouts, and Other Casualties, 1987, p. 115).

The investigative purpose of this study was to determine if relationships existed between the data gathered from a national research project conducted by Phi Delta Kappa and the data gathered locally by this researcher; also, if relationships existed among the educators from the four areas of the local sample.

Research questions which helped focus this study were as follows:

1. With regard to socioeconomic levels, how do the perceptions of rural, elementary principals from Oklahoma compare with their counterparts nationally?

2. With regard to more teacher involvement in the decision making process, how do the perceptions of rural, elementary principals from Oklahoma compare with their counterparts nationally?

3. With regard to more school-site autonomy, how do the perceptions of rural, elementary principals from Oklahoma compare with their counterparts nationally?

4. With regard to the use of preferred strategies

(proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school, how do the perceptions of rural, elementary teachers and principals combined from Oklahoma compare with their counterparts nationally?

5. With regard to the effectiveness of preferred strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school, how do the perceptions of rural, elementary teachers and principals combined from Oklahoma compare with their counterparts nationally?

6. With regard to the use of preferred strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school, how do the perceptions of rural, elementary teachers/principals combined from Woods, Washita, Lincoln and Bryan Counties compare with each other?

7. With regard to the effectiveness of preferred strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school, how do the perceptions of rural, elementary teachers/principals combined from Woods, Washita, Lincoln, and Bryan Counties compare with each other?

Significance of the Study

From the study, elementary school principals and teachers from rural Oklahoma appeared to be confronted with many of the same problems concerning at-risk students as their colleagues from rural communities nationally. Therefore, this national-to-local network of information could provide educational strategies to retain at-risk students in school which otherwise might not be available.

Researchers from different chapters of Phi Delta Kappa used the same definitions, the same procedures, and collected data according to the same time frame. Consequently, researchers nationally in 276 widely separated communities studied the same problems in the same way and during the same academic school year (Frymier, J., 1989).

Therefore, since threats to external validity were greatly decreased by these simultaneous replications (Huck, S., Cormier, W., and Bounds, W., 1974. and Frymier, J., 1989), rural, elementary educators nationally and locally could more carefully scrutinize the strategies proposed by PDK to provide more effective means to retain at-risk students in their respective schools.

Also, a second issue of significance to this study was the willingness of the public to listen to the perceptions of principals and teachers to supply a complete picture of data that pertains to the effectiveness of strategies to retain at-risk students in school. For instance, consider the following as an analogy. For a business affiliate to build an airplane, engineering, marketing, management, and governmental standards are all considerations; however, a key source of information to the effectiveness of this vehicle is the perception of the test pilot. In other words, the business community relies heavily on the perceptions of its employees who work closest to their product or service for positive results.

Peters (1987), in <u>Thriving on Chaos</u>, shared several examples of successful outcomes, because of the employees' perceptions:

> ...A bank president called a two-day meeting at a remote location to work...on some strategic issues...'You've got two hours to come up with big savings, without layoffs'...A significant share of the ideas were implementable. One group brought $700,000 back to the table, and exceeded that brash target.

At Milliken's [Milliken is a rag business.
Their customers are basically anyone who needs
cleaning cloths; their chief competitor is the
Japanese] four-day annual retreat..., groups of
twenty from disparate functions and businesses
wrestle with a thorny issue for two hours, knowing
they had to come up with a lengthy action list,
to be implemented--and reported on--in 30 days...
They quickly go around the table; each participant
has a minute or two to discuss her or his idea--
and to propose a 30-day action plan...It may sound
impossible. I couldn't believe my own eyes at
first. But I've seen it at Milliken four years
running, and at a number of other firms as well.
It can be done (Pp. 254-255).

Like the business community, the educational community

relies on its "engineers" of curriculum, testing, and

related services; "marketing", to improve public relations

within communities; and the state and federal standards.

All are considerations for the building process of the

school; however, a key source of information to the

effectiveness of our vehicle called school are the

perceptions of our "test pilots," the educators at the local

school.

By deleting the perceptions of the principals and

teachers, a valuable source of information is lost, and,

thus, an incomplete picture of the problems and solutions of

our schools is created. Therefore, solutions to educational

problems, such as the retention of at-risk students in

school, may prove to be ineffective, because of the missing

data from the experts who work closest with school children,

the principals and teachers.

Also, this research study was significant at the

elementary school level, because by the time at-risk

students reached the sixth grade, they were two years behind their grade level counterparts academically (Levin, 1989).

Lastly, since the sample was representative of Oklahoma's rural, elementary school population, educational professionals from this state could more carefully examine the strategies proposed by PDK to provide more effective means to retain at-risk students in their respective schools.

Limitations

Any conclusions which may be drawn from this study may be limited because of threats to internal and external validity. Those threats pertaining to internal validity were history, maturation, and instrumentation. For example, with regard to history, local elementary principals and teachers in this study may have been more aware of our nation's concern for dropout prevention and may have responded differently to the questions provided by the data gathering instruments than educators nationally did a year earlier in the PDK research project.

Maturation could have been a second threat to internal validity, because of the psychological processes: fatigue, lack of interest, anxiety, or even boredom of the subjects during the data gathering process.

Instrumentation was a third threat: only those questions, from the principals' interview and the teachers' survey, that directly pertained to the research questions

within this particularly study were utilized. However, the questions used in the local study were the same questions that were used in the national study conducted by PDK.

This research was limited to certified elementary principals and teachers from four Oklahoma county rural elementary schools. These principals and teachers represented independent public schools from counties with less than 150 people per square mile.

Potential threats to external validity regarding ecological sources were the Hawthorne effect, multiple treatment interference, and the experimenter effect. School principals and teachers may have been more positive about their perceptions of what they were doing to retain at-risk students in their respective schools than if these educational professionals were not involved in this study. Insofar as possible, multiple treatment interference was controlled by not involving local schools that had participated in the Phi Delta Kappa research project; however, similar projects could have been administered without the knowledge of this researcher.

The final source of possible external ecological invalidity in this study was the experimenter effect: the experimenter could have unintentionally modified the subject's behavior through active effects (nonverbal or verbal behavioral uses) or passive effects (appearance, sex, race, dress)" (Huck, S., Cormier, W., and Bounds, W., 1974. p. 266).

Also, the principals' and teachers' data were collected differently: the principals' data were collected by a telephone interview, and the teachers' data were collected through a survey which was administered and collected by the local principal. Lastly, there was a discrepancy between the instructions and the teachers' responses in the teachers' instrument (survey). The directions asked for were as follows (see Appendix C):

> Some students are "at risk." Being "at risk" means being likely to fail at school or even at life. When you have students who are at-risk, which of the following strategies do you regularly use? Also indicate how effective each strategy is, using the four-point scale below. Rate the effectiveness of every strategy, even if you do not use it regularly.
>
> The responses requested were as follows:
>
> "Is it effective?"   YES   NO

Assumptions

The following two assumptions were made:

1. The PDK Instruments, "Principals' Interview" and "Teachers' Survey", were validated instruments and thus accurately measured the principals' and teachers' responses.

2. All participants in the study responded truthfully and to the best of their ability.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were applied:

> At-Risk Students--"Children who were low achievers, potential dropouts, pregnant teenagers, latchkey children, or children who suffer from abuse,

neglect, drugs or alcohol" (Frymier, Phi Delta
Kappa Study of Students at Risk a Preliminary
Report, 1989)

<u>Elementary School</u>--Schools that serve students who
were in kindergarten through the fourth grade,
kindergarten through the fifth grade, kindergarten
through the sixth grade, kindergarten through first
grade, second and third grades, the fourth through
the sixth grades, fourth and fifth grades, and
fifth and sixth grades.

<u>Simultaneous Replication</u>--Refers to when a researcher
builds into the study replications in either
another setting or by another experimenter (Huck,
S., Cormier, W., and Bounds, W., 1974, and
Frymier, J., 1989).

<u>Rural School</u>--An independent public school that is
located within a local area where the population is
less than 150 people per square mile (Bull, K.,
1990).

<u>Effectiveness of the Strategies Used to Retain At-Risk
Students</u>--"Those efforts to raise students'
achievement levels, reduce dropout rates, improve
students' attitudes toward school, help students
become more responsible and competent as learners
and citizens" (Frymier, J., p. 5, 1989).

<u>The following 30 Strategies to Retain At-Risk
Students</u>:

<u>Smaller Classes</u>--Instructional settings that
include less than 22 students with one teacher
(Sabrio, 1987).

<u>Computerized Instruction</u>--An environment where
computers were utilized for instruction to
retain at-risk students in school. This form
of instruction provides the student with
supportive comments and rewards, and
corrections without public awareness of the
students' mistakes (Gross, 1989).

<u>Special Teachers</u>--"One who teaches or directs
instruction in subjects for which regular
teachers are not specially trained..." (Good,
V., 1959, p. 515-516).

<u>Peer Tutoring</u>--Instructional relationships with
individuals of one's own group: a member of
this peer group and the instructional body
who, through informal conferences, instruct

and examine another student or students from one's peer group (Good, 1959).

Retain in Grade--A student's retention in grade was determined by the degree to which that student mastered the basic skills required in each grade (Macchiarola, 1987).

Special Education--"The education of pupils (for example, the deaf, the blind and partially seeing, the mentally subnormal, the gifted) who deviate so far physically, mentally, emotionally, or socially from the relatively homogenous groups of so-called 'normal' pupils that the standard curriculum is not suitable for their educational needs; involves the modification of the standard curricula in content, methods of instruction, and expected rate of progress to provide optimum educational opportunity for such pupils; carried on in special classes, in special curricula, or in special schools" (Good, 1959, p. 515).

Vocational Courses--Courses organized to prepare the learner for entrance into a particular vocation or to upgrade employed workers...(Good, 1959).

Alternative School--Alternate placement that addresses a variety of needs such as juvenile offenders, students of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds who need the individualized attention such schools provide (Garrison, 1987).

Special Study Skills--"Any special ability used in study, such as reading, outlining, summarizing, or locating material" (Good, V., 1959, p. 504).

Special Textbooks--Textbooks used for pupils when the standard curricula is not suitable for their educational needs. These special textbooks provide modifications in content, methods of instruction, and expected rate of progress to provide optimum educational opportunity for students in special classes, special curricula, or in special schools (Bull, K., Hyle, A., and Yellin, D., 1990).

Place in Low Group--A plan that consisted in assigning certain periods to each teacher to be spent in remedial work with a group of

students needing such assistance (Good, 1959).

Emphasize Coping Skills--Children learning to
function as people among other people, and to
understand there are differences in the
thinking and interpreting of experiences
(Barrett, 1989).

Flexible Scheduling--A schedule that permitted
periods to be lengthened, shortened, combined,
or shifted in time to meet the varying demands
of activity (Good, 1959).

Individualized Instruction--The organization of
instructional materials in a manner that
permitted each student to progress in accord
with his/her own abilities and interests; the
provision of instructional guidance and
assistance to individual pupils in accord
with their needs (Good, 1959).

Home Tutoring--Instruction and examination
provided by a certified or non-certified
instructor, during the period when a student
is judged unable to attend school (Good,
1959).

Extra Homework--More school assignments completed
out of regular school hours at the residence
of the pupil (Good, 1959).

Emphasize Thinking Skills--An instructor
emphasized a thinking skill when a child was
afforded the opportunity to get involved with
a particular activity (Barrett, 1989).

Restrict from Sports--A Student is restricted
from participating in a school sponsored
athletic program.

Leave School at Age 16--A student asked to
leave school at age 16 by a principal or
teacher.

Refer to Psychologist--At-risk elementary
students received consultation with families
or individually (Sloan, 1986).

Refer to Social Workers--The referral of an
at-risk elementary student to a social worker
for consultation with families or
individually.

Confer with Parents--The face-to-face

communication between a student's teacher and/or principal and the student's parent for the purpose of exchanging information and suggestions to facilitate the child's development (Good, 1959).

More Time on Basic Skills--More time spend on skills that are basic to the mastery of school subjects (Good, 1959).

Eliminate Art and Music--Exclude art and music from the at-risk students' curricula, so that he/she can spend more time on basic skills.

Notify Parents--A two-way communication between the local school principal or teacher and parents of the at-risk student, with the purpose of exchanging information and suggestions to facilitate the child's development.

Chapter I Program--A federally funded program with a focus on improving at-risk students reading and mathematics abilities. The organization of the instructional materials are so ordered to permit each student to progress according to his/her own abilities and interests.

Teacher Aides--Teacher aides relieve teachers of clerical duties, perform routine administrative tasks, and tutor students (Hamby, 1989).

Before School Programs--Functions served by the school: educational, guidance, extra class and community service functions, which occurred before the regularly scheduled school day.

After School Programs--functions served by the school: educational, guidance, extra class and community service functions, which occurred after the regularly scheduled school day.

Summer School Program--Functions served by the school: the educational, guidance, extra class and community service functions, which occurred during the summer months.

Summary

The purpose of Chapter One was to form a research framework in terms of need and background for this proposed study, and to establish the research problem into a means to achieve the purpose of this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of the review of literature was to describe
Phi Delta Kappa's "A Study of Students at Risk" and their
proposed strategies to keep at-risk students in rural,
elementary schools. Teachers and principals from across the
nation were asked to give their perceptions to whether
strategies proposed by PDK was used by teachers in the
classroom, and the effectiveness of those strategies. As of
this writing, the literature revealed that the PDK studies
conducted by researchers nationally and by this researcher
locally were the only two studies that dealt with the
perceptions of principals and teachers regarding the use and
the effectiveness of strategies intended to retain at-risk
students in school. Also, the literature did not produce
much information that dealt with high-risk students from
rural, elementary schools. Consequently, it was necessary
to broaden the scope of research to include studies of
at-risk students in urban and suburban schools at the
elementary school level. This writer noted, however, the

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same programs discussed in this chapter may be utilized for most elementary schools, including rural elementary schools.

A Study of Students at Risk

The Phi Delta Kappa's (1989) "A Study of Students at Risk" grew out of an earlier investigation that was designed to answer one question: which issues in education are most likely to be especially critical by 1990? Fourteen issues thought to be important to teachers and administrators was developed by Jack Frymier, the director, during the summer of 1987. An earlier version of the list had been put together by members of the Phi Delta Kappa Issues Board in response to suggestions from each Issues Board member's informal network and that person's general knowledge of the field. Several of the issues on the original list were discarded following a survey of 79 officers of Phi Delta Kappa, but other issues were added from a list developed by Larry Barber, a member of the coordinating committee, who polled educational agencies and organizations during the spring of 1987.

The 14 issues were presented in questionnaire format to the Biennial Council in Louisville in October, 1987. More than 800 members of Phi Delta Kappa from 635 chapters identified four issues, out of the 14 listed, that they thought would be especially critical by 1990:

    1.   at risk/neglected/abused students
    2.   changing demographic factors
    3.   public support and confidence in education
    4.   improving the effectiveness of schools   (p.4)

On the basis of that survey, a proposal to accomplish a study of the issues listed above was developed by Jack Frymier and presented to the Board of Directors of Phi Delta Kappa for approval and funding. The proposal outlined procedures for conceptualizing and accomplishing "A Study of Students at Risk" by working collaboratively with up to 100 chapters of Phi Delta Kappa. That proposal was approved in January, 1988.

In February, 1988, letters were mailed to president and research representatives of 640 chapters in Phi Delta Kappa inviting them to participate in the project. It was specified that applications to participate were due on or before April 15, 1988, and that "if more than 100 chapters indicate an interest in becoming involved, PDK selected chapters from those that applied according to the level of expertise, degree of commitment, and access to the schools and community evident in the application.

By mid-April, applications to participate in the project had been received from 240 chapters. A special committee of Kappans was convened to evaluate the applications. On the basis of those evaluations, 100 chapters were approved for participation. Notifications of approval and rejection were mailed in mid-May.

The original proposal included a provision to establish a committee of experienced researchers that was responsible for coordinating the conduct of the study. The proposal further specified that the coordinating committee would

conceptualize the problem in final form and develop instruments and procedures for chapters to use, but that committee worked directly from the top-ranked issues, as identified by the delegates at the Biennial Council.

The top-ranked issues had been described in the survey presented to delegates at the Biennial Council this way:

> At Risk/Neglected/Abused Students: Children who are low achievers, potential dropouts, pregnant teenagers, latchkey children, or children who suffer from abuse, neglect, drugs, or alcohol.
>
> Changing Demographic Factors: Increasing number of minorities, non-English speaking families, children born out-of-wedlock, single-parent homes, elderly, and declining school enrollments with fewer taxpayers as parents.
>
> Public Support and Confidence in Education: Declining support for public schools, importance of public schools in a democracy not understood, help people understand how better schools mean a better economy and a better culture.
>
> Improving the Effectiveness of Schools: Raise students' achievement levels, reduce dropout rates, improve students' attitudes toward school, help students become more responsible and competent as learners and citizens (Frymier, J., 1989, pp. 4, 5).

The interpretation of crucial issues described the basic purpose of Phi Delta Kappa, which:

> ...shall be to promote quality education, with particular emphasis on publicly supported education, as essential to the development and maintenance of a democratic way of life. (Frymier, 1989, p. 1).

The general assumption, as expressed in the proposal presented to the Board of Directors, was that this research project:

> would be a truly collaborative effort between chapters and headquarters in the sense that the ideas for such a project grew out of the Future's

Committee Report (centralized), but the topic to
be studied emerged from an analysis of responses
of representatives from 635 chapters meeting in
session at a Biennial Council (decentralized).
The proposal was developed by headquarters staff
(centralized) and would be implemented by a
coordinating committee (centralized), but data
would be collected in each area (decentralized)
and data would be interpreted by representatives
of chapters meeting at the district level
(decentralized) before a final report was written
(centralized). However, each chapter would also
be encouraged and assisted in developing special
reports and other communications to people within
their own locale (decentralized), based upon their
own interpretation of their own data in relation
to the summarized data for all chapters (p. 7).

The following persons were appointed in February, 1988,

to serve as a coordinating committee of A Study of Students

At Risk:

Larry Barber, Phi Delta Kappa
Ruben Carriedo, San Diego Public Schools
William Denton, Dallas Independent School District
Jack Frymier, Phi Delta Kappa, Director
Bruce Gansneder, University of Virginia
Sharon Johnson-Lewis, Detroit Public Schools
Neville Robertson, Phi Delta Kappa

This committee met three times between March and June, 1988,

to conceptualize the problem and develop instruments and

procedures to accomplish the study.

Four issues had been identified by delegates at Phi

Delta Kappa's Biennial Council as likely to be especially

critical by 1990. The coordinating committee posed four

questions from those four issues to guide the research:

a. Who is at risk?
b. What are they like?
c. What is the school doing to help these students?
d. How effective are those efforts?
                                        (Frymier, 1989)

The theoretical rationale presumed that the student

would be the focus of the study, but five factors or sets of conditions impinged upon the student and affected the extent to which a student was or was not "at risk": family, peers, school, life events, and the community context. Data was collected on each of these factors. The coordinating committee decided to structure the research effort so that the participating chapters would do some things in common, would choose other things to do from a list of options to be made available, and would do still other things individually and in-depth, if they choose to do so. Also, the research design should include diverse methodological approaches to the multi-faceted problem so members in various chapters would be able to find some aspects of the study that appealed to their unique interests and skills. Finally, questions that were raised concerning the quality of the research endeavor, because of the size and scope of the project, could be dealt with adequately if instructions regarding methodologies were explicit and uniform. Therefore, all data collected was analyzed separately by each chapter, and accumulatively for all chapters (Frymier, 1989).

Smaller Classes

Despite arguments that the teacher would decide the outcome of a class, not the number of students in the class, various studies augmented the decision that smaller was better.

Glass and Smith (1980), in their search for valid and reliable research on class size, reviewed the literature spanning 70 years. They compiled data from journal articles, books, theses, and unpublished studies and chose 14 studies for their study. By comparing mean achievement of "small" classes to their "large" comparison groups and standardizing the differences by dividing by the standard deviation of the groups, Glass and Smith plotted the relationship of class size to student achievement. According to their results, the 20-student class was a benchmark. Below 20 students, achievement climbed rapidly; above 20 students, achievement continued to decline slowly as class size increased (Glass and Smith, 1980. Sabrio, Pechman, and Rubin, 1982. and Mueller, Chase, and Walden, 1988).

