THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED

PRACTICES AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

IN OKLAHOMA MIDDLE SCHOOLS

By

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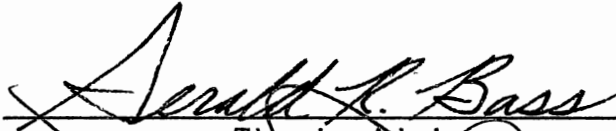Southeastern Oklahoma State University
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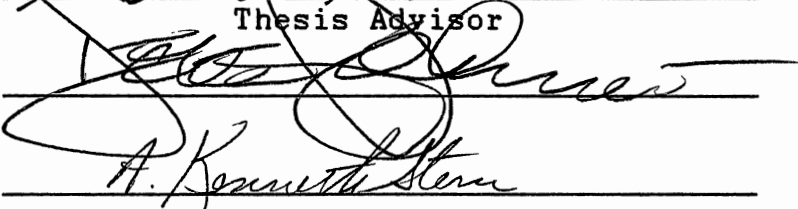the Degree of
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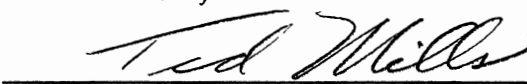
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Throughout this century, educators have not agreed in theory or in practice upon what type of grade organization would best serve the needs of students between the ages of 11 and 14. At present there is still no clear answer to this lingering question. The variety of different grade organization schemes found in our public school systems emphasizes the difference of opinions concerning middle level education.

Prior to the reorganization of public education during the early years of the 20th century, the most common organizational structure of public schools was an "8-4" pattern, representing an eight-year elementary school and a four-year high school (Brimm, 1969). However, from 1892 to 1918, a series of national committees proposed drastic changes to the organizational make-up of the public schools across the nation. Those committees favored a "6-6" plan with grades seven and eight becoming part of the secondary school (Calhound, 1983). In 1918, the National Education Association's Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education generally supported the 6-6 system, but with the secondary school further separated into specific junior and

senior divisions (Klingele, 1979; Alexander, 1988).
According to Alexander and George (1981), this report gave
great impetus to the already established junior high school
movement and the "6-3-3" organizational structure.

The first junior high school was started in 1895, but
the idea did not catch on until 1910 when the Berkeley,
California, and Columbus, Ohio, school districts established
junior high schools (Toepfer, 1962). The junior high
school concept was widely accepted across the country and
the number of junior high schools increased steadily for the
next 60 years. By 1920, there were 385 junior high schools
and in 1970 there were over 6,000 (Alexander, 1971).

There were several reasons for the wide acceptance of
the junior high school concept within the American
educational system. From its beginnings, the junior high
was assigned a variety of purposes. In 1918, Inglis
described four major purposes of the junior high school: (1)
to provide a gradual transition from elementary to high
school, (2) to adapt the school to the individual pupil's
needs, (3) to enhance vocational education for those not
continuing to high school, and (4) to reorganize teaching
materials and methods to reflect the needs of the pupils
with reference to their life after school (Calhound, 1983).

Several studies conducted in the 1950s and 1960s
confirmed that indeed many junior high schools were
established for educational reasons such as those mentioned
above (Toepfer, 1962; Lavenburg, 1963; Hence, 1967).

However, it was apparent to some authorities (i.e., Lentz, 1958; Alexander & Kealy, 1969; Brimm, 1969) that a primary force in the steady increase in the number of junior high schools was the overcrowded conditions caused by the post-World War I population boom and the lack of existing facilities to accommodate those students. Regardless of the underlying reasons for its implementation, the junior high concept was widely accepted as a progressive idea of benefit to the early adolescent student.

By the decade of the 1960s, however, many educators were beginning to be critical of the junior high school and were proposing new organizational structures which could more adequately serve the unique needs of early adolescent students. One of the primary objections to the junior high school concept was that it had "generally become a school more like the high school, better geared to the teenager than the in-between-ager" (Alexander et al., 1969, p. v). The junior high school emphasized a subject-oriented approach to education which, according to Stewart (1975), failed in its mission to provide for an education suited to the age group.