Also, the effects of instruction in a smaller class carried over to later grade levels. Additionally, students were more likely to exhibit desirable practices and behaviors if they were in a smaller class situation (Ryan and Greenfield, 1980). Research showed that a deliberate reduction in class size promoted more individualization of instruction than a chance reduction (Frymier, 1985).

The positive reinforcement reflected both on teachers and on the students. The teachers felt more professionally competent in a small class environment, while student achievement was more positively affected when instructional settings included less than 22 students with one teacher

(Sabrio, Pechman, and Rubin, 1982. Frymier, 1985).

Lastly, the benefit of smaller classes, more individualized instruction, seemed to diminish as the grade level increased. (Furno, O.F. and Collins, G.J., 1967. Clark, S.C., Richel, S., 1963. Barlow, 1969. PDK, 1985. and Mueller, Chase and Walden, 1988). Thus, the most promising effect of class size reductions occurred in grades K-3, such as Project STAR:

> Tennessee's Project STAR, currently in progress, is a four-year study involving some 6900 pupils in about 350 classes from kindergarten through grade 3. The latest data available indicate that class size reductions from about 24 to about 15 pupils in each of grades had positive effects as measured by scores on nationally standardized tests. [Also] smaller classes were associated with student mastery of the district's basic skills objectives for all three years...Current data from Project STAR indicate that at the end of 2nd grade minority students did substantially better than minority students in larger classes (Robinson, G.E., 1990, Pp. 82 and 86).

Computerized Instruction

In elementary schools with significant high-risk students, alternative methods of instruction were necessary. Thus, in keeping with the advancement of technology and preparing the students for the high-tech world, turning to computers for instruction was a logical step.

At Williams Elementary School in Chicago, 50 percent of the black students tested below grade level. The school used a computerized homework program for reading, math, and spelling; this program combined computer and audio

technology to phone students and give exercises in basic skills. The computer, through the process, adjusted the instructional level for each child, told who took the lesson, the number of lessons completed, and the proficiency level. The results were best summed up by Floyd Banks, the principal. 'We see an average grade level improvement of nine months in reading and one year in math with students who use the computer 15 minutes a day, four days a week, for eight months' (Dowdney, 1987, p. 13).

Dowdney stated that Chicago and other districts used Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) because it:

1. Provided individualized instruction appropriate for any learner population, regardless of age, socioeconomic background, or skill level.

2. Created a positive, nonthreatening learning environment because teachers and other students were not looking constantly over the students' shoulder...students could relax in a private world--free to experiment, to make mistakes, to try again.

3. Gave students immediate feedback...the program then directed students to new concepts if they answered correctly or to additional practice if they answered incorrectly.

4. May be used at all levels (elementary through college).

5. Speeds up learning. On the average, students gained one and one-half years for each year they used CAI.

6. Provided almost unlimited supplementary practice to support classroom instruction.

7. Increased motivation through success in the program, thereby self-esteem was achieved as well.

8. Could be administered by aides or others who were not instructional experts.

9.   The same program could be used for the entire
     target population.

10.   Tracked students' progress so that educators knew
      where each student was performing in the curriculum
      (p. 13).

Ross (1989) described a tutoring system using a computer
network between at-risk sixth graders and Master of Arts in
Teaching candidates. This program of distance tutoring was
developed by Apple Computer, Inc., Memphis City Schools, and
Memphis State University. This program like the CAI program
in Chicago, combined computer and audio technology to a
two-way communication between tutor and student. An
electronic bulletin board system (BBS) was used to explain
content lessons to students, assigned tutorship roles for
the M.A. Teaching candidates, and assigned writing skills
lessons to the at-risk students.

Kleifgen (1989) expressed a concern that CAI was
expected to help American schools to teach at-risk students
more effectively and to reduce educational inequalities;
yet, she suggested that computer technology actually widened
the gap in educational opportunity. Inequities in school
computer use resulted from some of the following factors:
1.) unequal access to computers in the home; 2) limited
access in ethnic and language minority schools; 3) limited
the teaching approaches toward at-risk students; 4) and
limited access and applicability for female students.

Pogrow (1990) shared similar concerns to the lack of
effectiveness of the CAI upon at-risk students beyond the
third grade, because they did not deploy thinking strategies

or derive meaning from symbols. "CAI may, in fact, widen the gap between good and poor achievers...the primary cause is inadequate metacognitive skills. That is, at-risk students do not consciously apply and test mental strategies to deal with normal thinking activities like reading and problem-solving" (Pp. 61-62). The at-risk student was viewed as one who looked for an answer simply for a response, rather than learning to think.

The HOTS program (Higher Order Thinking Skills) used microcomputers to help high-risk students master basic skills, basic thinking processes, course content, and apply learned information in various problem-solving situations. In the HOTS program, the software was selected for motivation, not for explicit goals. Programs, usually games or adventure stories, were presented solely to spark an interest in a given activity, not to develop content knowledge of technical expertise.

Words and concepts in the menus provided the classroom teachers opportunities to create Socratic questions that led students to discover and practice key thinking skills.

Special Teachers

For students labelled at-risk due to learning disabilities, various alternatives to the methods of special instruction have become a necessity. Avoidance of further labelling of at-risk students as called "dumb" by their peers was a primary concern in the adoption of more

innovative avenues of instructing students with special
needs.

Team teaching with the regular teacher and the
specialist in the same classroom proved to be of
benefit. The students in need of special instruction were
provided a stable environment, as they were not shuffled
from one room to another. There was also the added
advantage of closer coordination between the classroom
teacher and the special teacher. Shared ideas from
team-teachers increased the effectiveness of communication
strategies, joint instructional planning, classroom
management procedures, constructive feedback, and staff
development (Richardson, 1989).

Even non-traditional team teaching partners worked
successfully together. Technology teachers worked with
elementary school teachers to teach technology education in
the elementary classroom. Students were involved in
manipulating tools and materials to construct an object,
role-playing situations relating to the use of technology,
testing a product for performance, or designing an idea for
an invention (Kieft, 1988).

Unfortunately, however, disadvantages surfaced with
this system of special teaching. Limited space forced
teachers to work in cramped conditions. Also, the normal
classroom setting offered distractions to students who
tended to distract easily. And, labelling was still a
problem; children received special instruction in full

view of their peers, thereby being labelled "slow"
(Shepard and Smith, 1989).

Thus, the TAT (Teacher Assistance Team) was formed.
Hayek (1987) suggested the use of building-level teacher
assistance teams to provide suggested alternative
instructional strategies and support services to regular
teachers with problem learners before a referral to special
education.

Before a student was referred for special services,
three teachers who met once a week listened to reports on
problem students and offered classroom solutions. After
two weeks, the classroom teacher reported to the TAT either
success or failure of the recommendations. Only if the
recommendations failed, was the referral approved.

After approval for special services was given, the
child's case was referred to a Child Study Team, which
consisted of the principal, counselor, school psychologist,
social worker, LD teacher and regional LD representative to
consider options to special testing (Hayek, 1987. Chalfont,
J. and Pysh, M. V., 1981).

Restrict from Sports

Participation in extracurricular activities demonstrated
a variety of desirable effects on the academic progress by
raising educational expectations and grades (Spreitzer and
Pugh, 1973), lowering delinquency (Landers and Landers,
1978), and affected the at-risk student's desire to

persist in school (Otto and Alwin, 1977).

Participation in sports built a positive attachment to the school, and also provided additional avenues for success for students who did not perform well in the classroom. Therefore, by restricting at-risk students from sports, greater student alienation may grow and deprive the school of the only holding power it had for this group of students (PDK, 1989).

Coping Skills

Schools, teachers and students (peer members) have often been the role models and model environment for many children. Hence, teachers have been accorded the responsibility of teaching moral attitudes and social skills to the children in their classes (Barrett, 1989). When a child entered school, a new role was assumed, and new values and attitudes were assumed as well.

> Children must learn to operate in society. They
> need to know how to function as people among
> other people. They must understand there are
> differences in thinking and interpretation of
> experiences. There is the need for children to
> share ideas and discuss their ideas and thoughts
> with others to see how differences in thinking
> and experiences relate to them...In this way,
> children can learn to be unafraid of differences
> and similarities and can learn to alter their
> own understanding...Each child, as a person,
> needs to keep a critical perspective on his
> or her own thinking and actions. (Barrett, 1989,
> pp. 164-166).

Elias and Clabby (1988) presented an eight-step strategy for students of all ages to use to cope with stress and make informed decision:

1. Look for signs of different feelings.
2. Tell yourself what the problem is.
3. Decide on your goal.
4. Stop and think of as many solutions to the problem
    as you can.
5. For each solution, think of all the things that
    might happen next.
6. Choose your best solution.
7. Plan it and make a final check.
8. Try it and rethink it (p. 53).

Building on the work of Dewey and Piaget, and Shure and

Spirach, Elias and Clabby (1989) suggested to teachers five

steps to help school children with the improvement of their

social awareness and social problem-solving skills:

1. Teach an ordered sequence of skills. A hierarchy
    of skills underlies competent interpersonal
    behavior, a primary aspect of which is children's
    social-cognitive problem-solving skills--those they
    use to analyze, understand, and prepare to respond
    to everyday problems, decisions, and conflicts.

2. Focus on decision-making situations. Many problems
    of our youth originate in concrete decision-making
    situations that usually occur in the absence of
    adult supervision.

3. Provide a cognitive strategy...a common framework
    that unifies the content areas and a strategy that
    can be employed accress content areas to meet a
    variety of mandates.

4. Make it usable by educators and parents. Because
    the decision-making framework and the
    problem-solving strategy can be used consistently
    throughout or across all developmental periods.

5. Build in activities to aid maintenance and
    generalization. Without reinforcement, many
    affective programs in the schools fail to achieve
    satisfactory carryover to the real world. For this
    reason, we build in application. We train
    teachers, special teachers, educational
    administrators, and especially parents in how to
    prompt and encourage children's use of
    problem-solving as everyday decision-making
    situations occur (p. 53).

Refer to Psychologist

The literature supported the assumption that
understanding of a person's sets of relationships and the
character of the system within which the person functioned
were extremely important in analyzing problems of
individuals or families. The goal of such intervention was
to modify the system that was supportive of the "problem"
behavior. In family consultation, the system that worked to
the detriment of the child was dismantled and reorganized to
enhance the child's development.

High-risk elementary school students with behavioral
difficulties improved their behavior after consultation with
families and counseling with students (New York State
Education Department, 1984. Walz, G.R., 1986. Jones, E.D.,
1987). Behavior problems usually included poor school
performance, asocial behavior, rejection by peers, truancy
and excessive absences due to illness. There was a
significant improvement in self-concepts for high-risk
students receiving counseling and family consultation
(Sloan, 1986).

Third, fourth and fifth grade high risk students with
behavioral difficulties may have evidenced higher
self-concepts and improved behavioral quotients when they
received counseling and consultative services, either
directly or through the classroom teacher (Richardson,
1989).

Notify Parents/Confer with Parents

The involvement of parents was determined to be a key factor in a child's academic achievement. The teacher's perceptions of a student may differ from those of the student's parents. A teacher's decision to classify a student perceived to have classroom difficulties as "at risk" initiated a formal process of referral, testing, labelling, and placement, resulting in different educational opportunities for that particular student.

Casanova (1988) cited the case studies of 12 students in the second and third grades who were identified as "at-risk" by their classroom teachers. The students ranged in age from seven to nine and one-half years old. Half of the children were Hispanic, from homes where Spanish was the dominant language. Interviews were conducted with parents, teachers, and students, and school records were examined. Findings included the following:

1. Discrepancies existed between parents' and school personnel's perceptions of the child.

2. Information was often not solicited from parents by school personnel.

3. School personnel's perceptions were more important than the parents' percentions in making decisions about the child's school career.

4. Information was sometimes withheld from parents by school personnel.

5. Parents seemed to accept the judgements of the school personnel and set aside their own doubts.

6. Class size may have prevented the development of strong home--school relationships.

Secondly, a pattern of poor attendance was an early sign of a potential student dropout. Therefore, various school systems throughout the country instituted programs through which parents, willingly or unwillingly, became involved in what their child was doing (Rich, 1987).

Hamby (1988) stressed five criteria for such programs:

1. Develop and communicate a comprehensive attendance policy.

2. Let parents know immediately when the child is absent.

3. Provide classes for parents in how to help children learn.

4. Send letters to parents to recognize their child's achievement.

5. Reward good behavior on the part of the student with certificates, buttons or ribbons, whatever might indicate pride in his achievements. (P. 22).

Extra Homework

The first major national report calling for educational reform was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) under the title A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. One of this commission's major themes was "more homework".

Data from teachers, parents and students were used to explore the correlation of homework activities and the effects of homework on elementary school students' achievements and behaviors in school. Results indicated that at the elementary school level, low achievement in reading and mathematics, in comparison with high

achievement, was associated with more time spent doing homework, more minutes of parents' help, and more frequent requests from teachers for parental involvement (Epstein, 1988). Further, Czech (1988) stated that elementary students who did not complete homework assignments performed poorly on standardized tests.

Foyle (1988), in 84 homework experiments conducted between 1904 and 1984, 34 studies found a significant difference in favor of homework over other methods of learning; 6 found a significant difference in favor of other methods of learning than homework, and 49 experiments found that homework and other methods of learning produced similar results in student achievement; however, at higher grade levels a decreasing difference was found between homework and other methods.

Chandler (1983) conducted a study which involved 32 elementary school children. Her major assumption was that there was a vast discontinuity between home and school in the functions of literacy and language development. Parents and teachers of the school children were interviewed, and one observation was made of a parent helping a child in an assignment at home. This assignment involved filling out an hourly log-sheet of the child's activities on a specific day. Analysis of observation data led to the conclusion that parent/child interaction over a homework task was very similar to the interaction between a teacher and child in school. Results indicated that discontinuity between home

and school could explain at least a portion of the problems
of at-risk children in acquiring literacy.

In summation, homework in and of itself appeared not to
be a significant factor in at-risk children acquiring
literacy. However, the parental involvement associated with
homework appeared to be a significant factor in the school
career of the at-risk student (Chandler, 1983, and Epstein,
1988).

Eliminate Art and Music

At-risk students increased knowledge of basic skills,
personal talents and developed worthy use of leisure time
during art, music and drama classes (Acer, 1987).

During art class, elementary school children learned to
mix their own colors and choose the appropriate materials
for the task at hand. They learned about size, color,
shape, texture, shade and relationships of the various
materials. Within this process, the child developed
understanding, thinking and his/her own perception of the
world. In addition, while working with the art materials,
the students learned to accept responsibility and to work
independently (Barrett, 1989).

Retain in Grade

Macchiarola (1987) stated that student promotion was
determined by the degree to which the student mastered the
basic skills required in each grade. Early mastery of basic

skills helped ensure that today's elementary school student would not be tomorrow's high school dropout. Achievement was to be improved in two ways: the students were to be more diligent in learning if they perceived some genuinely negative consequence for failing to learning, and students who failed were not passed on unnoticed, but given another opportunity to acquire necessary skills.

A 1983 Gallup Poll showed 75 percent of U. S. citizens were in favor of grade retention. They felt promotion from grade to grade should only be awarded if the student passed the equivalency exams for the grade level (Shephard and Smith, 1989). Some educators also agreed that retention in grade was helpful to assuring student achievement. Frymier (1989) found more than 40 percent of teachers and more than 70 percent of principals in a PDK research project that they regularly retained students in grade. However, only 48 percent of the teachers and 26 percent of the principals believed that retention was effective in dealing with at-risk students.

House (1989), however, perceived the practice of retaining students differently. Students were retained in rather arbitrary and inconsistent ways, and those flunked were more likely to be poor, males and minorities.

The effects of children being retained in grade had as much to do with children dropping out as did their academic achievement (Grissom and Shepard, 1988. Frymier, 1989. House, 1989. Shephard and Smith, 1989. and Richardson,

Casanova, Placier, Guilfoyle, 1989).

Alternative School

Alternative programs for at-risk youth were forecast to grow through the 1990s. According to Garrison (1987), approximately 35 percent of the school districts had alternative school programs. Alternative placement addressed a variety of needs for many groups, including juvenile offenders and students of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds who required the individualized attention such schools provided.

Levin (1987) stated an effective approach to educating disadvantaged students must be characterized by high expectations, deadlines by which they were to be performing at grade level, stimulating instructional programs, planning by the educational staff to offer the program and the use of all available parental and community resources. He further stated that educational intervention must be transitional and must be designed to close the achievement gap after a period of intervention so that students could benefit from regular instruction.

To this end, a program of accelerated schools was designed. The accelerated school demonstrated a transitional elementary school designed to bring disadvantaged students up to grade level by the end of sixth grade so they could take advantage of mainstream secondary school instruction. Also, this school was designed to

prevent dropouts by eliminating the single most important cause of dropping out: serious achievement deficit. The curriculum emphasized language in all disciplines, even in mathematics. Learning was applied to everyday problems and events (Barton, J., 1988, and Levin, 1987).

Parents were involved in this method of instruction through signing a written agreement that clarified the obligations of all parties concerned. They were also provided opportunities to interact in school programs and actively assist their children. The accelerated school also benefitted the parents through an extended day, thus eliminating many "latchkey" children (Levin, 1987).

Levin (1987) stressed that the accelerated schools were successful because "they emphasized the instrumental goal of bringing students up to grade level by the completion of sixth grade and stressed accelerating learning and high expectations" (p. 20).

Even in kindergarten, major advantages were seen in alternative schools. In Kindergarten Plus in the Springfield School District #186, one kindergarten class attended school a full-day and the other kindergarten class attended the normal half-day. The results included the following:

1. The full-day students scored significantly higher than the half-day students on the Kindergarten Skills Inventory.

2. The full-day students scored significantly higher than the half-day students on the MRT.

3. Attendance was improved over the half-day students.

4. There was reinforcement of skill development.

5. Parents perceived the children's readiness for first grade and expressed satisfaction with the program.

6. There were fewer retentions.

7. The teachers perceived the benefits of the full day program and the administrators approved the program (Rutledge, 1987).

Garrison (1987) discussed two alternative programs from California for elementary students: the PASS program (Positive Alternatives to Student Suspensions) and Transitional Skills Class.

The PASS program was an individual and group counseling program performed by teachers and teacher aides during class time. "Time out rooms" were set aside to discuss problems with students and/or parents. A vital component of the program was the counseling for parents who experienced difficulty with their children at home as well.

Transitional Skills Class was an alternative program which was designed to serve students in grades one through six who failed to meet the standards for promotion. Targeted students were those who, through either lack of attention, absenteeism, or low ability, needed intensive instruction and more structure in order to "catch up" academically.

The instruction in the transitional class was concentrated in the basic skills areas and students were provided with remedial instruction in the areas of previous academic failure. When appropriate, students were

mainstreamed into regular classes at the grade level to
which the student would have been assigned if promoted.

The transitional class concept focused on alternative
strategies to prevent failure. It provided many students
the opportunity to gain the skills they lack for promotion
in a much shorter time and in a more efficient manner. The
participating elementary schools were Cutler Ridge, Fulford,
Lillie C. Evans, and Riverside from Malibu, California.

Edmonson (1986) indicated that the growth in the number
of children age six to thirteen will increase the demands on
the nation's elementary schools. Hence, the use of day-care
alternatives by greater numbers of working parents and other
related demographic factors will greatly affect the future
of public schools.

Individualized Instruction

The Pull-out Program helped students who were having
difficulty in a regular classroom. This program
provided the individual child or small group of children
with more one-on-one instruction (Levin, 1989).

Class size reductions below 20 students allowed the
teacher to provide more individual attention to the at-risk
student's problem areas. Also below 20 students in a
classroom, the achievement level climbed rapidly (Sabrio,
Pechman, and Rubin, 1982, and Mueller, Chase and Walden,
1988).

Peer tutoring programs proved to be effective for both

the tutor and tutee, because student tutors received direct instruction in basic skills, as well as tutoring skills and increased the self-esteem of the tutor and the self-incentive of both the tutor and the child being tutored (Sosa, 1986).

Emphasize Thinking Skills

The literature revealed that conventional computer-assisted instruction was an effective strategy in helping at-risk students master basic skills, but failed high-risk students who could not deploy thinking strategies.

Pogrow (1990), however, described the HOTS program (Higher Order Thinking Skills). This program used microcomputers to help high-risk students master basic skills, thinking processes, course content, and apply learned information in various problem-solving situations. The software was selected in various problem-solving situations. The software was selected for motivation not for content goals. Programs, usually games or adventure stories, were presented to instill an interest, not to develop content knowledge or technical expertise. Words and concepts in the menus provided teachers opportunities to create questions that led students to discover and practice key thinking skills.

And an extended day program "Hands on Science" allowed students to discover the numerous applications of simple,

everyday materials to science and technology (Feldman, 1987).

The literature further revealed that most at-risk programs tended to rely on remedial or compensatory services rather than on higher order thinking skills (Levin, 1989).

More Time on Basic Skills

Tennessee's Project STAR found that by class size reductions from about 24 to 15 students had positive effects as measured by pupils' scores on nationally standardized tests. Also, smaller classes were associated with student mastery of the district's basic skills objectives for a three year period; and, at the end of second grade, minority students did substantially better on the basic skills objectives than minority students in larger classes (Robinson, 1990).

In Chicago, at Williams Elementary School, a computerized program for reading, math, and spelling, was implemented for at-risk students. The program combined computer and audio technology to phone students and gave exercises in basic skills. The results were an average grade level improvement of nine months in reading and one year in math with students who used the computer 15 minutes a day, four days a week, and for eight months (Dowdney, 1987).

Basic skills were found to be enhanced through homework. Homework alone did not appear to be significant, but the

parental involvement associated with homework appeared to be a significant factor in the child's ability to master basic skills (Epstein, 1988).

Art and music education increased knowledge of basic skills for elementary students. During art class, elementary school children learned to mix their own colors and choose appropriate materials for an assigned task. They learned about size, color, shape, texture, shade, and relationships of various materials (Barrett, 1989).

Lastly, Hannah (1984) found a statistically significant and positive relationship between a student's language concept skill development and his/her reading achievement.

Peer Tutoring

Bull and Garrett (1989) in "At Risk in Rural America: Strategies for Educators", made several recommendations for educational programs to keep youth in school. Among their recommendations was the strategy of educational programs to develop positive self-concepts.

In 1984, in the Edgewood and South San Antonio Independent School Districts, the Value Youth Partnership Progam (VYP) was instituted. The VYP identified Hispanic junior high school and high school students at risk of dropping out and gave them an opportunity to serve as tutors of young children. This provided them the chance to learn the basic skills, develop new positive self-perceptions and remain in school. A remarkably successful program, of the

100 students identified at-risk, 94 remained in school. Additionally, these students' overall grade point average increased and there was a decrease in absenteeism and discipline referrals (Sosa, 1986).

In Chicago, a computer-tutor project was created to help economically disadvantaged students in Chicago's uptown district. Sixth through eighth grade students learned computer programming and tutoring skills and tutored first through fourth grade students. Most of the participants, peer tutors, and students experienced academic or behavioral difficulties in school. However, program supervisors encountered none of the rebellion or reluctance to learn that teachers often received from troubled students. Most participants constantly exhibited cooperation and enthusiasm. During the learning sessions, peer tutors spent 20 minutes working on their own programs and then spent the next 20 minutes helping younger students. Educational software used in the learning/tutoring sessions was carefully selected to insure that the materials were consistent with each child's educational needs. From the perceptions of the program supervisors, outcomes of the peer tutorship intervention strategy enhanced both the tutor's and the student's cognitive development, but also enhanced feelings of self-worth in the tutors.

In conclusion, the reasons these programs were felt to be so successful was the student tutors received direct instruction in how to tutor, thereby reviewing basic skills

and increased the self-esteem of the tutor and the
self-incentive of both the tutor and the child being tutored
(Jason, 1983. Sosa, 1986).

Teacher Aides

The value of teacher aides in schools was increasingly
visible to the administration of each school. Teacher aides
relieved teachers of clerical duties, performed routine
administrative tasks, and tutored students, thus leaving the
teacher to accomplish the job of teaching more effectively
(Hamby, 1983).

Unfortunately, the system of using teacher aides had
some serious drawbacks, resulting in limited use by the
schools:

1. Planning time for assigned duties and training of
   the aide by the teacher for the duties--this may be
   relatively simple to ease by merely implementing
   weekly or monthly inservice training sessions for
   the new aide volunteers.

2. Assigning tasks appropriate to the aides'
   experience and teachers' needs.

3. Coordinating activities and meeting times--this
   also may be relieved merely by utilizing breaks,
   lunch, recess, and the periods before and after
   school to communicate the teacher's wishes.
   Written missives explaining job duties are also an
   alternative (p. 27).

After School Programs

This strategy coincided with flexible scheduling and
extracurricular activities (Hamby, p. 26). For children
who parents work, extending the school day provided them

with the opportunity for after-school tutoring classes and peer friendships (Seiter, 1988).

The issue of the latchkey child was addressed in the literature. Various agencies were attempting to meet the needs of the latchkey children through programs by parent alliances, community organizations, social service agencies, youth groups, schools, businesses, churches, and private daycare centers.

Due to the lack of policies concerning child care for school-aged children at the federal and state levels, a void appeared to leave schools uncertain to their potential role in this important issue. Should the after-school curriculum be geared toward academic achievement, then staff selection would be on educational achievement and the proper credentials (Walters, K., 1985).

Feldman (1987) described an after-school science program, "Hands On Science", in which students from kindergarten through sixth grade discovered the application of simple, everyday materials to science and technology.

Whether the cirriculum be academic or developmental, students from all grade levels benefitted from the one-to-one instruction and/or the interpersonal peer relationships developed during activites after school (Van Wyck, B., 1979. Genser, 1979. Feldman, 1987. Seiter, D.M., 1988, and Oklahoma Curriculum Improvement Commission and Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1989).

Title I Program

Chapter I, known earlier as Title I, was a large federally funded program which provided extra services for all elementary children who met the criteria; students who were identified as in need of remedial services. Although the results were inconclusive and controversial, the federal government has indicated its approval of the program by continued funding for the next 20 years.

The Title I program was extended further into two other programs, "Head Start" and "Follow Through". According to Zigler (1983), these intervention programs were intended to provide poor children with learning experiences lacking in their impoverished environments. These two programs were discussed in this section.

Head Start:

Since its inception in 1965, the Head Start program has been the largest and broadest intervention program in this country (Zigler & Berman, 1983). These programs had the unique role as the first national preschool intervention effort (Zigler, 1983).

Head Start designated families of over 2,000 programs that shared common goals and guiding principles. In addition to the center-based preschool programs, demonstration projects within Head Start were committed to the enhancement of the quality of life for children and families, and to enhance physical, cognitive, social and

emotional development, as well as positive attitudes toward self, family and society.

The Head Start Program experience influenced children to perform optimally under conditions which were debilitating for children who had not attended Head Start. Seitz (1975) found the place of testing was important on Head Start and non-Head Start children. Home testing performances revealed poor findings on non-Head Start children. The findings of test studies suggested that culturally deprived children have more intelligence than they are often credited (Zigler & Butterfield, 1986).

In 1969, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, instituted a Summer Head Start Program. Emanuel (1970) found no significant differences in reading achievement scores of Head Start attendees and non-Head Start attendees at the end of grades one and three. However, there were significant differences in reading achievement scores of second graders who attended the Summer Head Start Program and their counterparts who did not.

Dellinger (1971) studied the effects the Summer Head Start Program had on students' readiness for school and their achievement at the end of first grade. There were no significant differences.

Molloy (1969) found no significant difference in third grade achievement scores as measured by the standardized achievement tests between attendees of the Summer Head Start Program and non-attendees.

Follow Through:

In 1986, the United States office of Education initiated a comprehensive program for economically disadvantaged children in primary grades in 180 communities (Meyer, 1983). Unlike Head Start and Title I, the Follow Through program was aligned with an outside sponsor--a university, educational laboratory, or state department of education. The sponsor was responsible for designing and implementing a comprehensive educational program in each project. A wide array of instructional approaches was included, ranging from open classroom models to cognitive models based on the theories of Piaget, to highly structured programs utilizing principles of contemporary learning theories (Meyer, 1983).

The Englemann-Becker Follow Through Model provided increased manpower through one teacher and two aides and a structured daily routine. Poor children progressively moved ahead of the national norm through the Englemann-Becker Follow Through Model. Starting this follow through model in kindergarten gave an advantage of nearly .7 grade levels over those children starting this model in first grade (Becker & Englemann, 1973).

The goal of the Follow Through Program was to provide a continuous program from kindergarten through third grade with the overall objective to improve the "life chances" of low income children. Stallings and Stipek (1984) in their study followed a control group of children through high school. The results indicated fewer children were retained

and/or placed in special education classes. More children were staying in school and were graduating at a greater rate than those children not in a Follow Through Program which allowed underachieving students to act as tutors. The student tutors received considerable training involving a specified curriculum before they began to tutor, and spent one day out of five in group supervision, received continuing training in subject matter, and tutoring skills (Madden, N. A. and Slavin, R.E., 1987).

Gains were significantly greater for both tutors and tutees. In reading, the tutees of trained tutors gained .51 standard deviations score on the Metropolitan more than their comparison group. Trained tutors gained .49 standard deviations more than their untrained counterparts in math, but did not gain significantly more in reading (Archambeult, F. X., 1987).

None of the evaluations of preventative tutoring models actually presented data on long-term maintenance of effects either on achievement or on assignment to special or remedial education. However, Clay (1985) claimed through the "Reading Recovery" program to remove the need for future remediation for most high-risk first graders it served, but evidence was lacking as of this writing.

Computer assisted instruction was a pull-out model where students worked on computers for at least part of their remedial reading or math time. Overall, results for the CAI program are well-established and positive, though more

frequently on basic skills than on higher-order skills
(Ragosfa, 1983, Ross, 1989, Pogrow, 1990, and Kleifgen,
1990).

Categories of Effective Pull-Out Models:

The effective pull-out programs for at-risk students
fell into three broad categories: Diagnostic-prescriptive
programs, tutoring programs, and computer-assisted
instruction.

In diagnostic-prescriptive programs, students identified
as being in need of remedial services were carefully
assessed and then instruction appropriate to their needs was
given by a teacher in a location separate from the regular
classroom. Instruction was given to individuals or to small
groups within a pull-out class of about three to eight
students (Madden, 1989).

Kimball, Crawford and Raia (1985) evaluted the
diagnostic-prescriptive pull-out program of Oklahoma City's
school district by which careful matching on prescores of
students who received Chapter I services with those who did
not. Results indicated that Chapter I students gained a
statistically significant score in math than their
counterparts who did not receive Chapter I services.
However, gains in reading were much smaller, and, in one
year, were not statistically significant.

The second strategy was tutoring programs, in which
tutors work, one-on-one with identified at-risk students.
Tutors were identified as teachers, paraprofessionals,

volunteers, or older students (Sosa, 1986. Madden, N. A. and Slavin, R.E., 1987). Tutorship programs fell into two main groups: programs designed as remedial programs and as preventative programs.

In Dade County, Florida, volunteer junior high school students took tutoring as an elective class to tutor low achieving first through sixth graders in reading and math. Tutors were required to read at the fifth grade level.

Place in Low Group

In recent years, cooperative learning has been proposed as a solution to ability grouping--special programs for the gifted, Chapter I pull-out programs, and special education. Cooperative learning programs were suggested as a vehicle for placing higher-level thinking skills into the curriculum, ensured at-risk students an adequate level of basic skills, mainstreamed academically handicapped students, and as a means to improve relationships among students of different racial or ethnic backgrounds (Slavin, 1988).

There was evidence that cooperative learning could accomplish many of the goals stated above: Goodlad and Oakes (1988) reported that in 1983, Desert Sky school from Phoenix, Arizona, had 38 remedial and accelerated classes. As the 1987-88 school year began, Desert Sky had none. With the exception of certain special education classes and advanced reading and math classes for gifted students,

students worked in cooperative learning settings.

By year's end in 1988, all academic levels in the mixed-ability classes did well compared to their counterparts in tracked classes. Remedial students in the mixed classes experienced the greatest overall gains. Average students in mixed classes also experienced achievement gains; however, accelerated students in both mixed and ability-group settings performed quite well with a slight edge favoring the mixed setting.

Two other studies found positive achievement levels for students who were graded on the average of individual quiz scores and not on the basis of one group worksheet (Humphreys, 1982, and Yager, 1986). This ensured individual accountability (Davidson, 1985).

Cooperative Learning Methods:

Jigsaw Teaching assigned each student a topic on which she or he was to become an "expect". Each student had a unique task, "part to play", within an overall group objective. This method did not emphasize individual accountability and was not considered effective (Aronson, Blancey, Sikes, and Snapp, 1978).

Group Investigation took on subtasks within an overall group task. In contrast to Jigsaw Teaching, Group Investigation based individuals' evaluations on the group's product. The method provided both group goals and individual accountability (Slavin, 1984).

In comparing the achievement effects of the various

cooperative learning methods, methods that incorporated both group goals and individual accountability were considerably more effective than other methods (Davidson, 1985. Newmann and Thompson, 19874. and Slavin, 1988). There was no reason to believe that if students simply worked together or were rewarded on a single group product or task, they would learn more than would students taught traditionally (Slavin, 1988).

In summation, cooperative learning programs were considered to be effective if they emphasized individual accountability as well as group goals (Aronson, Blancey, Sikes, and Snapp, 1978. Humphreys, 1982. Johnson and Johnson, 1987).

Flexible Scheduling

Flexible scheduling demonstrated a distinct advantage to learning for those students who were unable or disinclined to follow a regular school plan. This educational format provided more afternoon and night classes as well as staggered classes (Hamby, 1989).

Staggered, or split scheduling, occurred when part of the class followed the regular school schedule. Thus, it followed that the rest of the class arrived later and stayed later in the day (Frymier, 1989).

The primary force behind this method was to reduce student-teacher ratio for part of the day. This enabled the teacher to provide more individualized instruction to those

students in particular who benefitted (Jones, E.D. and Amuleru-Marshall, N., 1988).

Special Education

In a study conducted by Richardson (1988), teachers were found to be more likely to refer children for testing and labelling if classroom situations did not work and the child was in danger of failing. Thus, most or all LD students were considered at risk.

Miramonte (1987) stated that the learning disabled category was a "dumping ground" for minority students who failed academically, thereby assessing a high relationship between LD and bilingualism. Assessment strategies that concentrated on reading skills in a second language were likely to create wrong assessments of the student's ability by underestimating the student's aptitude, because reading difficulties surfaced when Hispanic students read in English (Bowman, 1988).

Barton (1988) determined that academically handicapped students could be taught to think critically as a part of the process of learning to read. The key to the students' improvement was the teacher's knowledge base; the ability to apply the theoretical background of language development and thinking skills to the instructional exercises of this particular population of at-risk students.

Top and Osguthorpe (1987) examined the effects of having handicapped students tutor younger, nonhandicapped students

in reading. The study included 78 fourth through sixth grade learning disabled or behaviorally disordered students who attended either a resource or a self-contained special education class and 82 nonhandicapped first graders.

After 12 weeks of tutoring, a multivariate analyses of covariance indicated that the tutors and tutees from the experimental group scored significantly higher on both criterion and standardized reading tests than students assigned to control groups; also, the tutors from the experimental groups increased more than their counterparts from the control groups in "general academic ability" and spelling.

Buse (1988) described positive behavior changes among five behavior-disordered, multiply-handicapped elementary students who participated in daily play sessions with non-handicapped elementary students. The play sessions lasted for ten weeks and the researcher concluded that nonhandicapped children received positive interactions from their handicapped playmates, especially when specific playmates were assigned.

Fuchs (1989) studied the effects of computerized teacher feedback and systems within curriculum-based measurement (CBM) in the area of spelling. The study involved 27 special education teachers and 54 mildly-handicapped students--learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, or educable mentally retarded. The researcher indicated that the special students in this study achieved a significant

improvement in their spelling skills.

Summer School Programs

According to Ballinger (1988), over 400 schools in the U.S. organized the instructional year on a year-round basis. These local schools/school districts did so for the following reasons: 1.) learning is more continual; 2.) memory loss is reduced by shortening summer vacation; 3.) remediation can occur throughout the year by using more frequent vacation periods, rather than limiting it to summer school after nine months of failure and frustration, and 4.) the instructional periods lend themselves to concepts of units, segments, or blocks of learning (p. 61).

Research seemed to support Ballinger's four assumptions: Heyns (1978) suggested that summer losses in achievement for lower socioeconomic status children seemed to deepen the gap between these at-risk students and their higher socioeconomic status peers. David and Pelavin (1978) stated that gains made in remediation programs during the regular school year seemed not to be carried over the summer months and into the next year.

Ward (1989) examined the long-term effectiveness of North Carolina's Basic Education Summer School Program (BEP). North Carolina instituted a testing and summer remediation program for academically at-risk students at grades three, six, and eight. The BEP sample was obtained by a stratified random sampling of schools in North

Carolina. The results of CAT (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1986) scores suggested that the Summer School program positively affected scores for one year, but that gain was not maintained for two years. It appeared that a summer program of even a short duration had significant effects on the CAT scores; however, it was also apparent that summer remediation needed to be repeated to continue to have an effect.

Socioeconomic Levels in Terms of Occupations: Local and National

According to the Department of Economic and Community Affairs Information Services Division (1990), the following counties, which participated in the study, reported the following unemployment rates: Woods county registered 3.2 percent, with a projected 2.5 percent unemployment by the year 2000; Washita county had a 7.5 percent rate, and a projected unemployment rate of 5.7 percent by the year 2000; Lincoln county had a 8.3 percent unemployment rate, with a projected decreased rate of 5.7 percent by the year 2000; and Bryan county registered an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent and a decline by the year 2000 to 4.4 percent. A combined unemployment rate for the local sample of 6.4 percent, and a projected (year 2000) unemployment rate of 4.6 percent. The unemployment rate of the entire state was 6.6 percent (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990).

The Census Bureau (1980) classified workers by

occupation. Over half (51.0 percent) of Oklahoma's employed personnel worked in white collar jobs ["White collar jobs are defined as those persons engaged in two main areas: managerial and professional specialty (accountants, auditors . . .administrators) ..."] (p. 40), while 32.0 percent of the state's workforce comprised the blue collar jobs in the state, precision production, craft and repair occupations (Department of Economic and Community Affairs Information Services Division, 1984).

In addition, the service sector was the other substantial employer of Oklahoma workers with 13.0 percent. Lastly, farming, forestry, and fishing had only 4.0 percent of the total employment in Oklahoma (p. 40).

Nationally:

The U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1990) reported that the unemployment rate nationally was 5.4 percent, while 26.3 workers were categorized as professionals, 14.0 percent were technical managers, 45.3 percent were skilled laborers, and 9.0 percent were unskilled laborers.

Site-Based School: Autonomy and Collegial Roles for Educators in the Decision-Making Process

In site-based schools, the primary premise was that educational improvement occurred when school decision making was shifted from a centralized "top down" administration to individual school control, a cooperatively directed process

where principals and teachers both played active roles
(Young, J., 1989). Hence, school-based decision making
appeared to create a professional environment for the
principals and teachers and improved the quality of their
decisions (Goodlad, J., 1985. The Carnegie Task Force,
1986. National Association of Elementary School Principals,
1989. and McBee, M. and Fink, J.S., 1989).