The middle school movement emerged from this criticism of the organizational structure and instructional program of the junior high school. The middle school idea provided alternatives to those characteristics of the junior high school which many educators perceived to be inappropriate for early adolescents. These areas of concern included a

subject-centered curriculum, traditional teaching styles,
graduation units, and sophisticated social activities
(Moss, 1969).

The new school structure proposed for the middle school
also addressed several positive reasons for improving the
education of early adolescent students. Moss (1969)
identified five reasons for the establishment of a middle
school.

1. Because of the earlier onset of puberty, 6th
   graders may be better served in a middle
   school of grades 6, 7 and 8.
2. Greater curriculum experimentation may be
   undertaken, because the middle school will
   not be bound by college entrance
   requirements. The school may focus on the
   needs of 11-14-year-olds and become `a school
   for growing up.´
3. Ideally, middle school certification will be
   developed which will result in teachers
   trained especially to work with this age
   group.
4. A nongraded structure may be developed which
   will more effectively ease the transition
   from elementary school to middle school.
5. Educational guidance may be emphasized
   (pp. 18-19).

Calhound (1983) offered the following description of a
middle school, according to his interpretation of the views
of the major middle school advocates. A middle school would
include:

A grade pattern that begins with either the
5th or 6th grade and ends with the 8th grade.
An educational philosophy that emphasizes the
need and interests of the students.
A willing attitude on the part of the staff
toward instructional experimentation, open
classrooms, team teaching, utilization of
multimedia teaching techniques, and student
grouping by talent and interest, rather than age
alone.

> An emphasis on individual instruction and
> guidance for each pupil.
> A focus on educating the whole child, not
> just the intellect.
> A program to help ease the transition between
> childhood and adolescence (p. 88).

The middle school philosophy was one of "humanizing

education" for the early adolescent (Overly, 1972). As

opposed to the subject-centered curriculum of the junior

high school, the middle school curriculum was student-

centered.

> The middle school which features an educational
> program predicated on each individual student's
> characteristics, interests, and objectives is in a
> good position to be of value to the early
> adolescent (Stewart, 1975, p. 23).

The middle school was described by Grooms (1967, p. 158) as

"a school of change," while Lounsbury and Vars (1971, p. 19)

considered it to be a "new opportunity, a new rallying

point, a fresh start."

This philosophy, and the new organizational structure

which accompanied it, was widely accepted across the

country. The first middle school was started in 1950 in Bay

City, Michigan. The number of middle schools grew to 499 by

1965 (Cuff, 1967). From that point, the growth of middle

schools across the United States has been described as "the

most remarkable phenomena in the history of American

education" (Gatewood & Dilg, 1975, p. 1). From 1965 to

1977, the number of middle schools grew to approximately

4,060 (Brooks, 1978a). Today, Oklahoma schools have a

multitude of grade organization patterns serving this middle

group of students. "For general purposes, schools are

organized on an 8-4, 6-2-4, 7-2-3, 6-3-3, K-6, 1-6, K-8, 1-8, or K-5-3-4 plan" (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1987, p. 151). Unlike the middle grades, the first five grades (six including kindergarten) and the last three grades are not directly affected by these different school organizations.

Many school systems in Oklahoma have only two distinct schools, an elementary and a secondary. In those districts, the elementary school usually houses grades K-8 or K-6 and the secondary school contains either grades 9-12 or 7-12. Other Oklahoma school systems provide one or more junior high schools to serve the middle level student. Many of those junior high schools are made up of grades 7-8-9 or grades 8-9. Still another organizational structure employed in Oklahoma school systems includes the middle school, which generally consists of grades 6-7-8, but by definition could include only grades 6-7 or grades 7-8 (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1987).

The recent growth of middle schools in the State of Oklahoma has followed the national trend. The first middle schools were begun in Oklahoma in 1970, and there has been a steady increase in the number of middle schools since that time. Butler (1983) reported that there were 93 accredited middle schools in Oklahoma during the 1981-82 school year. Jennings (1985) counted 109 Oklahoma middle schools for the 1984-85 school year. According to the <u>1989-90 Oklahoma Educational Directory</u> (Oklahoma State Department of

Education, 1989), there were 153 accredited middle schools in the state. This number includes all schools with grade organizations of 5-6-7, 5-6-7-8, 6-7, 7-8, and 6-7-8, regardless of the specific name associated with any particular school.