In Oklahoma City, McBee and Fink (1989), in "How One
School District Implemented Site-Based School Improvement
Planning Teams", shared several examples of how planning
teams trained to implement the (IDEA), Institute for
Development of Educational Activities, Inc. This school
improvement program facilitated pilot programs in nine
Oklahoma City schools to implement this process, access the
benefits to participating schools, and access the
contributions to future participants. The criteria appeared
to follow four educational variables: (1) decentralization
of authority to each of the nine school-sites; (2)
organization of curriculum and instruction to provide
creative, flexible, and challenging education for all
students; (3) collegial roles for educators in the
decision-making process; (4) and accountability emphasizing
performance-based outcomes. Conley (1990) seemed to agree
with the educators from Oklahoma. She believed that the
implementation of the school-based school alone would not
guarantee administrative decentralization, but that a
collegial, professional work environment could be created

by adhering to a participatory managerial philosophy that respected teachers as professionals and decision makers.

Lastly, the autonomy of local school sites appeared to gain some approval from the instructional leaders from California. Heller (1989) mailed a questionnaire to a stratified random sample of 4,800 principals, which elicited 1,509 responses, a return rate of 31.0 percent. His findings indicated that 91.0 percent of the principals favored local school autonomy; however, the teachers were not solicited for their responses of this proposed collegial enterprise. Yet, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, both teachers and administrators were surveyed to determine the effectiveness of school-based management versus the traditional form of management, a central office which dictated policy from the "top down". A total of 131 responses were received from 33 schools, and 92 of the respondents, 70.0 percent, preferred decentralized, school-based management to centralized management.

Summary

It was the primary purpose of this review of the literature to describe "A Study of Students at-Risk" conducted by Phi Delta Kappa and their proposed strategies to keep at-risk students in rural schools at the elementary level. However, the literature did not produce much information that dealt with high-risk students from rural, elementary schools. Consequently, it was necessary to

broaden the scope of research to include studies on at-risk students in urban and suburban schools at the elementary level. Further interest included socioeconomic levels regarding occupations for both local and national populations, school-site management, and the collegial roles of educators in the decision-making process.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purposes of this study were to determine if
relationships existed between local and national educators
as well as among educators from the four areas of the local
sample regarding the perceptions of strategies intended to
retain at-risk students in school (proposed by Phi Delta
Kappa).

Of further interest were the comparisons of principals
nationally and principals locally regarding their
perceptions of socioeconomic levels, more teacher
involvement in the decision making process, and school-site
autonomy.

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the sources
of data, instrumentation, population and sample, data
gathering procedure, and treatment of data.

Sources of Data

Data for this study were obtained from a "Principals'
Interview" and the "Teachers' Survey" developed by a

coordinating committee appointed by the PDK president.
These instruments were administered nationally by PDK
representatives between October 15 and December 15, 1988,
and locally by this researcher between April and May of
1990.

Instrumentation

Development of the Instruments

The Phi Delta Kappa's (1989) "Principals' Interview" and
"Teachers' Survey" grew out of an earlier investigation that
was designed to answer one question: Which issues in
education were most likely to be especially critical by
1990?

In 1986, PDK established a special Issues Board to
identify, monitor, and coordinate the organization's
response to developing issues and problems in the field of
education. The Issues Board included the president,
president-elect, executive director, editor of the Kappan,
and senior fellow.

As a result of monthly scheduled meetings and an earlier
version of the list which had been compiled in response to
suggestions from each Issues Board member's informal network
and that person's general knowledge of the field, a list of
14 issues thought to be important to teachers and
administrators was developed by the Issues Board during the
Summer of 1987.

In October 1987, the Issues Board decided to survey the

delegates at the PDK's Biennial Council in Louisville,

Kentucky, regarding the 14 issues. Each issue was described

in about 25-30 words. Delegates were asked to indicate "how

critical each issue is likely to be by 1990--for society and

for the profession--and how much attention will each issue

demand?" Responses were made according to a five-point

scale:

> Responses to each of the 14 issues were
> summarized for all persons completing the
> questionnaire. Each response to an issue was
> accorded a numerical value, depending on how the
> delegate marked the optical scan answer blank. "A"
> responses (that is, "very critical") were
> accorded a value of "5," "B" responses were accorded
> a value of "4," and so on, down through "E"
> responses ("not critical at all"), which were
> accorded a value of "1" (p. 3).

There were 635 chapters represented, each with a

delegate and alternate delegates; a total of 808 usable

responses were collected from the delegates. Most of the

responses received were from delegates, and obviously some

alternate delates also responded. Table I below indicates

how the 808 PDK delegates responded to the critical issues

questionnaire. Rank order and mean values for each of the

14 issues to which the delegates responded were reported.

On the questionnaire, what were seen as the top four

issues were described this way:

1. At-Risk/Neglected/Abused Students: Children who
   are low achievers, potential dropouts, pregnant
   teenagers, latchkey children, or children who
   suffer from abuse, neglect, drugs, or alcohol.

2. Changing Demographic Factors: Increasing number of
   minorities, non-English-speaking families,
   children born out of wedlock, single-parent homes,
   elderly, and declining school enrollments with

fewer taxpayers as parents.

Table I

RANK ORDER LISTING OF ISSUES SEEN AS ESPECIALLY CRITICAL
BY THE YEAR 1990
(N = 808)

RANK ORDER	ISSUE	MEAN VALUE
1	at risk/neglected/abused students	4.69
2	changing demographic factors	4.36
3	public support/confidence in education	4.34
4	improving the effectiveness of schools	4.33
5	financing public schools	4.16
6	selection and preparation of teachers	4.08
7	attitudes of professonals	4.03
8	AIDS/AIDS testing/fear of AIDS	4.01
9	special problems in urban schools	3.82
10	accountability	3.71
11	evaluating teachers	3.70
12	top-down/mandated reform	3.65
13	court decisions about curriculum content	3.65
14	privatization of public education	3.34

(p. 4)

3. Public Support and Confidence in Education:
    Declining support for public schools, importance of
    public schools in a democracy not understood, help
    people understand how better schools mean a better
    economy and a better culture.

4. Improving the Effectiveness of Schools: Raise
    students' achievement levels, reduce drop-out
    rates, improve students' attitudes toward school,
    help students become more responsible and competent
    as learners and citizens (pp. 4 and 5).

Given the issues outlined in Table I and above, 808

members of Phi Delta Kappa felt an obligation to improve the

effectiveness of public schools so that the confidence and

support of the general public could be restored. Also, that

public schools needed to deal more effectively with the learning difficulties and other problems that at-risk students have as a consequence of the changing demographic situation in America.

As a result of the response to the questionnaire, a proposal was developed to involve chapters of PDK in a study of at-risk students. This proposal was approved by the organization's Board of Directors in January 1988. The board made funds available for up to 100 chapters to collaborate in a research effort. A committee of researchers was appointed in February 1988 to conceptualize and coordinate the study.

The proposal to the Board of Directors outlined a project designed to do two things:

1.   Generate good data about the four issues
     a.   At-Risk/Neglected/Abused students
     b.   Changing Demographic Factors
     c.   Public Support and Confidence in Education
     d.   Improving the Effectiveness of Schools

2.   Generate enthusiasm, participation, and a sense of
     accomplishment in reserach among PDK members in up
     to 100 chapters (p. 6).

In March 1988, a committee of researchers was appointed by the president to coordinate the collaborative research project for PDK. The following persons agreed to serve:

    Ruben Carriedo, director of planning, research, and
      evaluation for San Diego Public Schools
    William Denton, assistant superintendent, Midland,
      Texas, Public Schools
    Bruce Gansneder, professor, Bureau of Educational
      Research, University of Virginia
    Sharon Johnson-Lewis, director of Evaluation and
      Testing, Detroit Public Schools
    Larry Barber, director, Phi Delta Kappa Center for
      Evaluation, Development and Research

Neville Robertson, director, Phi Delta Kappa Center for the Dissemination of Innovative Programs
Jack Frymier, senior fellow, Phi Delta Kappa, chairman (p. 7)

The committee of researchers met three times between March and June 1988 to conceptualize the study, to develop instruments and procedures that chapters would use to collect data.

Four questions provided direction for the research effort:

1. Who is at risk?
2. What are they like?
3. What is the school doing to help these students?
4. How effective are those efforts? (PDK, 1989, p. 7)

In the research study conducted locally, the scope was narrowed to question 3 and question 4: "What is the school doing to help these students?" "How effective are these efforts?" Also, demographic questions were asked in the "Principals' Interview".

Instruments

The instruments used in this research were modified versions of the PDK "Principals' Interview" (Appendix D) and the "Teachers' Survey" (Appendix C). Only the Interview and Survey items that addressed the research questions in this study were used by this researcher.

"Principals' Interview":

Interview items 1-3 were designed to gather demographic data: Name of the district, name of the school, street address, city and state and zip, name of the principal, telephone number, local PDK chapter number, school level, and the socioeconomic background of the students' families in school.

Interview items 4-5 were designed to assess the teachers' involvement in the decision making process and the level of school-site autonomy.

Interview items 6-36 were designed to determine the principals' perceptions of the strategies proposed by PDK to retain at-risk students in school.

"Teachers' Survey":

Survey items 1-30 were designed to determine the teachers' perceptions of the strategies proposed by PDK to retain at-risk students in school.

Because of a difference in the principals' and teachers' levels of measurement, four variables for principals--"1", "2", "3", "4" (Appendix A, PDK Instruments, 1989)-- and two variables for teachers--"yes" or "no" (Appendix B, PDK Instruments, 1989), the following statistical procedure of data conversion was used: the principals' ordinal data was converted to the teachers' nominal data. This conversion of data to the lowest common level of measurement should not have affected the validity of this research study (Bice, G., Key, P., Maril, L., Kussrow, P., and Sawyer, K. 1990).

> Score data may be converted to ordered data and ordered data may be converted to frequency data, but the reverse is not true. Frequency data may not be converted to ordered data and ordered data may not be converted to score data...Data can be converted in one direction but not in the other because score data generally contain more information than ordered data and ordered data contain more information than frequency data...Such conversions may not always be wise, but they are certainly legitimate. On the other hand, to go from frequency data to ordered data or from frequency data to ordered data to score data requires that you obtain information that was not in your initial measurement...
> (Linton and Gallo, 1975, pp. 26-27).

Validity of the Interview and Survey Instruments

A measure of validity is content validity. Kerlinger
(1986) suggested that content validity is a judgment of how
well the items of an instrument represent what is to be
measured. Also, content validity is usually determined by
competent judges in the specialty area.

As stated earlier, seven expert judges in the specialty
area of at-risk students were impaneled by PDK to
conceptualize the study, to develop instruments and
procedures that PDK chapters used to collect data. A
consensus of the above areas was achieved by this committee
in the form of the Manual of Instruction for a Study of
Students at Risk (PDK, 1989). This manual contained all
instruments, procedures, problems, and training procedures
for participating PDK chapter members. Therefore, all items
in the "Principals' Interview" and the "Teachers' Survey"
received 100 percent agreement among the seven judges.
Hence, sufficient content validity was established for the
survey and interview instruments.

Another measure of validity is face validity. Cates
(1985) noted:

> Many researchers do not consider face validity at
> all. Others contend that if a measurement
> instrument doesn't look quite right, that fact
> may have a subtle influence on the performance of
> the subjects being measured (p. 123).

From the state capitol in the Oliver Hodge building, a
volunteer sample of 20 subjects was established. All were
identified as certified educators by the state of Oklahoma.

In each instance, the volunteer subjects were asked to examine whether the survey and the interview instruments looked "acceptable" or "not acceptable" for her or him to complete. An 80 percent agreement among the volunteer subjects sampled was determined to be sufficient to establish a high level of face validity for the "Teachers' Survey" and the "Principals' Interview" (Willard, R. D., 1988).

All 20 of the volunteer sample identified as state certified educators found both the "Principals' Interview" and the "Teachers' Survey" "acceptable". One subject raised a question about the clarity of the directions for questions four and five of the "Principals' Interview", but yet remarked: "If this [instrument] were sent to me, I would probably answer it". In summation, 100.0 percent of the volunteer sample found both instruments "acceptable"; therefore, sufficient face validity was established for both the survey and the interview instruments.

Population and Sample

National population and sample: Of the elementary principals and teachers from 94 different sites, 31 sites represented the rural population, rural and small town schools. This sample represented 33 percent of the total elementary school population, and also represented both the sample and the population of elementary, rural schools.

The local target population for this research study was

the elementary principals and teachers from Oklahoma's
rural, elementary schools. These principals and teachers
represented independent public schools from counties with
less than 150 people per square mile (Bull, K., 1990).

To obtain a sample of this population, the state was
separated into four quadrant areas: The Northwest quadrant
included Cimarron, Texas, Beaver, Harper, Woods, Woodward,
Major, Alfalfa, Grant, Garfield, Ellis, Dewey, Kingfisher,
Roger Mills, Custer, Blaine, Canadian, and Logan counties;
the Southwest quadrant included Caddo, Washita, Beckham,
Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa, Tillman, Comanche, Cotton,
Jefferson, Love, Carter, Stephens, Grady, and McClain
counties; the Northeast quadrant included Lincoln, Okfuskee,
Creek, Okmulgee, Muskogee, Sequoyah, Payne, Adair,
Cherokee, Mayes, Wagoner, Delaware, Rogers, Pawnee, Noble,
Kay, Osage, Nowata, Craig, and Ottawa counties; and the
Southeast quadrant included Pottawatomie, Seminole, Hughes,
Garvin, Pontotoc, Coal, Pushmataha, McCurtain, Atoka,
Choctaw, Bryan, Marshall, and Johnson counties.

Secondly, one county was selected from each one of the
four quadrant areas. Three criteria were used for the
selection of each county: (1) Gender, (2) Teaching
experience of 15 or more years, (3) and Race. The counties
selected were Woods from the Northwest, Washita from the
Southwest, Lincoln from the Northeast, and Bryan from the
Southeast. The following comparison of the three criteria
was made between the state's rural population and the sample

from the selected counties:

1. Gender
    a. State -   male - 8.9 percent
                 female - 90.1 percent
    b. Sample - male - 8.5 percent
                 female - 91.5 percent

2. Teaching experience of 15 or more years
    a. State - 35.8 percent
    b. Sample - 34.9 percent

3. Race
    a.   State   Sample
        1. Caucasian   94.2   percent   97.9   percent
        2. Black   2.6   percent   1.8   percent
        3. Indian   2.9   percent   .30   percent
        4. Spanish American .24   percent   0   percent
        5. Oriental   0.777   percent   0   percent

(Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1989)

The accessible population represented 25 rural

elementary schools. From this population, three schools

were randomly selected from each county. This random

selection process was accomplished by using random-number

tables. Research started by pointing blindly at a point in

the table and proceeded from that point through the table,

until the selection of three schools in each county was

complete (McBurney, 1990).

By selecting a random sample in each county by this

method, 27 teachers from Carmen-Dacoma elementary school in

Carmen, and Longfellow and Washington elementary schools in

Alva were selected to represent Woods county; 41 teachers

from Canute, Cordell and Washita Heights elementary schools

were selected to represent Washita county; 44 teachers from

East Ward Elementary School in Colbert, Northwest Heights

and George Washington elementary schools in Durant were

selected to represent Bryan county; and 61 teachers from Meeker, Prague, and Stroud elementary schools were selected to represent Lincoln county--a total of 173 teachers. Of these 173 teachers, 126 responded to the "Teacher Survey". Thus, 72.8 percent of the teachers participated in this study. Also, 100 percent of the 12 principals participated in this study as well. Therefore, a total of 138 teachers and principals participated in this study.

Data Gathering Procedure

The intent was to ascertain what teachers and principals were doing to help at-risk students, and the effectiveness of those efforts. As mentioned in Chapter I and in the Instrumentation section in this Chapter, only those Interview and Survey items that pertained to the research questions, which were established in Chapter I, were used in this study.

The following procedure was used in gathering the local data:

1. Arrangements with the principal of each building were made for an interview session; this interview session was to be conducted by telephone. The purpose was to gain information about what efforts schools employed to retain at-risk students in school, and how effective were those efforts. Additional questions of concern were socioeconomic levels, more teacher involvement in the decision making process, and school site-autonomy.

2. The researcher solicited the principal's support to place one "Teacher Survey" and one answer blank in each teacher's mail box, along with a one-page statement of purpose and instructions about where and when to return the answer blanks.

3. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was enclosed for the principal. Each principal gathered the "Teachers' Surveys" and returned them to this researcher in one 12x10 business-sized envelope.

4. For surveys not returned to this researcher within 10 days after mailing, a follow-up telephone call was made.

5. Local data were collected between April and May of 1990. This researcher utilized the same procedures of data collection as the PDK researchers nationally.

Statistical Treatment of the Data

In this section, three components regarding statistical treatment of the data in this study were discussed:

1. The relationship of the perceptions of principals locally to principals nationally regarding socioeconomic levels, the degree of teacher involvement in the school's decision making process, and school-site autonomy.

2. Determining the relationships between/among nominal data.

3. Converting principals' ordinal data to the teachers' nominal data, or to the lowest common levels of measurement.

In determining the relationship of the perceptions of principals locally to principals nationally regarding socioeconomic levels, the degree of teacher involvement in the school's decision making process, and the perceived level of autonomy at their local school-site, a comparison of the principals' perceptions were made in the form of percentages to each of the above areas. Thus, these percentages that represented the perceptions of the principals nationally and principals locally were compared side-by-side in tables and presented descriptively in

Chapter Four of this study. When using nominal data, single variable cases can be analyzed and interpreted using percentages (Kerlinger, F.N., 1986).

The following research questions provided the focus for the research procedure above:

1. With regard to socioeconomic levels, how do the perceptions of principals from rural Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of principals nationally?

2. With regard to more teacher involvement in the decision making process, how do the perceptions of principals from rural Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of principals nationally?

3. With regard to more school-site autonomy, how do the perceptions of principals from rural Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of principals nationally?

Kerlinger (1986) suggested a research procedure for determining relationships between or among nominal data: calculate Chi Square to determine statistical significance--a greater than chance expectation; calculate the coefficient of contingency--the strength of the relationship; calculate the percentages of the obtained frequencies; and then interpret the data using all the information.

This research procedure was used to answer the following research questions:

4. With regard to the use of preferred strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school, how do the perceptions of teachers and principals from rural Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of teachers and principals nationally?

5. With regard to the effectiveness of preferred strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school, how do the perceptions of

elementary teachers and principals from rural
Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of teachers
and principals nationally?

6. With regard to the use of preferred strategies
(proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in
school, how do the perceptions of
teachers/principals from Woods, Washita, Lincoln
and Bryan Counties compare with each other?

7. With regard to the effectiveness of preferred
strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk
students in school, how do the perceptions of
teachers/principals from Woods, Washita, Lincoln,
and Bryan Counties compare with each other?

The level of significance was .05.

Because of a difference in the principals' and teachers'
levels of measurement, four variables for principals--"1",
"2", "3", "4" (Appendix A, PDK Instruments, 1989)--and two
variables for teachers--"yes" or "no" (Appendix B, PDK
Instruments, 1989), the following statistical procedure was
used when comparing principals' and teachers' responses to
the effectiveness of a given strategy: the data of this
comparative analysis was converted to the lowest common
level of measurement; thus, the principals' variables "1"
and "2" were converted to the value of "no"--the same as the
teachers' variable, while the values of "3" and "4", the
principals' variables, were converted to the value of "yes",
the teachers' variable. Thus, some information from the
data collected nationally by the PDK membership and locally
by this researcher could have been lost; however, this
statistical procedure of converting the principals' ordinal
data to the teachers' nominal data, or to the lowest common
level of measurement, should not affect the validity of this

research study (Linton and Gallo, 1975).

Summary

This chapter described the following: (1) the sources of data, (2) Instrumentation, (3) the population and sample, (4) data-gathering procedures, and (4) the statistical treatment of the data collection. The findings from this methodology were presented descriptively in Chapter Four of this study.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter presents the gathered data in a way to
identify and describe emerging relationships between the
national and local principals/teachers. Also described
are the emerging relationships among the educators from the
four quadrant areas of the local sample.

Of further concern were the perceptions of national
and local principals regarding socioeconomic levels of the
students, the degree of teacher involvement in the
decision-making process, and the level of school-site
autonomy. In summation, Chapter IV represents the findings
of this study.

Description of Responding Sample

National sample:

The principals and teachers participating in the
national PDK study were selected by the methodology
reported in Chapter Three. For purposes of this study, 31
principals and 654 teachers comprised the national rural,

elementary school sample of the Phi Delta Kappa study.

Local sample:

From April 16th to April 20th, 1990, the "Principals' Interview" was conducted by telephone and the "Teachers' Survey" was mailed to each of the 12 school-sites, three from each area, that represented the local sample (four different counties in the state--Woods, Washita, Bryan, and Lincoln counties). Schools were randomly selected by using the methodology reported in Chapter Three.

In keeping with accepted data-gathering procedure, telephone follow-ups were made April 26th to April 30th, 1990 to each of the non-responding schools. As a result, on May 21st, 1990, data were received from all 12 sites.

A total of 126 responses from the teachers' sample of 173 were received, a return rate of 72.8 percent. All 12 principals participated in the "Principals' Interview"; hence, a total of 138 teachers and principals participated in this study for a combined return rate of 75.1 percent. In keeping with the assumption made by Isaac and Michael (1985) that a survey with 60.0 percent return was acceptable, it was decided that the survey and interviews were acceptable.

Size of Local School-Sites

The size of the schools' student population ranged from a high of 120 students to a low of 105 students. By size, eight of the schools each reported serving 105 students;

one school served 110 students; two schools each served 115 students; and one school served 120 students. In sum, 1,300 students were served by the 12 school-sites.

The size of teaching staffs ranged from a high of 27 to a low of 7. One school reported that 27 certified teachers were working in that particular school; two schools each had 26 certified teachers; one school had 20 certified teachers; one school had 14 certified teachers; one school had 12 certified teachers; one school had 10 certified teachers; and one school had 9 certified teachers; one school had 8 certified teachers; and three schools had 7 certified teachers. Each school reported one principal, so 12 principals were represented in this study.

Table 2 summarizes the number of students, teachers, principals, and the principals and teachers who responded to the interview and survey by quadrant of the state.

Presentation of Data

The obtained data were tabulated and arranged according to the regular use and the effectiveness of strategies proposed by PDK. This was accomplished to determine the relationships between and among the sample groups stated in Chapter 3.

Of further concern were the findings pertaining to the perceptions of the national and local principals regarding socioeconomic levels in terms of professions of the parents or guardians of the students from their respective schools,

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS
AND RESPONDENTS

	AREAS BY QDRNTS.	STDTS.	TEACH.	TEACH. RESP.	PRNCPLS.	PRNCPLS. RESP.
	NW	330	25	25	3	3
	SW	315	42	31	3	3
	NE	315	61	44	3	3
	SE	340	45	26	3	3
TOTALS	4	1300	173	126	12	12

the degree of teacher involvement in the decision-making
process, and the level of school-site autonomy were
presented descriptively in the form of percentages.

Examination of Research Questions

Six questions were individually examined and
statistically treated by percentages in questions one, two,
and three, while questions, four, five, and six utilized the
chi-square test to determine a significant difference beyond
chance findings. A contingency coefficient was applied to
determine the relationship between, or among, the samples
stated in Chapter III. And the percentage of "yes"
responses were used to supply more information regarding
the differences between, or among, the samples of educators
that participated in this study. Also, percentages were
utilized in questions four, five, and six to determine if
similarities existed between, or among, the above stated

groups. In addition, each chi-square was tested at the .05 level of significance. The questions are reported as follows.

Research Question One

Research Question One stated: "With regard to socioeconomic levels, how do the perceptions of principals from rural Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of the national principals"?

Table 3 summarizes the percentage of the students' parents in each socioeconomic level regarding occupations.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS' PARENTS IN
EACH SOCIOECONOMIC LEVEL
REGARDING OCCUPATIONS

Categories Regarding Occupations	Principals Nationally n=31 Percentage	Principals Locally n=12 Percentage
Professionals	14.0	22.0
Managers Technical	14.0	13.0
Skilled Labor	38.0	27.0
Unskilled Labor	24.0	30.0
Unemployed	10.0	8.0
TOTALS	100.0 percent	100.0 percent

The national principals perceived that 14.0 percent of

their students came from homes where the parents or guardians were "Professionals"; 14.0 percent were "Managers Technical"; 38.0 percent were dependents of parents or guardians whose job description was "Skilled Labor"; 24.0 percent were dependents of parents or guardians whose job description was "Unskilled Labor"; and 10.0 percent had parents or guardians who were unemployed.

The local principals perceived that 22.0 percent of their students came from homes where the parents or guardians were "Professionals"; 13.0 percent were "Managers Technical"; 27.0 percent were dependents of parents or guardians whose job description was "Skilled Labor"; 30.0 percent were dependents of parents or guardians whose job description was "Unskilled Labor"; and 8.0 percent had parents or guardians who were unemployed.

In sum, the local principals perceived that more of their students came from parents or guardians whose job description was "Professional" and "Unskilled Labor." On the other hand, the national principals perceived that more of their students came from parents or guardians whose job description was "Skilled Labor", "Unemployed", and "Managers Technical" than the local principals.

Research Question Two

Research Question Two stated: "With regard to more teacher involvement in the decision-making process, how do the perceptions of principals from rural Oklahoma compare

with the perceptions of the national principals"?

Table 4 summarizes the percentages of the principals'
perceptions of increased involvement of teachers in the
decision-making process.

One hundred percent of the national principals perceived
that increased teacher involvement in the decision-making
process did occur. Although a lower percentage of local
principals felt that this occurred (67 percent said "yes"
and 33 percent said "no"), however a greater percentage of

TABLE 4

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF INCREASED
TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IN THE
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Categories	Principals Nationally n=31		Principals Locally n=12	
Did this occur?	YES	100.0	YES	67.0
	NO	00.0	NO	33.0
	TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0
How did the	POS	55.0	POS	67.0
teachers feel?	NEUT	32.0	NEUT	33.0
	NEG	13.0	NEG	00.0
	TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0
What effects did increased teacher				
involvement in	POS	45.0	POS	67.0
the decision-	NEUT	32.0	NEUT	16.0
making process	NEG	13.0	NEG	17.0
have on students?	TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0

the local principals perceived a positive effect on teachers, with 67 percent positive and 33 percent neutral responses. Fifty-five percent of the national principals perceived a positive effect on teachers: 32 percent perceived a neutral effect, and 13 percent perceived that increased teacher involvement in the decision-making process had a negative effect on teachers.

A higher percentage of local principals, 67 percent, perceived that increased teacher involvement had a positive effect on their students, and 16 percent perceived that there was a neutral effect; however, 17 percent believed that more teacher involvement in the decision-making process had a negative effect on their students. Forty-five percent of the national principals perceived that this had a positive effect, 32 percent a neutral effect, and 13 percent a negative effect on their students.

Research Question Three

Research Question Three stated: "With regard to more school-site autonomy, how do the perceptions of principals from rural Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of national principals"?

Table 5 summarizes the percentages of the principals' perceptions of increased school-site autonomy.

One hundred percent of the national principals perceived that more school-site autonomy existed in their respective schools. A lower percentage of the local principals

perceived an increase of autonomy in their respective

TABLE 5

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF AUTONOMY
AT THEIR LOCAL SCHOOL-SITES

Categories	Principals Nationally n=31		Principals Locally n=12	
Did this occur?	YES	100.0	YES	67.0
	NO	00.0	NO	33.0
	TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0
How teacher feel?	POS	100.0	POS	50.0
	NEUT	00.0	NEUT	25.0
	NEG	00.0	NEG	25.0
	TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0
Effects on students?	POS	00.0	POS	33.0
	NEUT	100.0	NEUT	50.0
	NEG	00.0	NEG	17.0
	TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0

schools: 67 percent responded "yes" and 33 percent responded
"no".

One hundred percent of the national principals believed
that more local school autonomy had a positive effect on
their teachers, while the local principals responded with
50 percent positive, 25 percent neutral, and 25 percent
perceived negative effects on students because of more
school-site autonomy of teachers.

One hundred percent of the national principals perceived that more school-site autonomy had a neutral effect on students, whereas the local principals had a higher percentage with positive and negative effects on students, 33 percent and 17 percent, respectively. Fifty percent of the local principals perceived that more school-site autonomy had a neutral effect on students.

Research Question Four

Research Question Four stated: "With regard to the use of preferred strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school, how do the perceptions of teachers and principals from rural Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of the national rural teachers and principals"?

Table 6 summarizes the regular use of strategies as they pertain to the national and local samples. For purposes of reporting these data, the principals and teachers were reported as educators.

The following strategies yielded significance at the .05 level, 3.84. Each strategy was rank ordered according to the strength of the relationship of the local and national educators as determined by the contingency coefficient; also, percentages were placed within this text to demonstrate the net percentage differences between the local and national samples and to determine which sample indicated the greater use of the following strategies:

1. Summer school yielded a contingency coefficient of .027; 12.0 percent of the local educators and 50.0

TABLE 6

NATIONAL AND LOCAL EDUCATORS: THE PERCEIVED
USE OF STRATEGIES PROPOSED BY PDK TO
RETAIN AT-RISK STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

Strategies	X^2	Contingency Coefficient	Percentage of Yes Responses Local n=138	Nat'l n=675
1. Smaller Classes	*16.0	0.14	75.0	55.0
2. Computerized Instruction	11.4	0.19	48.0	37.0
3. Special Teachers	*12.5	0.13	77.0	89.0
4. Peer Tutoring	2.72	0.06	74.0	66.0
5. Retain in Grade	1.98	0.05	53.0	46.0
6. Special Education	2.47	0.06	85.0	78.0
7. Vocational Courses	0.12	0.02	14.0	15.0
8. Alternative School	1.74	0.05	11.0	17.0
9. Study Skills	0.31	0.02	74.0	71.0
10. Special Textbooks	* 7.71	0.10	63.0	49.0
11. Place in Low Group	0.31	0.02	66.0	69.0
12. Coping Skills	0.99	0.04	78.0	74.0
13. Flexible Scheduling	0.65	0.03	76.0	72.0
14. Individualized Instruction	* 8.18	0.11	96.0	88.0
15. Home Tutoring	6.69	0.10	39.0	27.0
16. Extra Homework	0.08	0.01	23.0	25.0
17. Thinking Skills	0.33	0.03	87.0	89.0
18. Restrict from Sports	5.98	0.09	22.0	13.0
19. Refer to Psychologist	*47.0	0.24	37.0	69.0
20. Refer to Social Worker	*30.8	0.20	28.0	55.0
21. Confer with Parents	0.50	0.04	96.0	98.0
22. More Time on Basic Skills	1.26	0.05	94.0	91.0
23. Eliminate Art and Music	3.85	0.08	12.0	6.0
24. Notify Parents	* 7.80	0.11	93.0	98.0
25. Chapter I	0.00	0.00	78.0	78.0
26. Teacher Aides	*48.5	0.24	27.0	61.0
27. "Say Leave at Age 16"	7.73	0.11	8.0	3.0
28. Before School Programs	0.00	0.00	13.0	13.0
29. After School Programs	8.09	0.11	10.0	21.0
30. Summer School	*59.6	0.27	12.0	50.0

*Significant at the .05 level, 3.84 and at least 50.0 percent response from at least one of the samples.

**Significance levels were not affected by the combining of the principals' and teachers' data.

***This instrument was designed for elementary and secondary levels and one should be cautious when analyzing and drawing conclusions from data regarding items 7, 18, and 27.

percent of the national educators perceived a regular use of this strategy, a difference of 38.0 percent. Therefore, the national educators perceived a greater use of this strategy than their local counterparts.

2. The strategies of "Teacher aides" and "Refer to psychologist" both yielded a C of 0.24:

   a. Teacher aides--27.0 percent of the local educators and 63.0 percent of the national educators perceived a regular use of this strategy, a difference of 36.0 percent. Hence, the national educators perceived a greater use of this strategy than their local counterparts.

   b. Refer to psychologist--37.0 percent of the local educators and 69.0 percent of the national educators perceived a regular use of this strategy, a difference of 32.0 percent. Therefore, the national educators perceived a greater use of this strategy than their local counterparts.

3. "Refer to social worker" yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.20, and 28.0 percent of the local educators and 55.0 percent of the national educators perceived that they used this strategy regularly, a difference of 27.0 percent. Therefore, the national educators indicated a greater use of this strategy than their local counterparts.

4. "Smaller classes" yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.14, and 75.0 percent of the local and 55.0 percent of the national educators indicated that they used this strategy, a difference of 20.0 percent. Therefore, the local educators demonstrated a greater use of this strategy than their national counterparts.

5. "Special teachers" yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.13, and 77.0 percent of the local educators and 89.0 percent of the national educators indicated that they used this strategy, a difference of 12.0

percent. Therefore, the national educators perceived a greater use of this strategy than their local counterparts.

6. The strategies of "After school programs", "Notify parents", "Say leave at age 16", and "Individualized instruction" each yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.11:

   a. Regarding "Individualized instruction", 96.0 percent of the local educators and 88.0 percent of the national educators indicated that they used this strategy, a difference of 8.0 percent. Therefore, the local educators perceived a greater use of this strategy than their national counterparts.

   b. Regarding "Notify parents", 93.0 percent of the local educators and 98.0 percent of the national educators perceived that they used this strategy, a difference of 5.0 percent. Therefore, the national educators demonstrated a greater use of this strategy than their local counterparts.

7. The strategy of "Special textbooks" yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.10. Regarding "Special textbooks", 63.0 percent of the local educators and 49.0 percent of the national educators indicated that they used this strategy, a 14.0 percent difference. Therefore, the local educators perceived a greater use of this strategy than their national counterparts.

Fifteen strategies did not yield significance at the .05 level, 3.84; and, similarities appeared to exist between the local and national educators in the perceived use of these strategies proposed by PDK. The following strategies were rank ordered according to the highest to lowest percentages of the local and national samples:

1. Confer with parents
2. More time on basic skills
3. Thinking skills
4. Special education
5. Chapter I
6. Coping skills
7. Flexible scheduling
8. Special study skills

9. Peer tutoring
10. Place in low group
11. Retain in grade
12. Vocational courses
13. Alternative schools
14. Before school programs

(For more results, see Table Six)

Research Question Five

Research Question Five stated: "With regard to the effectiveness of preferred strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school, how do the perceptions of elementary teachers and principals from rural Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of national teachers and principals"?

Table 7 summarizes the effectiveness of strategies as they pertain to the national and the local samples.

The following strategies yielded significance at the .05 level, 3.84. Each strategy was rank ordered according to the strength of the relationship of the local and national educators as determined by the contingency coefficient; also, percentages were placed within this text to demonstrate the net percentage differences between the local and national samples and to determine which sample perceived the greater effectiveness of the following strategies:

1. The strategy of "Summer school" yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.22, and 42.0 percent of the local educators and 73.0 percent of the national educators perceived that this strategy was effective. Therefore, a greater percent of the national educators perceived this strategy to be effective, since a difference of 31.0 percent existed between the two samples in favor of the national educators.

TABLE 7

NATIONAL AND LOCAL EDUCATORS: THE PERCEIVED
EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES PROPOSED BY PDK
TO RETAIN AT-RISK STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

Strategies	X^2	Contingency Coefficient	Percentage of Yes Responses	
			Local n=138	Nat'l n=675
1. Smaller Classes	0.09	0.02	91.0	89.0
2. Computerized Instruction	* 8.30	0.11	71.0	55.0
3. Special Teachers	0.88	0.04	91.0	93.0
4. Peer Tutoring	0.14	0.02	86.0	84.0
5. Retain in Grade	* 4.54	0.08	69.0	57.0
6. Special Education	0.02	0.01	88.0	89.0
7. Vocational Courses	0.38	0.03	60.0	64.0
8. Alternative School	2.62	0.07	52.0	63.0
9. Study Skills	0.30	0.03	89.0	87.0
10. Special Textbooks	* 4.40	0.08	82.0	72.0
11. Place in Low Group	3.00	0.06	72.0	63.0
12. Coping Skills	0.05	0.01	86.0	86.0
13. Flexible Scheduling	1.80	0.05	86.0	80.0
14. Individualized Instruction	0.00	0.00	93.0	93.0
15. Home Tutoring	*12.3	0.14	53.0	71.0
16. Extra Homework	2.73	0.07	37.0	29.0
17. Thinking Skills	3.40	0.07	84.0	90.0
18. Restrict from Sports	20.0	0.17	41.0	20.0
19. Refer to Psychologist	* 8.0	0.11	61.0	75.0
20. Refer to Social Worker	2.90	0.07	56.0	66.0
21. Confer with Parents	1.00	0.04	87.0	83.0
22. More Time on Basic Skills	0.20	0.02	92.0	90.0
23. Eliminate Art and Music	20.2	0.17	25.0	9.0
24. Notify Parents	3.0	0.07	75.0	82.0
25. Chapter I	* 6.21	0.10	75.0	85.0
26. Teacher Aides	* 5.00	0.09	73.0	84.0
27. "Say Leave at Age 16"	87.3	0.35	35.0	4.2
28. Before School Programs	2.00	0.05	39.0	56.0
29. After School Programs	* 8.00	0.11	39.0	56.0
30. Summer School	*35.1	0.22	42.0	73.0

*Significant at the .05 level, 3.84 and at least 50.0 percent response from at least one of the samples.

**Significance levels were not affected by the combining of the principals' and teachers' data.

***This instrument was designed for elementary and secondary levels and one should be cautious when analyzing and drawing conclusions from data regarding items 7, 18, and 27.

2. The strategy of "Home tutoring" yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.14, and 53.0 percent of the local educators and 71.0 percent of the national educators perceived this strategy to be effective. Therefore, a greater percent of national educators indicated this strategy was effective, because a difference of 18.0 percent existed in favor of the national sample.

3. The strategies of "After school programs", "Computerized Instruction", and "Refer to psychologist" yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.11:

   a. Regarding "After school programs", 39.0 percent of the local educators and 56.0 percent of the national educators perceived this strategy to be effective.

   b. Regarding "Computerized instruction", 71.0 percent of the local educators and 55.0 percent of the national educators perceived this strategy to be effective.

   c. Lastly, regarding the strategy "Refer to psychologist", 61.0 percent of the local and 75.0 percent of the national educators perceived this strategy to be effective.

   Hence, a greater percent (17.0 percent greater) of the national educators perceived that the strategy "After school programs" was effective. Secondly, a greater percent (16.0 percent greater) of local educators perceived "Computerized instruction" was effective. And, lastly, regarding the strategy "Refer to psychologist", a greater percent (14.0 percent greater) of national educators perceived this strategy was effective.

4. The strategy of "Chapter I" yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.10, and 75.0 percent of the local educators and 85.0 percent of the national educators perceived this strategy to be effective. Hence, a

greater percent of national educators perceived this strategy to be effective, because of a 10.0 percent difference that existed between the two samples and which favored the national sample.

5. The strategy of "Teacher aides" yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.09, and 73.0 percent of the local educators and 84.0 percent of the national educators perceived this strategy to be effective. Therefore, a greater percentage of the national educators perceived this strategy to be effective, because of a 11.0 percent difference that existed between the two samples and which favored the national sample.

6. The strategies of "Special textbooks" and "Retain in grade" both yielded a contingency coefficient of 0.08:

    a. Regarding "Special textbooks", 82.0 percent of the local educators and 72.0 percent of the national educators perceived that this strategy was effective.

    b. Regarding "Retain in grade", 69.0 percent of the local educators and 57.0 percent of the national educators perceived this strategy to be effective.

        Hence, a greater percent (10.0 percent) of local educators perceived "Special textbooks) to be effective than their national counterparts. Also, a greater percent (12.0 percent) of the local educators perceived the strategy to "Retain in grade" was effective.