Statement of the Problem

By looking at the numbers, the success of the middle school movement is indeed impressive. But numbers do not tell the whole story. Even though the middle school organizational structure has been widely accepted across the country, the implementation of middle school principles has not been totally successful.

William Alexander conducted a national survey of 110 middle schools in 1968. He concluded that the philosophical aims of the middle school were "not generally reflected in the curriculum plan and instructional organization" (p. 115) and that the programs were similar to those of the junior high school. Brooks (1978a, 1978b) ran a follow-up national survey and he found that middle school students were still grouped in traditional classrooms and taught in traditional ways. The middle schools which Brooks surveyed were "not easily distinguished in program from the junior high schools" and revealed "little significant difference from the findings of 1967" (1978b, p. 7).

Other studies on the implementation of middle school goals and practices reinforced the findings from the

national surveys. Riegle (1971) developed a questionnaire outlining 18 middle school principles which has become a primary instrument in the study of middle school practices. He found that "the rapid increase in the number of schools labeled as middle schools has not been accompanied by a high degree of application of these principles" and that Michigan middle schools had a "long way to go to become middle schools as defined in the literature" (Riegle, 1971, p. 74). Similar conclusions were found in numerous studies outlined in Organization of the Middle Grades: A Summary of Research (Calhound, 1983). Calhound concluded that, "like junior high schools before them, middle schools generally failed to live up to the expectations of their proponents" (p. 81).

Similar findings have been found in Oklahoma. Butler (1983) surveyed 69 of the 93 middle schools in the state and found a low level of implementation of middle school concepts across the state. Butler concluded "that Oklahoma may have experienced a 'band wagon' approach to middle school education" and that the middle school movement in Oklahoma "appears to lack direction" (p. 56).

Jennings (1985) also found a generally low level of implementation of middle school concepts in Oklahoma. Jennings reported that "Oklahoma middle schools appeared to be developing patterns in the curriculum, activities and other areas that appear in the traditional junior high school" (p. 77) and that "school administrators have demonstrated only nominal adherence to accepted middle

school characteristics/principles" (p. 78). Jennings
concluded that "Oklahoma middle schools generally are
functioning more in name than in fact" (p. 78).

Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to determine the degree to
which the middle school concept was being implemented by
public school systems across the State of Oklahoma. A
significant part of this study was devoted to the level of
implementation of middle school practices as outlined by the
professional literature and measured by the Middle School
Practices Index. In addition, this study was designed to
examine the school climate in selected middle schools of
Oklahoma. School climate is a major area in which there are
sharp distinctions between more effective and less effective
schools (Sweeney, 1988). According to Gottfredson and
Hollifield (1988, p. 63), school climate "determines whether
the school can achieve excellence or will flounder
ineffectively."

Therefore, this study was designed to specifically
address the following four research questions:

1. What is the current level of implementation of
recommended middle school practices across the State of
Oklahoma?

2. How does the current level of implementation of
recommended middle school practices compare to earlier
studies by Butler (1983) and Jennings (1985)?

3. Is there a significant difference in school
climate, as perceived by teachers, in schools that have a
higher level of implementation of recommended middle school
practices as compared to schools that have a lower level of
implementation?

4. What significant relationships exist between the
levels of implementation of the 18 specific recommended
middle school practices and the 10 areas of school climate?

Significance

Beginning in 1950 and booming in the 1970s, the growth
of middle schools was described as "one of the most notable
educational movements of the past decade" (Soares, Soares, &
Pumerantz, 1973, p. 381). But many middle schools exist in
name only and do not exhibit the philosophies or practices
of the middle school concept as described in the
professional literature.

This study was conducted to analyze the state of the
middle school in Oklahoma to determine if progress has been
made in incorporating middle school concepts. This
information may assist educators in identifying areas of
concern regarding middle school education and give some
direction to possible improvements in the future.

Limitations

The results of the study are only applicable to
Oklahoma middle schools. There was no attempt to include

other grade configurations or structures in the study and thus the results cannot be inferred to schools such as K-8 elementary schools or traditional 7-9 junior high schools.

Measurement of the degree of implementation of middle school concepts was limited to the 18 middle school characteristics measured by the Middle School Practices Index (MSPI). School climate was limited to the perceptions of teachers concerning "the physical, social, and learning environments of a school" (Halderson, 1988, p. 3) as measured by the NASSP School Climate Survey.

Definitions

Middle School: A separate school setting which "shall include at least two consecutive grades in the sixth through eighth sequence" (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1987, p. 43) and which contains no grades lower than grade five or higher than grade eight.

School Climate: "The relatively enduring pattern of shared perceptions about the characteristics of an organization and its members" (Keefe, Kelly, & Miller, 1985, p. 70). School climate was measured by the NASSP School Climate Survey and was focused upon teacher-student relationships, security and maintenance, administration, student academic orientation, student behavior values, guidance, student-peer relationships, parent and community relationships, instructional management, and student activities (Halderson, 1988).

Middle School Practices: Those characteristics of a
middle school which have been determined to exemplify the
ideal middle school. These principles were measured by the
Middle School Practices Index, developed by Riegle (1971),
and include the following characteristics:

Continuous progress: The middle school program
should feature a nongraded organization that
allows students to progress at their own
individual rate regardless of chronological age.

Multi-material approach: . . . a wide range of
easily accessible instructional materials.
Classroom activities should be planned around a
multi-material approach rather than a basic
textbook organization.

Flexible schedule: . . . a schedule that
encourages the investment of time based on
educational needs rather than standardized time
periods. . . .

Social experiences: . . . appropriate for the
transescent youth and should not emulate the
social experiences of the high school.

Physical experiences: . . . based solely on the
needs of the students. A broad range of
intramural experiences . . . should supplement the
physical education classes, which should center
their activity upon helping students understand
and use their own bodies.

Intramural activities: . . . intramural
activities rather than interscholastic activities.

Team teaching: . . . teaching patterns that allow
students to interact with a variety of teachers in
a wide range of subject areas.

Planned gradualism: . . . experiences that assist
early adolescents in making the transition from
childhood dependence to adult independence,
thereby helping them to bridge the gap between
elementary school and senior high school.

Exploratory and enrichment studies: . . . program
should be broad enough to meet the individual
interests of the students . . . Elective courses
should be a part of the program of every student . . .

Guidance services: The middle school program
should include both group and individual guidance
services for all students.

Independent study: . . . the opportunity for
students to spend time studying individual
interests or needs that do not appear in the
organized curricular offerings.

Basic skill repair and extension: . . .
opportunities for students to receive clinical
help in basic learning skills. . . .

Creative experiences: . . . opportunities for
students to express themselves in creative
manners. . . . student-centered, student-directed,
and student-developed activities should be
encouraged.

Security factor: . . . provide every student with
a security group: a teacher that knows him well
. . .; a peer group that meets regularly . . .

Evaluation: . . . provide an evaluation of a
student's work that is personal, positive in
nature, non-threatening, and strictly
individualized. . . .

Community relations: . . . a varied program of
community relations. Programs to inform, to
entertain, to educate, and to understand the
community . . .

Student services: . . . specialized services for
students. Community, county, and state agencies
should be utilized to expand the range of
specialists . . .

Auxiliary services: . . . utilize a highly
diversified array of personnel such as volunteer
parents, teacher aides, clerical aides . . . to
facilitate the teaching staff (Riegle, 1971,
pp. 43-45).

Summary

The growth of the middle school movement has been an

important and impressive change in the organizational

structure of American schools during the past 25 years.

However, the implementation of middle school concepts in these new middle schools has not been nearly as successful. Oklahoma has experienced both of these trends.

This study was designed to assess the current status of middle schools in Oklahoma and to determine if there has been improvement in the implementation of middle school principles as outlined by the professional literature. Data were also gathered to examine whether the level of implementation of middle school concepts had any effect upon school climate.