Eighteen strategies did not yield significance at the .05 level, 3.84; and, similarities appeared to exist between the local and national educators in the perceived effectiveness of the strategies proposed by PDK.

The following strategies were rank ordered according to the percentages of the local and national samples:

1. Individualized instruction
2. Special teachers
3. More time on basic skills
4. Smaller classes
5. Special education
6. Special study skills

7. Thinking skills
8. Confer with parents
9. Peer tutoring
10. Coping skills
11. Flexible scheduling
12. Notify parents
13. Place in low group
14. Vocational courses
15. Alternative schools
16. Refer to social worker
17. Before school programs
18. Extra homework

(For more results, see Table Seven)

Research Question Six

Research Question Six stated: "With regard to the use of preferred strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school, how do the perceptions of teachers/principals from Woods, Washita, Lincoln and Bryan counties compare with each other"?

Table 8 summarizes the regular use of strategies (proposed by PDK) by the four areas of the local sample. Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient values are illustrated in this table.

Table 9 summarizes the regular use of strategies (proposed by PDK) by the four areas of the local sample. The percentages of "yes" responses are illustrated in this table.

The following strategies yielded significance at the .05 level, 7.81 and at least a 50.0 percent response from at least one of the samples. Also, each strategy was rank ordered according to the strength of the relationship of the local and national educators as determined by the

contingency coefficient; also, percentages were placed

within this text to demonstrate the differences among the

local educators from the four quadrant areas and to

determine which sample indicated the greatest perceived use

of the following strategies:

1. The strategy of "Summer school" yielded a
    contingency coefficient of 0.48, and 32.0 percent of
    the educators from the Northwest, 40.0 percent from
    the Southwest, 35.0 percent from the Southeast, and
    58.0 percent from the Northeast quadrants indicated
    that they used this strategy regularly. Therefore,
    the educators from the Northeast quadrant
    demonstrated the greatest use of this strategy.

2. The strategies of "After school programs" and
    "Computerized instruction" yielded contingency
    coefficients of 0.39:

    a. Regarding "After school programs", 30.0 percent
        of the educators from the Northwest, 40.0
        percent from the Southwest, 35.0 percent from
        the Southeast, and 58.0 percent from the
        Northwest quadrants indicated that they used
        "After school programs" as a strategy regularly.

    b. Regarding "Computerized instruction", 89.0
        percent of the educators from the Northwest,
        54.0 percent from the Southwest, 68.0 percent
        from the Southeast, and 71.0 percent from the
        Northeast quadrants indicated a regular use of
        this strategy.

        Therefore, a greater percent of educators from
        the Northeast quadrant of the state indicated a
        regular use of the "After school program" than
        their local state counterparts with 52.0 percent
        "yes" responses. Also, a greater percent of the
        educators from the Northwest quadrant indicated
        a regular use of the strategy "Computerized
        instruction" than their local state
        counterparts, with 89.0 percent "yes" responses.

3. "Flexible scheduling and "Refer to psychologist"
    each yielded a C of 0.39:

    a. "Flexible scheduling"--93.0 percent of the
        educators from the Northwest, 93.0 percent from
        the Southwest, 68.0 percent from the Northeast
        quadrants perceived use of this strategy.

TABLE 8

LOCAL EDUCATORS: THE PERCEIVED USE OF
STRATEGIES PROPOSED BY PDK TO RETAIN
AT-RISK STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

Strategies	X^2	Contingency Coefficient
1. Smaller Classes	3.62	0.17
2. Computerized Instruction	*22.30	0.39
3. Special Teachers	* 8.50	0.25
4. Peer Tutoring	4.22	0.18
5. Retain in Grade	6.70	0.22
6. Special Education	3.82	0.17
7. Vocational Courses	2.32	0.14
8. Alternative School	3.15	0.16
9. Study Skills	3.90	0.17
10. Special Textbooks	2.80	0.14
11. Place in Low Group	3.82	0.17
12. Coping Skills	1.80	0.12
13. Flexible Scheduling	* 9.40	0.26
14. Individualized Instruction	2.33	0.12
15. Home Tutoring	4.36	0.18
16. Extra Homework	4.21	0.18
17. Thinking Skills	0.90	0.08
18. Restrict from Sports	6.6	0.22
19. Refer to Psychologist	* 9.31	0.26
20. Refer to Social Worker	* 8.30	0.25
21. Confer with Parents	0.14	0.03
22. More Time on Basic Skills	2.60	0.14
23. Eliminate Art and Music	2.82	0.15
24. Notify Parents	1.20	0.09
25. Chapter I	4.72	0.19
26. Teacher Aides	4.45	0.19
27. "Say Leave at Age 16"	5.25	0.20
28. Before School Programs	3.97	0.18
29. After School Programs	*22.74	0.39
30. Summer School	*29.61	0.48

*Significant at the .05 level, 7.81 and at least 50.0 percent response from at least one of the samples.
**The instrument was designed for elementary and secondary levels and one should be cautious when analyzing and drawing conclusions from data regarding items 7, 18, and 27.

Ninety-three percent of the educators from the Northwest and Southwest quadrants each indicated that they used this strategy regularly; thus, they each demonstrated a greater perceived use

TABLE 9

FOUR AREAS LOCAL SAMPLE: REGULAR USE
OF STRATEGIES--PERCENTAGES
OF "YES" RESPONSES

Strategies		NW n=28	SW n=34	SE n=47	NE n=29
1.	Smaller Classes	83.0	85.0	96.0	97.0
2.	Computerized Instruction	89.0	54.0	68.0	71.0
3.	Special Teachers	90.0	78.0	93.0	91.0
4.	Peer Tutoring	88.0	79.0	82.0	94.0
5.	Retain in Grade	64.0	55.0	71.0	81.0
6.	Special Education	86.0	82.0	88.0	92.0
7.	Vocational Courses	70.0	50.0	62.0	58.0
8.	Alternative School	53.0	43.0	63.0	50.0
9.	Study Skills	93.0	90.0	85.0	89.0
10.	Special Textbooks	74.0	83.0	85.0	86.0
11.	Place in Low Group	60.0	80.0	67.0	79.0
12.	Coping Skills	89.0	83.0	81.0	90.0
13.	Flexible Scheduling	93.0	93.0	68.0	88.0
14.	Individualized Instruction	90.0	94.0	91.0	96.0
15.	Home Tutoring	42.0	48.0	64.0	57.0
16.	Extra Homework	48.0	36.0	38.0	28.0
17.	Thinking Skills	83.0	85.0	69.0	93.0
18.	Restrict from Sports	41.0	52.0	41.0	33.0
19.	Refer to Psychologist	50.0	67.0	47.0	75.0
20.	Refer to Social Worker	70.0	30.0	53.0	64.0
21.	Confer with Parents	100.0	83.0	84.0	83.0
22.	More Time on Basic Skills	83.0	93.0	90.0	98.0
23.	Eliminate Art and Music	45.0	29.0	19.0	11.0
24.	Notify Parents	86.0	67.0	76.0	74.0
25.	Chapter I	90.0	68.0	65.0	77.0
26.	Teacher Aides	74.0	58.0	80.0	79.0
27.	"Say Leave at Age 16"	24.0	37.0	24.0	48.0
28.	Before School Programs	32.0	40.0	28.0	50.0
29.	After School Programs	30.0	39.0	32.0	52.0
30.	Summer School	32.0	40.0	35.0	58.0

of this strategy than their local state
counterparts.

    b.   "Computerized instruction"--50.0 percent of the educators from the Northwest, 67.0 percent from the Southwest, 47.0 percent from the Southeast, and 75.0 percent from the Northeast quadrants perceived a regular use of this strategy. Thus, the educators from the Northeast quadrant demonstrated the greatest use of this strategy.

  4. "Refer to social worker" and "Special teachers" each yielded a C of 0.25:

    a.   "Refer to social worker"--70.0 percent of the educators from the Northwest, 30.0 percent from the Southwest, 53.0 percent from the Southeast, and 64.0 percent from the Northeast quadrants perceived a regular use of this strategy. The educators from the Northwest indicated that a higher use of this strategy than their local state counterparts.

    b.   "Special textbooks"--90.0 percent of the educators from the Northwest, 78.0 percent from the Southwest, 93.0 percent from the Southeast, and 91.0 percent from the Northeast quadrants perceived a regular use of this strategy. The educators from the Southeast quadrant demonstrated a higher use of this strategy than their local state counterparts.

Twenty-three strategies did not yield significance at the .05 level, 7.81; and similarities appeared to exist among the local educators in the perceived use of the strategies proposed by PDK. The following strategies were rank ordered according to the percentages of the four areas of Oklahoma:

    1.   Individualized instruction
    2.   More time on basic skills
    3.   Smaller classes
    4.   Special study skills
    5.   Confer with parents
    6.   Special education
    7.   Peer tutoring
    8.   Coping skills
    9.   Thinking skills
  10.   Special textbooks
  11.   Notify parents
  12.   Chapter I
  13.   Teacher aides

14. Retain in grade
15. Place in low group
16. Vocational courses
17. Home tutoring
18. Alternative school
19. Extra homework
20. Restrict from sports
21. Before school programs
22. Say "leave at age 16"
23. Eliminate art and music

(For more results, see Table Nine)

Research Question Seven

Research Question Seven stated: "With regard to the effectiveness of preferred strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school, how do the perceptions of teachers/principals from Woods, Washita, Lincoln, and Bryan Counties compare with each other"?

Table 10 summarizes the effectiveness of strategies perceived by the principals/teachers from the four areas of the local sample. Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient values are illustrated in this table.

Table 11 summarizes the effectiveness of strategies perceived by the principals/teachers from the four areas of the local sample. The percentages of "yes" responses were illustrated in this table.

The following strategies yielded significance at the .05 level, 7.81 and at least a 50.0 percent response from at least one of the samples. Also, each strategy was rank-ordered according to the strength of the relationship of the local and national educators as determined by the contingency coefficient; also, percentages were placed

TABLE 10

FOUR AREAS LOCAL SAMPLE: THE PERCEIVED
EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES PROPOSED
BY PDK TO RETAIN AT-RISK
STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

Strategies	X^2	Contingency Coefficient
1. Smaller Classes	6.00	0.22
2. Computerized Instruction	7.61	0.26
3. Special Teachers	0.29	0.05
4. Peer Tutoring	3.80	0.18
5. Retain in Grade	4.47	0.20
6. Special Education	1.64	0.12
7. Vocational Courses	1.63	0.15
8. Alternative School	1.22	0.13
9. Study Skills	0.90	0.09
10. Special Textbooks	1.60	0.12
11. Place in Low Group	3.67	0.18
12. Coping Skills	1.34	0.11
13. Flexible Scheduling	* 9.30	0.27
14. Individualized Instruction	1.23	0.09
15. Home Tutoring	2.82	0.16
16. Extra Homework	2.53	0.16
17. Thinking Skills	6.30	0.22
18. Restrict from Sports	1.78	0.13
19. Refer to Psychologist	5.20	0.23
20. Refer to Social Worker	8.50	0.30
21. Confer with Parents	5.32	0.20
22. More Time on Basic Skills	5.38	0.20
23. Eliminate Art and Music	8.50	0.30
24. Notify Parents	2.90	0.41
25. Chapter I	5.50	0.21
26. Teacher Aides	3.18	0.18
27. "Say Leave at Age 16"	4.24	0.22
28. Before School Programs	2.83	0.18
29. After School Programs	2.94	0.18
30. Summer School	4.09	0.21

*Significant at the .05 level, 7.81.
**This instrument was designed for elementary and
secondary levels and one should be cautious when analyzing
and drawing conclusions from data regarding items 7, 18, and
27.

within this text to demonstrate the differences among the

local educators from the four quadrant areas and to

determine which sample indicated the perceived

TABLE 11

FOUR AREAS LOCAL SAMPLE: THE
PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF
STRATEGIES--PERCENTAGES
OF "YES" RESPONSES

Strategies	NW n=28	SW n=34	SE n=47	NE n=29
1. Smaller Classes	83.0	62.0	77.0	77.0
2. Computerized Instruction	59.0	36.0	80.0	28.0
3. Special Teachers	93.0	83.0	76.0	64.0
4. Peer Tutoring	61.0	71.0	75.0	82.0
5. Retain in Grade	69.0	39.0	60.0	45.0
6. Special Education	96.0	83.0	81.0	81.0
7. Vocational Courses	11.0	7.0	21.0	15.0
8. Alternative School	4.0	7.0	16.0	16.0
9. Study Skills	78.0	84.0	72.0	64.0
10. Special Textbooks	52.0	66.0	72.0	61.0
11. Place in Low Group	57.0	63.0	59.0	77.0
12. Coping Skills	76.0	83.0	70.0	81.0
13. Flexible Scheduling	82.0	93.0	61.0	71.0
14. Individualized Instruction	97.0	97.0	100.0	93.0
15. Home Tutoring	33.0	40.0	53.0	30.0
16. Extra Homework	37.0	24.0	15.0	20.0
17. Thinking Skills	90.0	89.0	82.0	86.0
18. Restrict from Sports	19.0	34.0	31.0	12.0
19. Refer to Psychologist	22.0	31.0	30.0	55.0
20. Refer to Social Worker	41.0	14.0	17.0	37.0
21. Confer with Parents	97.0	97.0	97.0	95.0
22. More Time on Basic Skills	100.0	94.0	91.0	93.0
23. Eliminate Art and Music	7.0	19.0	7.0	12.0
24. Notify Parents	90.0	94.0	97.0	91.0
25. Chapter I	85.0	80.0	63.0	81.0
26. Teacher Aides	42.0	24.0	19.0	24.0
27. "Say Leave at Age 16"	4.0	10.0	0.0	14.0
28. Before School Programs	4.0	10.0	21.0	14.0
29. After School Programs	0.0	0.0	32.0	7.0
30. Summer School	7.0	0.0	41.0	5.0

effectiveness of the following strategies:

   1. "Flexible scheduling"--contingency coefficient of

9.30. Eighty-two percent of the educators from the
Northwest, 93.0 percent from the Southwest, 61.0

percent from the Southeast, and 71.0 percent of the
educators from the Northeast quadrants perceived
this strategy to be effective. The educators from
the Southwest quadrant demonstrated the greatest
percentage of "yes" responses with 93.0 percent.

Twenty-seven strategies did not yield significance at
the .05 level, 7.81; and, similarities appeared to exist
among the local educators in the perceived effectiveness of
these strategies proposed by PDK. The following strategies
were rank-ordered according to the percentages of the four
areas of Oklahoma:

1. Individualized instruction
2. Confer with parents
3. More time on basic skills
4. Notify parents
5. Thinking skills
6. Special education
7. Flexible scheduling
8. Chapter I
9. Special teachers
10. Smaller classes
11. Special study skills
12. Peer tutoring
13. Place in low group
14. Special textbooks
15. Retain in grade
16. Computerized instruction
17. Home tutoring
18. Refer to psychologist
19. Teacher aides
20. Extra homework
21. Restrict from sports
22. Vocational courses
23. Before school programs
24. Alternative schools
25. After school programs
26. Summer school
27. Say "Leave at age 16"

(For results see Table 10)

Summary

Chapter IV presented the findings in this study. Research questions one, two, and three were tested to determine a comparison between the national and local principals regarding socioeconomic levels, more teacher involvement in the decision-making process, and school-site autonomy respectively. Research questions four, five, six and seven were tested to determine the relationship between the national and local educators and among the local educators regarding the strategies (proposed by PDK) used and their effectiveness respectively. Each question yielded beyond chance findings. These findings were summarized and discussed in Chapter V; also, conclusions and recommendations in Chapter V were made from findings in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION,
CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was designed to determine if relationships
existed between the national educators and the local
educators as well as among the local educators from the four
areas of the local sample regarding the use and
effectiveness of strategies proposed by PDK to retain
at-risk students. Of further interest were the comparisons
of the national and local principals regarding their
perceptions of socioeconomic levels in terms of the
professions of their parent or guardian, more teacher
involvement in the decision-making process, and school-site
autonomy.

Data for this study were obtained from instruments
developed by a coordinating committee appointed by the PDK
president. A survey and interview was conducted locally by
this researcher to a randomly selected sample of educators
from 12 school-sites in Oklahoma that met three criteria:
(1) Gender, (2) Teaching experience of 15 or more years,

and (3) Race.

Interview and Survey Response

Arrangements with each principal from the 12 schools
were made for an interview session; this interview session
was conducted by telephone and all principals participated.
Next, the researcher mailed the survey to each of the 12
school-sites and solicited the principals' support to
administer the individual surveys to the teachers. A total
of 126 responses from the teachers' sample of 173 was
received, a return rate of 72.8 percent. Hence, a total of
138 educators from 12 school-sites participated in this
study, a combined return rate from teachers and principals
of 75.1 percent.

<div align="center">Findings and Discussion</div>

Research Questions and Findings

From the collected data of the local and national
educators, seven questions were formulated for investigating
the purposes of this study. Research questions one, two,
and three were asked to make comparisons between the local
and national principals. Question one dealt with
socioeconomic levels (in terms of professions); question two
dealt with teacher involvement in the decision-making
process; and research question three dealt with school-site
autonomy. Research questions four and five were asked to
determine relationships between the local and national

educators regarding the regular use and effectiveness of the strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school. And, lastly, research questions six and seven were asked to determine relationships among the local educators from four quadrant areas of Oklahoma regarding the regular use and effectiveness of the strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in school.

The following questions were asked to make descriptive comparisons:

1. With regard to socioeconomic levels, in terms of professions, how do the perceptions of principals from rural Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of the national principals?

Regarding the students' parents' professions, 14.0 percent of the national principals and 22.0 percent of the local principals perceived that their students came from homes where their parents or guardians were professionals; 14.0 percent national and 13.0 percent local were managers technical; 38.0 percent national and 27.0 percent local were skilled laborers; 24.0 percent national and 30.0 percent local were unskilled labor; and 10.0 percent nationally and 8.0 percent locally were unemployed.

The local principals perceived that more of their students' parents or guardians' job descriptions were professional or unskilled labor than their national counterparts; whereas, the national principals perceived that more of their students' parents or guardians had job descriptions of skilled labor, and slightly more in the area of managers technical.

The Census Bureau (1980), classifying Oklahoma's workers by occupation, revealed 51.0 percent of Oklahoma's employed personnel worked in white collar jobs, 32.0 percent worked in blue collar jobs, while the service sector employed 13.0 of the state's workforce, leaving farming, forestry, and fishing to comprise the remaining 4 percent of employed personnel.

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1990) reported the unemployment rate of the entire state of Oklahoma as 6.6 percent as opposed to the combined unemployment rate for the local sample of 6.4 percent. Nationally, the unemployment rate reported by the Census Bureau was 5.4 percent.

2. With regard to more teacher involvement in the decision-making process, how do the perceptions of principals from rural Oklahoma compare with perceptions of national principals?

Regarding more teacher involvement in the decision-making process, 100.0 percent of the national principals stated that the above did occur in their respective schools, and 67.0 percent of the local principals stated that increased teacher involvement in the decision-making process occurred in their school, and 33.0 percent stated that this did not occur.

Fifty-five percent of the national principals and 67.0 percent of the local principals perceived that teachers were positive, 32.0 percent nationally and 33.0 percent locally were neutral, and 13.0 percent nationally and 0.00 percent locally were negative.

Forty-five percent of the national principals and 67.0 percent of the local principals perceived that students were positive about more teacher involvement in the decision-making process; 32.0 percent nationally and 16.0 percent locally were neutral; and 13.0 percent nationally and 17.0 percent locally were negative.

In summation, a larger percentage of national principals perceived that more teacher involvement took place in their schools than their local counterparts; however, a larger percentage of local principals perceived that their teachers were positive because of more teacher involvement in the decision-making process. Also, a larger percentage of local principals perceived that their students were positive because of more teacher involvement in the decision-making process than their national counterparts. [Supportive data for collegial decision making also appeared to encompass school-site autonomy. Therefore supportive data was presented in the next research question section.]