The middle school is a relatively new educational phenomenon and, as such, is ripe for change and improvement. George (1982, p. 51) stated that "the middle school is probably the only major, humanistic, educator-inspired national innovation to survive and prosper over the last 20 years." According to Alexander (1988, p. 109), "much remains to be done for the middle level to achieve the role the early advocates dreamed about 20 years ago—that of catalyst for improvement of the entire school ladder."

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of the literature provided a vast array of material pertaining to middle level education. The earliest writings were books by authors like William Alexander, Donald Eichhorn, Theodore Moss, John Lounsbury, Joseph Bondi, and Gordon Vars. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, these authors and others began to develop ideas about appropriate school experiences for the middle level student. Their books "extolled the virtues of the middle school model, discussed middle school philosophy and student characteristics, and provided recommendations for implementing and converting to the middle school" (Swiger, 1987, p. 4).

As the middle school movement gained in popularity during the 1970s and 1980s, the professional literature became more diversified. The National Middle School Association was formed in 1975 and published its own Middle School Journal, thus focusing attention on middle schools and relevant research studies. The subject of middle schools is a common topic in other educational periodicals and was the primary focus of the following issues of prominent educational journals: Principal (January 1981),

NASSP Bulletin (April 1974, May 1983), Social Education (February 1988), and Phi Delta Kappan (February 1990).

This review of the literature was focused primarily on describing the middle school student, articulating the philosophy and goals of the middle school concept, and listing the characteristics of middle school programs. The last portion of this review of literature contains a brief historical overview concerning school climate and reviews specific studies involving middle level schools and school climate. This review thus provides a foundation for analyzing the characteristics of middle school programs in Oklahoma and of the teachers' perceptions of school climate.

The Middle School Student

Any attempt to understand the middle school concept must begin with an understanding of the middle school student. Much has been written of the uniqueness of the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional characteristics of youngsters in the 11 to 14 age group. In the literature they are called adolescents, early adolescents, pre-adolescents, in-between-agers, middlescents, and transescents. The terms most commonly used are pre-adolescent and transescent, differentiating the middle school student from the child in elementary school and the adolescent or teenager in high school. Eichhorn (1966) described transescence as

> the stage of development which begins prior to the
> onset of puberty and extends through the early

stages of adolescence. Since puberty does not
occur for all precisely at the same chronological
age in human development, the transescent
designation is based on the many physical, social,
emotional and intellectual changes in body
chemistry that appear prior to the time in which
the body gains a practical degree of stabilization
over these complex pubescent changes (p. 3).

Moss (1969) described the general characteristics of
both boys and girls from age 10 to 14. At 10, boys and
girls are friendly, relaxed, happy, preoccupied with
fairness, and somewhat antagonistic toward members of the
opposite sex. Boys of that age tend to be more childlike
and restless than the girls. At age 11, according to Moss,
significant physical and emotional changes begin to occur in
both boys and girls. They have increased appetites,
restlessness, fatigue, and a strong tendency to talk
endlessly. They also become more demanding, critical,
moody, clumsy, and have dramatic swings in behavior.

At age 12, boys and girls display longer spans of
attention, more ability to do independent work, more
interest in the feelings of others, and boundless enthusiasm
(Moss, 1969). Peer association and approval are very
important. Boys are in varied stages of physical
development, while most girls are more fully developed
physically. The age of 13 is often a year of complex
transitions involving body, mind, and personality. Boys
experience rapid physical growth with the majority attaining
95% of their adult height. Boys and girls are moodier and
more worrisome, like to be treated as adults, accept more
individual responsibility, and desire increased peer group

affiliation and independence from parents. They are very interested in appearance, sensitive to criticism, and easily hurt.

At age 14, boys and girls become more robust and aggressive, more able to display special talents, and more willing to assume leadership roles (Moss, 1969). Boys continue their rapid physical growth and become even more interested in girls. Girls appear as mature young women and become preoccupied with dating.

Lipsitz (1979a) pointed out that there is no other age grouping in the human growth cycle that must confront so many physical, emotional, social, and intellectual changes than those of the transescent. The growth that transescents experience in these four areas is not continuous; rather it is variable and fluctuating. All children will experience growth, but the time of onset, the duration, and the degree of growth are primarily a function of variables both internal and external to the individual child (Lipsitz, 1979a; Wiles, 1976).

The most evident of the many changes which occur during the middle school years are biological in nature. Middle school advocates emphasized the importance of understanding the physical characteristics of middle school students (Eichhorn, 1966; Alexander et al., 1969; Bondi, 1972). Physical growth over the three to five year movement from childhood to adolescence was described by Alexander and George (1981) as probably the greatest of the human

experiences. Gatewood (1975) explained that the onset and
intensity of physiological growth varies from person to
person. Rapid and uneven physiological development creates
psychological changes in the transescent. The transescent
is typically very awkward and clumsy, aggressive and rough,
and perpetually restless. Gatewood pointed out that, at a
time when they need to be active and creative, youngsters
are instead confined to school situations where passivity,
concentrated attention, and strict behavior control are
required.

Tobin (1973) listed the physical needs and
characteristics of middle school students as

> increased interests in the physical aspects of the
> body, including its functions and changes;
> generally rapid, though irregular, physical
> development with resultant differences among peers
> due to uneven growth and development; generally a
> more advanced maturity of girls than boys; awkward
> and clumsy; great attention to personal
> appearances; restlessness because of need to
> release physical energy; and, responsiveness to
> leisure activities (p. 201).

The transescent youth is generally ignorant of the
facts pertaining to growth variability and only cares about
being like others of the same age and sex. The natural
tendency is to want to be like everyone else, meaning to
look and act like the most popular, most physically mature,
and best looking. A frequently asked, typical question
during this period is, "Am I normal?" (Alexander & George,
1981). Margaret Mead (1965) described early adolescence as
the time when students "are more unlike each other than they
ever have been before or ever will be again in the course

of their lives" (p. 10).

The research is not conclusive as to what actually occurs in the intellectual development during transescence. Several middle school advocates (Alexander et al., 1969; Bondi, 1972; Eichhorn, 1984; Henry et al., 1981; Kindred, Wolotkiewicz, Mickelson, Coplein, & Dyson, 1976; Toepfer, 1985) relied upon the cognitive development theory of Jean Piaget to explain the intellectual development of middle school youngsters. Piaget believed that every individual evolves through five overlapping cognitive levels of development: preoperational, intuitive thought, sensorimotor, concrete operations, and formal operations.

The concrete and formal operations stages are associated with the years of transescence (Kindred et al., 1976; Toepfer, 1985). The concrete operations stage, generally occurring between the ages of 7 or 8 and 11 or 12, involves cognitive development associated with thought processes for ordering, classifying, and serializing the events and objects in the immediate environment. The formal operations stage begins around age 11 or 12 and involves a further systematization of the concrete practices, plus the ability to think abstractly.

Piaget's cognitive development theory implies that every child will achieve the formal operations stage of intellectual development sometime during transescence, but its onset will depend upon the variety and quality of experiences the child has in the environment. The rate and

amount of learning thus becomes a function of an individual's experiences and the intellectual ability to process them. Eichhorn (1984) warned that instructional planners in the post-Sputnik era assumed that the preponderance of transescents were able to think in the abstract. This interpretation was used as justification for increasing the level of abstractness, such as algebra, in the middle level curriculum. "While some transescents were able to cope with this cognitive mismatch, most students found formal operations instruction frustrating" (p. 34).

Another area of research which had provided a rationale for the middle school concept is called brain growth periodization. This theory was based upon a biological justification of Piaget's cognitive development theory. Proposed by Epstein in 1976, this theory stated that there are five periods of brain growth spurts in child development and that they appear to correlate with the years of Piaget's cognitive learning stages. Brain spurts exist at ages 0 to 18 months, 2 to 4 years, 6 to 8, 10 to 12, and 14 to 16. It is during these periods that the child is most able to develop advanced thinking capacities (Epstein, 1977).

The age intervals alternating with brain growth spurts have been identified as brain plateaus. During these plateaus at ages 4 to 6, 8 to 10, and 12 to 14, the child is least able to develop advanced thinking skills. Advocates of the applicability of brain growth theory to education

believe that children are able to learn new facts and
information during brain plateaus, as long as the
information is presented in a manner consistent with the
thinking skills developed in the brain spurt prior to the
plateau (Toepfer, 1982, 1985; Strahan, 1985).