3. With regard to more school-site autonomy, how do the perceptions of principals from rural Oklahoma compare with the perceptions of national principals?

One hundred percent of the national principals perceived that more school-site autonomy existed in their schools, and 67.0 percent of the local principals perceived more school-site autonomy existed in their schools. One hundred percent of the national principals perceived that because school-site autonomy existed in their schools, their teachers were "positive". Sixty-seven percent of the local

educators perceived that school-site autonomy had a positive
effect on their teachers, and 33.0 percent perceived a
negative effect on their teachers. Thirty-three percent of
the local principals believed that school-site autonomy had
a positive effect on their students, 50.0 percent perceived
a neutral effect, and 17.0 percent a negative effect. One
hundred percent of the national principals stated that
school-site autonomy had a neutral effect on their students.

An interesting observation was uncovered from the
beforementioned data: a high percentage of principals
locally and nationally perceived their respective schools to
be autonomous; however, both indicated that this climate of
independence had negative and neutral effects on both
teachers and students.

A reason for these seemingly inconsistent findings may
be because of the tensions confronting educators to make
decisions that are unique to their respective schools.
Schools are faced with the dilemma of raising the levels of
their students' achievement through standardizing school and
classroom practices, or supplying principals and teachers
local autonomy to solve problems that are unique to their
own settings. Another reason may simply be a resistance to
change. Hence, placing school-site autonomy in the
confrontational role to stability.

In the literature regarding site-based schools, the
primary premise was that educational improvement occurred
when school decision making was shifted from a centralized

"top down" administration to individual school control; a
cooperatively directed process where principals and teachers
both played active roles (Young, J., 1989). Hence,
school-based decision making appeared to create a
professional environment for the principals and teachers and
improved the quality of their decisions (Goodlad, J., 1985.
The Carnegie Task Force, 1986. National Association of
Elementary School Principals, 1989. and McBee, M. and Fink,
J.S., 1989).

4. With regard to the use of preferred strategies
(proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in
school, how do perceptions of teachers/principals
from rural Oklahoma compare with perceptions of the
national principals/teachers? (Results can be found
in Table Six).

5. With regard to the effectiveness of preferred
strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk
students in school, how do perceptions of
teachers/principals from rural Oklahoma compare
with perceptions of the national
principals/teachers? (Results can be found in Table
Seven).

6. With regard to the use of preferred strategies
(proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk students in
school, how do perceptions of teachers/principals
from rural Oklahoma compare with perceptions of the
national principals/teachers? (Results can be found
in Tables Eight and Nine).

7. With regard to the effectiveness of preferred
strategies (proposed by PDK) to retain at-risk
students in school, how do perceptions of
teachers/principals from Woods, Washita, Lincoln and
Bryan Counties compare with each other? (Results
can be found in Tables Ten and Eleven).

A Profile of Findings: Common Characteristics

From this study, findings that emerged from data
regarding research questions four, five, six and seven

revealed a consistency of characteristics regarding the strategies (proposed by PDK) that the participants, locally and nationally, held in common. The characteristics of commonality were individualized instruction, classroom learning skills, and parental involvement.

Individualized instruction, which encompassed a group of related strategies such as smaller classes, peer tutoring, special teachers, and special education, was agreed on by the participants from this study as being effective. However, the local and national educators indicated a significant difference in their perceived use of smaller classes and individualized instruction. The difference could possibly be referenced to Table 2 of this study which shows a ratio of 7.5 students to one teacher in the local sample. Hence, smaller classes in the local sample may be more fully realized than in the national school-sites. Also, the local schools apparently relied heavily on special teachers, thereby providing more opportunities for small group and individualized instruction (see size of local school-sites section in Chapter III).

Classroom learning skills such as "more time on basic skills," "special study skills," and "special textbooks," appeared to be effective in the classroom for remediation and the mastery of basic skills; however, classroom learning skills such as "thinking skills" and "coping skills" appeared to be sparsely represented in the at-risk students' curriculum. Yet, Pogrow (1990) presented the HOTS program

(Higher-Order Thinking Skills). This program used the Socratic approach by utilizing computer skills and the application of higher-order thinking skills. By the use of computers, students were asked to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate new information. Also, Feldman (1987) presented an extended day program "Hands on Science" which allowed students to discover the numerous applications of simple everyday materials to science and technology. As previously mentioned, the literature revealed that most at-risk programs tended to rely on remedial or compensatory services rather than higher-order thinking skills (Levin, 1989).

Parental involvement can form an effective communication link between the home and school. According to the literature, this two-way communication helps teachers gain more insight to the special needs of the student. Also, the students' parents are provided more opportunities to actively participate in their child's school experience. Furthermore, this home to school linkage aided in elevating the following discrepancies between parents' and school personnel's perceptions of the child; information concerning the child being withheld from parents; parents set aside their own doubts to accept the judgments of their school personnel; and large class sizes may prevent the development of strong home and school relations (Casanova, 1988).

A Profile of Findings: Significant Differences

Significant differences existed between the national and local educators regarding the effectiveness of the following strategies: (1) computerized instruction, (2) retain in grade, (3) special textbooks, (4) home tutoring, (5) refer to psychologist, (6) Chapter I, (7) teacher aides, (8) after school programs, and (9) summer school programs (see table 7). While the local educators appeared to differ on the use of the following strategies: (1) computerized instruction, (2) special teachers, (3) flexible scheduling, (4) refer to a psychologist, (5) refer to a counselor, (6) after school programs, and (7) summer school (see tables 8 and 9). The differences appeared to be related to support services, equipment, and personnel. Those areas such as computerized instruction, special textbooks, special teachers, and chapter I programs may be seen as threatening modes to the regular classroom teacher. These strategies may be seen as a means to replace the classroom teacher, or implicitly imply that these educational professionals are not "doing their jobs." The difference among educators regarding strategies of "referral to psychologist" or to a social worker could be because of the varying degree by which a school interacts among other social agencies, such as counseling services that supply service to the same "client" (Hodgkinson, 1989). Also, elementary schools located in rural areas may not supply counseling services through certified school personnel, or because of diminishing funds,

counseling services at the elementary levels may be non-existent (Bull, K. 1990).

Differences between the Findings from this
Study and Current Literature

Three areas of disagreement existed between the findings from this study and current literature: computerized instruction, refer to psychologist, and summer school.

Computerized instruction helped at-risk students achieve significant gains in reading, math, and spelling (Dowdney, 1987) and higher-order thinking skills (Pogrow, 1990). Yet, educators may have perceived CAI as a means to actually broaden the gap between at-risk students and their on-level counterparts, because of the inequities of computer use availability to at-risk students during after school hours (Kleifgen, 1989).

Reluctance to refer a student to a psychologist or other counseling service may be: because of the isolation of educators from other "outside" service providers (Hodgkinson, 1989); certified counselors are not provided at the rural elementary school level; or even "outside" counseling services are not available because of a lack of funds. Nevertheless, the literature firmly supports the use of professional counseling as an effective strategy for dropout prevention (New York State Education Department, 1984. Walz, G.R., 1986. Jones, E.D., 1987).

The literature indicated that summer school was an

effective strategy to improve at-risk students' academic

achievement for one year, but that gain was not maintained

for two years. Summer school remediation needed to be

repeated to have positive results (CTB/McGraw Hill, 1986).

However, summer school via the extended school year for

rural elementary at-risk students may not be an option,

because of the priority of funding for the extended school

year may be reserved for students eligible for special

education, culturally disadvantaged or minorities, thereby

eliminating some at-risk students from this effective option

to academic and social success. Also, funding problems in

general may not allow rural elementary schools to offer

summer school programs (Bull, K., 1990).

Conclusions

The analysis of data revealed findings which served as

the basis of the following conclusions. Conclusions are

limited to subjects similar to the ones from this study.

1. Teachers should be involved in the decision-making
   process. This study indicated some evidence to
   support the aforementioned and that teachers tended
   to be more positive when directly involved in the
   governance of school policies. Also, this
   cooperative approach to teacher involvement in the
   decision-making process appeared to have a positive
   effect on the students as well (see table 4). This
   collegial approach allows educators to utilize one
   another's knowledge without a loss of one's
   specialty knowledge base, expertise, or "territory."
   Therefore, the problems of at-risk students could be
   resolved by incorporating more of the professional
   skills within the local school.

2. The significant relationships between and among the
   educational professionals that participated in this

study indicated some evidence to support what most
educators know: that at-risk children can be
helped to overcome social and academic failures.

Data from this study indicated three key areas to
help troubled youth in school: (1) individualized
instruction, (2) learning skills, and (3) parental
involvement.

There are no alternative techniques, materials or
equipment that will replace the need for the
classroom teacher. However, in a classroom of
considerably more than 20 students with diverse
educational and social needs, practical and workable
strategies must be available to teachers who seek
the best academic setting for their students. One
such strategy is individualized instruction. This
strategy encompasses an entire cluster of strategies
such as peer tutoring, special teachers, smaller
classes, and special education (strategies that the
participants locally and nationally appeared to
agree): peer tutoring can be utilized in
mainstreamed or integrated classroom settings.
Educational settings that elect to use older
students to tutor younger students have a potential
resource that can be instrumental in the achievement
of both the teachers' and students' goal, success in
the classroom. Special teachers can provide
innovative avenues of instructing students with
special needs. The specialist teacher teaming with
the regular teacher should improve the planning,
communication, classroom management procedures, and
provide constructive feedback.

Smaller classes can make substantial improvements in
the child's academic progress. However, this
progress appears to diminish markedly after the
third grade.

For students that qualify, special education can be
an effective strategy because of the individualized
curriculum (I.E.P.) and the freedom to educational
and social growth by the placing of students in the
least restrictive environments.

The second key area that was uncovered in this study

was learning skills. Learning skills encompass several

strategies identified by the participants from this study:

thinking skills, special study skills, coping skills, and

more time on basic skills. The literature indicates that

the strategies "more time on basic skills" and "special
study skills" are very effective in aiding at-risk students
to achievement in the classroom. However, the strategies of
thinking skills and coping skills appear to be moot issues,
because of the scarcity of academic decisions in at-risk
students curriculum regarding the opportunities to develop
higher-level thinking skills. An overwhelming amount of
instruction deals with remediation and not much in the
development of thinking skills and higher-level academic
applications.

The last key area that was identified in this study was
parental involvement. Parental involvement forms a link
between home and school, thereby, offering at-risk children,
such as the culturally or linguistically diverse,
opportunities to communicate more effectively with their
parents about what they are learning in school. Also, this
home to school linkage may provide parents with
opportunities to help more directly with their child's
school experience.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

For Practice

From this study, the following recommendations for
practice were generated:

1. At-risk students should not be retained in grade.
    The literature suggested that the effects of
    students retained in grade had as much to do with
    at-risk students dropping out of school as did
    their academic achievement.

2. A greater access to computer assisted instruction for at-risk students is needed in rural elementary schools in rural Oklahoma.

3. The development of stronger relations between home and schools is needed, especially homes where at-risk students live and their respective schools.

4. Summer school should be implemented in Oklahoma's rural elementary schools. The results of CTB/McGraw-Hill (1986) scores suggested that the summer school program positively affected scores for one year, but the gain was not maintained during the second year. Therefore, summer remediation and enrichment needs to be repeated to continuously obtain positive results.

5. Phi Delta Kappa's teachers' survey and principals' interview instruments (instruments utilized in this research study) could be adopted by the State of Oklahoma's Data Center which is located in the department of Economic and Community Affairs. These instruments would supply the state's educators with effective and easy-to-use tools to gather information regarding the use and effectiveness of the efforts to retain at-risk students in school. (Information pertaining to PDK's instruments is located in Chapter 3 under the Instrumentation section.)

   This researcher also suggests that the teachers' survey be changed from a nominal data-gathering instrument to an ordinal data-gathering instrument [thus, matching the principals' interview instrument]; this would enable the researcher to obtain more information from the state's educators.

6. At-risk students should not be restricted from the participation in sports. According to the literature, participation in extracurricular activities demonstrated a variety of desirable effects on the academic progress by raising educational expectations and grades, lowering delinquency, and positively affected the at-risk students' desire to persist in school.

7. Alternative schools that emphasize the instrumental goal of bringing at-risk students up to grade level by the completion of the sixth grade are recommended as a new or expanded practice (see Alternative School section, Chapter 2).

8. Peer tutoring programs are suggested as a strategy to retain at-risk students in school. This

student-that-teaches-other-students concept, a
remarkably successful program, provides at-risk
students to act as tutors to younger students.
These students in tutorship roles learn the basic
skills, develop new positive self-perceptions of
school, and develop positive self-concepts.

9. School psychologists are recommended to be utilized
in rural elementary schools. The literature
suggested that at-risk elementary students with
behavioral difficulties improved their behavior
after the consultation with families and counseling
with students.

For Further Study

From this study, the following recommendations for

further study were generated:

1. Since the passage of H.B. 1017, more research
regarding smaller class size is recommended. A
determination of significant difference is needed
between students in grades K-3 and students 4-6 and
their achievement levels due to smaller classes.

2. There is a need for this study to be replicated in
Oklahoma. Also, two additional procedures are
suggested: (1) change the teachers' survey (PDK's
instrument) from a nominal data-gathering instrument
to an ordinal data-gathering instrument. This
approach will enable the researcher to acquire more
information; (2) and, use the statistical test of
Friedman ANOVA by Ranks to determine a significant
difference, and a Spearman R to determine
relationships.

3. A longitudinal study is recommended. A long-range
determination of the effectiveness of strategies
(proposed by PDK) and their lasting effects on
at-risk students is needed.

4. There is a need to determine if positive
relationships exist between local school-site
autonomy and teachers, and between students.

Perceptions of the Study

This study began with the following statement: "We know

more about who has dropped out, and why, then we know about effective school efforts to prevent students from dropping out" (Phi Delta Kappa, <u>Dropouts, Pushouts, and Other Casualties</u>. 1987. p. 115). Yet, this investigation uncovered findings which related to helping at-risk students overcome social and academic failures: teacher involvement in the decision-making process and three key areas to help troubled youth in school, such as individualized instruction, learning skills, and parental involvement.

With this information and research from others, perhaps the educational community will more effectively address the problems of the youth at risk, thereby allowing all of us to win as a result.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

THE PDK PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

THE PDK PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

1. Name of Interviewer _____

Name of District _____

Name of School _____

Street _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Name of Principal _____

Telephone _____

2. School Level _____ Elementary _____ Middle _____ Senior

Record the total enrollment for this school district and this school as of October 1 for each of the following years (be exact):

	District		School
1980	3. _____		12. _____
1981	4. _____		13. _____
1982	5. _____		14. _____
1983	6. _____		15. _____
1984	7. _____		16. _____
1985	8. _____		17. _____
1986	9. _____		18. _____
1987	10. _____		19. _____
1988	11. _____		20. _____

21. Gender   _____Male   _____Female

22. Highest degree

       _____Bachelors   _____Masters   _____Doctorate

23. How many years have you been principal at this school?

         _____ less than 1 year
         _____ 1 to 2 years
         _____ 3 to 4 years
         _____ 5 to 6 years
         _____ 7 or more years

24. Which term best describes you?

         _____ Asian
         _____ Black
         _____ Hispanic
         _____ White
         _____ Other

25. Circle grade levels: Pre K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

26. Total number of <u>full-time</u> staff: Total

       Teachers   Male _____   Female _____   _____
       Administrators   Male _____   Female _____   _____
       Counselors   Male _____   Female _____   _____

              Total   _____   _____   _____

27. Total number of <u>part-time</u> staff: Total

       Teachers   Male _____   Female _____   _____
       Administrators   Male _____   Female _____   _____
       Counselors   Male _____   Female _____   _____

              Total   _____   _____   _____

28. In what type of community is the school located?

       _____ Large City   _____ Suburb   _____ Small City
       _____ Small Town   _____ Rural

29. Proportion of students in this school in terms of ethnic background (total 100%)

       _____ White   _____ Black   _____ Hispanic
       _____ Asian   _____ Other

30. Socioeconomic background of students' families in this school (total 100%)

     _____ Professionals   _____ Mgrs./Tech.
     _____ Skilled Labor   _____ Unskilled Labor
           _____ Unemployed

31. Describe the stability of this community (i.e., people moving in/out)

     _____ Very stable   _____ Moderately stable
     _____ Moderabely Mobile   _____ Very Mobile

32. Circle if the school is:

     Public   Parochial   Independent

33. What percentage of students receive free or reduced lunch or breakfast?   _____ %

34. How many students were <u>suspended</u> last year?   _____ %

35. How many students were <u>expelled</u> last year?   _____ %

36. Estimate percentage of students who <u>failed</u> one or more courses last year?   _____ %

37. (Elementary only)   How many students were <u>retained in grade</u> last year at each grade level?

     K _____

     1 _____

     2 _____

     3 _____

     4 _____

     5 _____

     6 _____

Estimate the degree to which each of the following is a problem among the students in your school:

	Not a Serious Problem	Somewhat Serious Problem	Very Serious Problem
38. Attendance	_____	_____	_____
39. Attitude Toward School	_____	_____	_____
40. Completing Assignments	_____	_____	_____
41. Arguments with Teachers	_____	_____	_____
42. Fighting Among Students	_____	_____	_____
43. Assault of Teachers	_____	_____	_____
44. Use of Drugs by Students	_____	_____	_____
45. Selling of Drugs	_____	_____	_____
46. Alcohol Use by Students	_____	_____	_____
47. Sexual Activity/Students	_____	_____	_____
48. Pregnancy Among Girls	_____	_____	_____
49. Abused Children	_____	_____	_____
50. Theft	_____	_____	_____
51. Racial Conflict	_____	_____	_____
52. Classroom Discipline	_____	_____	_____
53. School Morale	_____	_____	_____

During the last few years, many states and school districts have taken steps to improve the quality of education for young people in schools. Sometimes these actions have been taken by state legislatures, sometimes by state boards of education, sometimes by state departments of education, and sometimes by local boards of education and superintendents.

The intent of these actions by states and local boards has been to make schools better. Would you respond to the changes that have occurred in three ways?

1. Did this change occur in your situation?
2. How do teachers feel about these change?
3. How have the changes affected students?

	Did This Occur?		How Teachers Feel			Effect on Students		
54. Increase requirements for graduation?	Yes	No	+	0	–	+	0	–
55. Increase requirements for teacher evaluation	Yes	No	+	0	–	+	0	–
56. Mandatory testing programs for students	Yes	No	+	0	–	+	0	–
57. Mandatory testing programs for teachers	Yes	No	+	0	–	+	0	–
58. Retain in grade those who do not achieve up to the "norm"	Yes	No	+	0	–	+	0	–
59. Restrict participation in extracurricular activites for those who do not achieve	Yes	No	+	0	–	+	0	–
60. More teacher involvement in decision-making	Yes	No	+	0	–	+	0	–
61. More school-site autonomy	Yes	No	+	0	–	+	0	–
62. Improve working conditions for teachers	Yes	No	+	0	–	+	0	–

Suppose we posit a number line as portraying the absence or presence of a factor (1 = low, 9 = high)
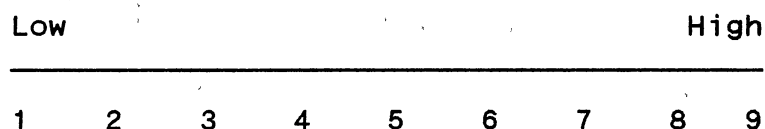
Low   High

_____

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Suppose further that the following options reflect the

<u>degree of diversity present within your school</u> on various factors:

        A. 1 - 9 (full range of variability)
        B. 1 - 5 (low end of scale, predominately)
        C. 5 - 9 (high end of scale, predominately)
        D. 3 - 7 (middle range, predominately)

Given the rationale above, how would you <u>describe the range or diversity among your students</u> on each of the following:

63.	intelligence	A	B	C	D
64.	motivation	A	B	C	D
65.	experience (trips, etc.)	A	B	C	D
66.	academic achievement	A	B	C	D

67. Which of the following options represents how you think teachers in this school ought to provide instruction?

    _____ each teacher should decide what to do with his or her students

    _____ there should be a common program, but each teacher should be encouraged to make variations for individual students

    _____ there should be a different but standard strategy for different types of students

    _____ there should be a common pgoram that each teacher is expected to follow

Teachers and administrators generally have a "cut off" point in their minds that triggers attention to students who may be at risk. Presented below are three different factors that schools use to alert themselves to problems among their students: absences, grades, and achievement scores. Where does your school "draw the line" regarding these things? <u>Circle the "cut-off" point</u> for each factor.