Brazee (1983) wrote that the transescent learner is a
concrete operations thinker in a brain plateau stage. The
transescent needs to have direct experiences with the
environment, needs to manipulate objects, and needs to be
physically active in order to facilitate learning.
According to Brazee, the transescent is not biologically
capable of projecting from direct experiences to abstract
ideas and should not therefore be expected to acquire
knowledge through educational methods that stress formal
operations and abstract thinking skills.

Middle school advocates see a very real danger of
failure and frustration in over-challenging transescent
learners with information and thinking skills applications
that are above their levels of readiness (Alexander &
George, 1981; Johnson, 1982; Strahan & Toepfer, 1984).
Epstein and Toepfer (1978) went even further when they
stated that pressuring the middle school youngster to
develop new cognitive skills during a plateau stage sets up
negative neural networks which can biologically inhibit the
transmission of nerve energy, thus enhancing the possibility
that transescents will react negatively to education and to
learning in general.

Curricula designed for middle level students' cognitive
development should be diverse, recognizing their short
attention spans, high energy, and movement from concrete to
formal levels of thinking. Active, concrete learning
experiences with problem-solving exercises that challenge
the students to search for answers will match their varying
cognitive levels (Wall, 1981).

> We have substantial evidence that increased
> earlier intellectual maturity has not paralleled
> the acceleration of physical development during
> transescence. . . . For example, a youngster at
> concrete operational levels cannot master
> intellectual challenges that demand formal,
> abstract thinking abilities. The punishment has
> not yet been invented that will force children to
> learn (not memorize) something before their
> cognitive ability level at any given age (Toepfer,
> 1988, p. 111).

Toepfer relied upon data from an earlier study (Toepfer,
1985) to emphasize that, on the average, only about 5% of
11-year-olds, 12% of 12-year-olds, 20% of 13-year-olds, and
24% of 14-year-olds can actually do formal (abstract)
thinking at these ages.

The acceleration and unevenness of physical and
intellectual development may have many emotional and
psychological side effects (Gatewood & Dilg, 1975). Levy
(1988) described the life of a middle school student as
being

> characterized by spurts of physical and mental
> growth, social and psychological uncertainties,
> and all the unevenness and awkwardness that make
> this age the worst of times and, only
> occasionally, the best of times (p. 104).

Georgiady and Romano (1977) described some of the emotional characteristics of transescence. The transescent appears to be out of control, demonstrating anger, fear, and love with great intensity. This often leads to scorn and ridicule by others, increasing the transescent's self-doubt, confusion, and frustration. These emotional tribulations can often create intense conflicts with parents or other authoritative figures. These emotional changes most commonly result in a strong need for affiliation by the transescent with a peer group. Being accepted into a peer group may be the transescent's greatest concern and produces constant worry about physical appearance, communication styles, and material possessions.

Tobin (1973) listed several social characteristics and needs, such as the desire to be different; the desire to be selective in choices of food, activities, and friends; peer consciousness; concern for right and wrong; and concern for less fortunate others. He described the characteristics of emotional uncertainties and conflicts of the transescent child as frequently impulsive with words and actions, having ambivalent desires, becoming more independent but desiring more direction, exhibiting a wide range of overt behaviors and mood instability, needing frequent successes, and desiring recognition.

Lipsitz (1980) pointed out that there are many indicators that may signal the troubled times of early adolescence. School violence reaches its height during the

junior high years. The birth rate for mothers 15 years old and under is the only age group statistic not showing a decline. The average age of runaways is 14. The average age of children in foster care is 12. Juvenile crime blossoms around age 14. The percentage of eighth graders reported to drink alcohol excessively is between 20% and 30%. The suicide rate among young adolescents is rising rapidly. Yet many adults believe that the transescents will naturally grow up, that it is all right to ignore them, that it is acceptable to ridicule those in this age group, and that the children are just temporarily out of control. Lipsitz (1979b) wrote that it is a serious mistake by adults to ignore the internal and external pressures on the transescent, thinking that the conflicts experienced during this time of growing up will simply go away over time.