68.	69.	70.
		Below Grade Level
<u>Absences</u>	<u>Grades Received</u>	<u>Achievement Scores</u>
A. 1-3	A. All C's or below	A. slightly
B. 4-6	B. one D or F	B. one year
C. 7-9	C. mostly D's and F's	C. 1 - 1/2 years
D. 10+	D. several F's	D. 2 or more years

Some students are "at risk." Being "at risk" means being likely to fail at school or even at life. When you have students who are at risk, <u>which of the following strategies do you regularly use</u>? Also indicate <u>how effective each strategy is</u>, using the four-point scale below. Rate the effectiveness of every strategy, even if you do not use it regularly.

		<u>Do You Do This Regularly?</u>		How Effective Is It?			
				Not Very			Very
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	1	2	3	4
71.	smaller classes	___	___	___	___	___	___
72.	computerized instruction	___	___	___	___	___	___
73.	special teachers	___	___	___	___	___	___
74.	peer tutoring	___	___	___	___	___	___
75.	retain in grade	___	___	___	___	___	___
76.	special education	___	___	___	___	___	___
77.	vocational courses	___	___	___	___	___	___
78.	alternative school	___	___	___	___	___	___
79.	special study skills	___	___	___	___	___	___
80.	special textbooks	___	___	___	___	___	___
81.	place in low group	___	___	___	___	___	___
82.	emphasize coping skills	___	___	___	___	___	___
83.	flexible scheduling	___	___	___	___	___	___
84.	individualize instruction	___	___	___	___	___	___
85.	home tutoring	___	___	___	___	___	___
86.	extra homework	___	___	___	___	___	___
87.	emphasize thinking skills	___	___	___	___	___	___
88.	restrict from sports	___	___	___	___	___	___
89.	refer to psychologist	___	___	___	___	___	___
90.	refer to social worker	___	___	___	___	___	___
91.	confer with parents	___	___	___	___	___	___
92.	more time on basic skills	___	___	___	___	___	___
93.	eliminate art and music	___	___	___	___	___	___
94.	notify parents	___	___	___	___	___	___
95.	Chapter I program	___	___	___	___	___	___
96.	teacher aides	___	___	___	___	___	___
97.	say "leave at age 16"	___	___	___	___	___	___
98.	before school programs	___	___	___	___	___	___
99.	after school programs	___	___	___	___	___	___
100.	summer school programs	___	___	___	___	___	___
101.	other (specify)	___	___	___	___	___	___

102. What percentage of your working times do you spend on
      the problems associated with students who are at
      risk?

     _____   less than 10 percent

     _____   11 to 20 percent

     _____   21 to 30 percent

     _____   31 to 40 percent

     _____   41 to 50 percent

     _____   more than 50 percent

103. Is the time that you spend working with at risk
      students--

     _____   very productive

     _____   somewhat productive

     _____   not very productive

     _____   not productive at all

How much influence does your school have over students':

	Not Very Much			Great Deal
	1	2	3	4
104. reading comprehension	1	2	3	4
105. mathematics skills	1	2	3	4
106. writing skills	1	2	3	4
107. listening skills	1	2	3	4
108. daily attendance	1	2	3	4
109. general behavior in school	1	2	3	4
110. attitude toward school	1	2	3	4
111. completion of homework	1	2	3	4
112. attention in class	1	2	3	4
113. higher order thinking skills	1	2	3	4

Please rank order the extent to which each of the groups
listed (parents, teachers, and students) should be
responsible for helping students acquire the learning or
behavior specified.

```
        1 - most responsible
        2 - next most responsible
        3 - least responsible
```

		Parents	Teachers	Students
104.	reading comprehension	_____	_____	_____
105.	mathematics skills	_____	_____	_____
106.	writing skills	_____	_____	_____
107.	listening skills	_____	_____	_____
108.	daily attendance	_____	_____	_____
109.	general behavior in school	_____	_____	_____
110.	attitude toward school	_____	_____	_____
111.	completion of homework	_____	_____	_____
112.	attention in class	_____	_____	_____
113.	higher order thinking skills	_____	_____	_____

Below is a list of problems that students may be confronted with <u>outside of school</u>. Are your students <u>confronted more</u> or <u>confronted less</u> with the problems listed below than students at most other schools.

		Not Very Much			Great Deal
		1	2	3	4
124.	substance abuse	1	2	3	4
125.	family discord	1	2	3	4
126.	family instability	1	2	3	4
127.	crime	1	2	3	4
128.	alcohol abuse	1	2	3	4

<u>Is it possible for you to help</u> your students cope with these problems?

		Not Very Much			Great Deal
		1	2	3	4
129.	substance abuse	1	2	3	4
130.	family discord	1	2	3	4
131.	family instability	1	2	3	4
132.	crime	1	2	3	4
133.	alcohol abuse	1	2	3	4

How responsible do you feel for helping students cope with these problems?

		Not at All			Very
		1	2	3	4
134.	substance abuse	1	2	3	4
135.	family discord	1	2	3	4
136.	family instability	1	2	3	4
137.	crime	1	2	3	4
138.	alcohol abuse	1	2	3	4

Rank order the extent to which each of the groups listed (parents, teachers, and students) should be responsible for helping students cope with these problems.

1 - most responsible
2 - next most responsible
3 - least responsible

		Parents	Teachers	Students
139.	substance abuse	___	___	___
140.	family discord	___	___	___
141.	family instability	___	___	___
142.	crime	___	___	___
143.	alcohol abuse	___	___	___

All levels

144. What is your primary role as principal of this school?

145. Is there a special incentive in your district or in your school to work with students who are most at risk?

146. What is the nature of that incentive?

147. Does the incentive work?

148. What is your perception of how teachers feel about working with at risk students?

149. What is the process used to provide at risk students the needed help to address their "at risk" characteristic? Please address academic and non-academic characteristics.

150. As principal, what role do you play in addressing at risk students' needs?

151. What at risk characteristic is most often associated with your at risk students?

152. Does the district have a formal plan and written policies for dealing with students who are at risk? If "yes," what is that plan?

Secondary

153. Describe the way students are assigned to classes in your school.

154. Are at risk students automatically assigned to certain classes? If so, what are they?

155. What kind of classes are at risk students assigned to?

        A. regular
        B. remedial
        C. basic skills

156. How do you feel about compulsory education?

Elementary

157. How are the composition of the classes formed each year in your school? (Probe) What process do you use to assign students to classes and teachers each year?

158. Does the class formation process take into account whether or not a student is at risk? If so, how?

159. What is the most important academic skill students must acquire for school success?

APPENDIX B

THE PDK TEACHER SURVEY

THE PDK TEACHER SURVEY

This school is one of hundreds of schools throughout North America in which teachers are participating in a study of students at risk.

The basic purpose of this portion of the study is to determine teachers' perceptions regarding students who may be at risk. A student is felt to be at risk if that student is in danger of failing in school or failing in life.

Do not write your name or the name of your school on the answer blank, and do not use a pen. Use a No. 2 pencil. Please answer every question carefully. Fill the appropriate circles on the answer blank completely. The questionnaire is fairly long, but it is easy to respond to.

No, turn your answer blank so that the words, "Teacher Survey", are positioned in the upper left-hand corner of the page, with places for responses to items 1 through 100 on the right side of the page.

<u>Subjects</u>: On the left-hand portion of the page, below the
directions, is this question: "What subjects are you
currently teaching?" Mark all that apply. also
answer the question about certification.

<u>Note</u>: In the lower left-hand corner of the answer blank you
will see a series of vertical columns marked "PDK" and
then "A" through "k". Mark the columns as follows:

<u>PDK</u>: Mark the four circles that represent the Phi Delta
Kappa <u>chapter number</u> that will be given to you by the
person who distributes the "Teacher Survey" forms.
This will be a four-digit number.

A. <u>Age</u>:   Indicate your age

B. <u>School Level</u>:

        1 - Elementary
        2 - Middle or Junior High
        3 - Senior High

C. <u>Total Years of Teaching Experience</u>

D. <u>Years at This School</u>

E. <u>Ethnic Group to Which You Belong</u>:

        1 - Asian
        2 - Black
        3 - Hispanic
        4 - White
        5 - Other

F. <u>Average Size of Your Classes</u>:

        1 - less than 15
        2 - 16 to 20
        3 - 21 to 25
        4 - 26 to 30
        5 - 31 to 35
        6 - 36 or more

G. <u>Highest Degree You Hold</u>:

        0 - No degree
        1 - Bachelors
        2 - Masters
        3 - Masters + 15 semester hours
        4 - Doctors

H. Proportion of Working Time You Spend With at Risk Students:

        0 - less than 10 percent
        1 - 11 to 20 percent
        2 - 21 to 30 percent
        3 - 31 to 40 percent
        4 - 41 to 50 percent
        5 - more than 50 percent

I. How Productive Are Your Efforts With At Risk Students?

        0 - not productive at all
        1 - not very productive
        2 - so-so/in between
        3 - fairly productive
        4 - very productive.

J. How Many Students Failed Your Course Last Year?

        0 - none
        1 - less than 10 percent
        2 - 11 to 25 percent
        3 - 26 to 50 percent
        4 - more than 50 percent

K. How Many of Your Students Failed ONe or More Courses Last Year?

        0 - none
        1 - less than 10 percent
        2 - 11 to 25 percent
        3 - 26 to 50 percent
        4 - more than 50 percent

Sex: Mark "M" if you are male or "F" if you are female.

Grade or Education: Mark each grade level that you are currently teaching.

Answer the remaining questions by marking your answer blank in the appropriate place for each numbered item on the right hand side of the page, 1 through 100.

Compared to students in general, <u>rate the students you teach</u> on the following factors, according to the scale below:

	Below Average				Above Average
	1	2	3	4	5

1. reading comprehension
2. mathematics skills
3. writing skills
4. listening skills
5. daily attendance
6. general behavior in school
7. attitude toward school
8. completion of homework
9. attention in class
10. higher order thinking skills

<u>How responsible do you feel</u> for specific learnings or behaviors of the students you teach?

	Not Very				Very
	1	2	3	4	5

11. reading comprehension
12. mathematics skills
13. writing skills
14. listening skills
15. daily attendance
16. general behavior in school
17. attitude toward school
18. completion of homework
19. attention in class
20. higher order thinking skills

How much influence do you have over students':

	Not Very Much				Great Deal
	1	2	3	4	5

21. reading comprehension
22. mathematics skills
23. writing skills
24. listening skills
25. daily attendance
26. general behavior in school
27. attitude toward school
28. completion of homework
29. attention in class
30. higher order thinking skills

Please indicate which of the groups listed (parents, teachers, or students) should be most responsible for helping students acquire the learning or behavior specified, according to the following key:

> 1 - parents
> 2 - teachers
> 3 - students

31. reading comprehension
32. mathematics skills
33. writing skills
34. listening skills
35. daily attendance
36. general behavior in school
37. attitude toward school
38. completion of homework
39. attention in class
40. higher order thinking skills

Below is a list of problems that students may be confronted with outside of school. In terms of the problems listed below, are your students <u>confronted less</u> or <u>confronted more</u> than students at most other schools? Use the following scale:

	Less				More
	1	2	3	4	5

41. substance abuse
42. family discord
43. family instability
44. crime
45. alcohol abuse

<u>Is it possible for you to help</u> your students cope with these problems?

	Definitely No			Definitely Yes
	1	2	3	4

46. substance abuse
47. family discord
48. family instability
49. crime
50. alcohol abuse

<u>How responsible do you feel</u> for helping students cope with these problems?

	Not at All			Very
	1	2	3	4

51. substance abuse
52. family discord
53. family instability
54. crime
55. alcohol abuse

Please indicate which of the groups listed (parents, teachers, or students) should be <u>most responsible for helping students</u> cope with the problems specified, according to the following key:

1 - parents
2 - teachers
3 - students

56. substance abuse
57. family discord
58. family instability
59. crime
60. alcohol abuse

Some students are "at risk." Being "at risk" means being likely to fail at school or even at life. When you have students who are at risk, <u>which of the following strategies do you regularly use?</u> Also indicate <u>how effective each strategy is</u>, using the four-point scale below. Rate the effectiveness of every strategy, even if you do not use it regularly.

	Do You Do This Regularly?		Is It Effective?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
61. smaller classes	___	___	___	___
62. computerized instruction	___	___	___	___
63. special teachers	___	___	___	___
64. peer tutoring	___	___	___	___
65. retain in grade	___	___	___	___
66. special education	___	___	___	___
67. vocational courses	___	___	___	___
68. alternative school	___	___	___	___
69. special study skills	___	___	___	___
70. special textbooks	___	___	___	___
71. place in low group	___	___	___	___
72. emphasize coping skills	___	___	___	___
73. flexible scheduling	___	___	___	___
74. individualize instruction	___	___	___	___
75. home tutoring	___	___	___	___
76. extra homework	___	___	___	___
77. emphasize thinking skills	___	___	___	___
78. restrict from sports	___	___	___	___
79. refer to psychologist	___	___	___	___
80. refer to social worker	___	___	___	___
81. confer with parents	___	___	___	___
82. more time on basic skills	___	___	___	___
83. eliminate art and music	___	___	___	___
84. notify parents	___	___	___	___
85. Chapter I program	___	___	___	___
86. teacher aides	___	___	___	___
87. say "leave at age 16"	___	___	___	___
88. before school programs	___	___	___	___
89. after school programs	___	___	___	___
90. summer school programs	___	___	___	___

Estimate the degree to which each of the following is a
problem among the students you teach:

	Not a Serious Problem			Very Serious Problem
1	2	3	4	5

91. Attendance
92. Attitude toward school
93. Completing assignments
94. Arguments with teachers
95. Classroom discipline

Suppose we posit a number line as portraying the absence or
presence of a factor (1 = low, 9 = high)

Low   High

_____

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Suppose further that the following options
reflect the degree of diversity present
within your school on various factors:

A.   1 - 9   (full range of variability)
B.   1 - 5   (low end of scale, predominately)
C.   5 - 9   (high end of scale, predominately)
D.   3 - 7   (middle range, predominately)

Given the rationale above, how would you describe the range
or diversity among your students on each of the following:

96.	intelligence	A	B	C	D
97.	motivation	A	B	C	D
98.	experience (trips, etc.)	A	B	C	D
99.	academic achievement	A	B	C	D

100. Which <u>one</u> of the following represents how you think teachers in this school ought to provide instruction?

      A. each teacher should decide what to do with his or her students

      B. there should be a common program, but each teacher should be encouraged to make variations for individual students

      C. there should be a different but standard strategy for different types of students

      D. there should be a common program that each teacher is expected to follow

APPENDIX C

THE LOCAL TEACHER SURVEY

Some students are "at risk." Being "at risk" means being likely to fail at school or even at life. When you have students who are at risk, <u>which of the following strategies do you regularly use?</u> Also indicate <u>how effective each strategy is</u>, using the four-point scale below. Rate the effectiveness of every strategy, even if you do not use it regularly.

		Do You Do This Regularly?		Is It Effective?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	smaller classes	___	___	___	___
2.	computerized instruction	___	___	___	___
3.	special teachers	___	___	___	___
4.	peer tutoring	___	___	___	___
5.	retain in grade	___	___	___	___
6.	special education	___	___	___	___
7.	vocational courses	___	___	___	___
8.	alternative school	___	___	___	___
9.	special study skills	___	___	___	___
10.	special textbooks	___	___	___	___
11.	place in low group	___	___	___	___
12.	emphasize coping skills	___	___	___	___
13.	flexible scheduling	___	___	___	___
14.	individualize instruction	___	___	___	___
15.	home tutoring	___	___	___	___
16.	extra homework	___	___	___	___
17.	emphasize thinking skills	___	___	___	___
18.	restrict from sports	___	___	___	___
19.	refer to psychologist	___	___	___	___
20.	refer to social worker	___	___	___	___
21.	confer with parents	___	___	___	___
22.	more time on basic skills	___	___	___	___
23.	eliminate art and music	___	___	___	___
24.	notify parents	___	___	___	___
25.	Chapter I program	___	___	___	___
26.	teacher aides	___	___	___	___
27.	say "leave at age 16"	___	___	___	___
28.	before school programs	___	___	___	___
29.	after school programs	___	___	___	___
30.	summer school programs	___	___	___	___

APPENDIX D

THE LOCAL PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

Appendix D--The Principal Interview

1. Name of Interviewer _____

Name of District _____

Name of School _____

Street _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Name of Principal _____

Telephone _____

2. School Level   _____ Elementary

3. Socioeconomic   background of students' families in this
    school (total 100%)

                    _____% Professionals
                    _____% Mgrs/Tech
                    _____% Skilled Labor
                    _____% Unskilled Labor
                    _____% Unemployed

    During the last few years, many states and school
districts have taken steps to improve the quality of
education for young people in schools. Sometimes these
actions have been taken by state legislatures, sometimes by
state boards of education, sometimes by state departments of
education, and sometimes by local boards of education and
superintendents.

    The intent of these actions by states and local boards
has been to make schools better. Would you respond to the
changes that have occurred in three ways?

        1. Did this change occur in your situation?
        2. How do teachers feel about these changes?
        3. How have the changes affected students?

	Did This Occur?		How Teachers Feel			Effect on Students		
	Yes	No	+	0	−	+	0	−
4. More teacher involvement in decision-making								
5. More school site autonomy								

Some students are "at risk." Being "at risk" means being likely to fail at school or even at life. When you have students who are at risk, <u>which of the following strategies do you regularly use?</u> Also indicate <u>how effective each strategy is</u>, using the four-point scale below. Rate the effectiveness of every strategy, even if you do not use it regularly.

	<u>Do You Do This Regularly?</u>		How Effective Is It?			
			Not Very		Very	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	1	2	3	4
6. smaller classes	___	___	___	___	___	___
7. computerized instruction	___	___	___	___	___	___
8. special teachers	___	___	___	___	___	___
9. peer tutoring	___	___	___	___	___	___
10. retain in grade	___	___	___	___	___	___
11. special education	___	___	___	___	___	___
12. vocational courses	___	___	___	___	___	___
13. alternative school	___	___	___	___	___	___
14. special study skills	___	___	___	___	___	___
15. special textbooks	___	___	___	___	___	___
16. place in low group	___	___	___	___	___	___
17. emphasize coping skills	___	___	___	___	___	___
18. flexible scheduling	___	___	___	___	___	___
19. individualize instruction	___	___	___	___	___	___
20. home tutoring	___	___	___	___	___	___
21. extra homework	___	___	___	___	___	___
22. emphasize thinking skills	___	___	___	___	___	___
23. restrict from sports	___	___	___	___	___	___
24. refer to psychologist	___	___	___	___	___	___
25. refer to social worker	___	___	___	___	___	___
26. confer with parents	___	___	___	___	___	___
27. more time on basic skills	___	___	___	___	___	___
28. eliminate art and music	___	___	___	___	___	___
29. notify parents	___	___	___	___	___	___
30. Chapter I program	___	___	___	___	___	___
31. teacher aides	___	___	___	___	___	___
32. say "leave at age 16"	___	___	___	___	___	___
33. before school programs	___	___	___	___	___	___
34. after school programs	___	___	___	___	___	___
35. summer school programs	___	___	___	___	___	___
36. other (specify)	___	___	___	___	___	___

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VITA

James N. Maryott

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: PERCEPTIONS OF RURAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS:
THE USE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES PROPOSED BY
PHI DELTA KAPPA TO RETAIN AT-RISK STUDENTS IN
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