Levy (1988) emphasized that while they are becoming sexually mature, or perhaps sexually driven, transescents' mental and social development does not reach maturity until the late teens. Often these young people live in unstable families, have easy access to alcohol and drugs, and lack the personal relationships which would provide support during the stress of everyday adolescent life.

> The menu of problems facing today's youth
> seriously affects character development during
> transescence--for example, youth suicide,
> dissolution of personality, and continued change
> and fragmenting of the support systems in their
> lives outside the school. Schools do not create
> these problems. Youngsters bring them to school
> each day (Toepfer, 1988, p. 110).

Beane (1983) discussed social problems and how they affect the self-concept and self-esteem of the transescent youth. Television suggests values, behavior, dress, and other aspects of an ideal self that are far removed from the realities of real life. An abundant array of lifestyles presents an unsure picture of right and wrong to the transescent. Both easy access to drugs and alcohol and increased sexual activity offer convenient means of escape.

> Given the central place of self-perceptions in the transescent personality, the school must do whatever it can to enhance those self-perceptions so that growth and development through this stage is as positive and constructive as possible (Beane, 1983, p. 66).

In <u>All Grown Up and No Place to Go: Teenagers in Crisis</u>, Elkind (1984) focused upon our rapidly changing society and how it has influenced the teenager. Young people and adults alike are often unsure of what limits to set and what values to enforce. Elkind proposed that a teenager must achieve a sense of self and a sense of identity during these troublesome years. He emphasized that adults cannot deny young people the time, the support, and the guidance they need to arrive at an integrated definition of self.

The need to address these societal and cultural concerns during the middle school years has been a focus of many middle school advocates. Csikszentimihalyi and McCormack (1986) found that, outside of school, the typical adolescent spends about two hours a day in the company of mature adults. They concluded that the time young people

spend with teachers "is the single most important
opportunity for them to learn from adults in our culture--a
culture that has essentially delegated the upbringing of its
young to educational institutions" (p. 417).

Middle school advocates recognized the importance of
the middle school years as a very significant time in human
development.

> These are the prime years, the years during which
> one's value system, one's behavior code, and one's
> self-esteem are largely formed. When the
> adolescent leaves the middle level institution,
> his or her personality and personal values are
> largely set for life (Lounsbury, 1987, p. 35).

> Adult value patterns are largely set during one's
> middle level school years. The physical,
> emotional, and social metamorphosis of early
> adolescence is the capstone of the basic character
> developed by most humans (Toepfer, 1988, p. 110).

> Many middle school leaders believe that the
> interest-finding and -serving activities and
> services of the schools in the middle are
> education's best preventatives for such perplexing
> problems of adolescence today as school dropout,
> learner apathy, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse,
> and teenage pregnancy (Alexander, 1988, p. 109).

Levy (1988) explained that the curriculum in successful
middle schools must be sensitive to student needs for
socialization, provide for activities with variety and
challenge, and encourage active involvement. Honig (1988)
saw the middle grades as the last chance for many students
to develop a sense of academic purpose and personal
commitment to educational goals. Those who fail at the
middle school will often drop out of school and may never
again have the opportunity to develop to their fullest
potential.

Eichhorn (1983) provided a summary of the basic
characteristics of the transescent and the need to address
these characteristics in educational programming. He
stressed that effective middle school programs are those
which have a causal relationship with learner
characteristics. Eichhorn provided a partial listing of the
traits of the middle school learner.

> Transescents:
> * vary widely in the rate at which they are
>   maturing physically, and in the age at which
>   they mature.
> * are emotionally insecure.
> * reflect a range of intellectual stages.
> * desire and need responsibility.
> * cling to childhood, yet feel a conflicting
>   yearning for adolescent sophistication.
> * are group minded.
> * become intensely loyal--to friends, classmates,
>   school: yet loyalties are brief and shift
>   frequently.
> * have intense but short-lived interests.
> * possess an insatiable curiosity and thirst for
>   knowledge.
> * present a variety of achievement levels to the
>   teacher (p. 46).

Eichhorn explained that these traits produce certain
transescent needs which require action by curriculum makers.
These include the need for intellectual growth, the need for
individual attention, the need to understand self, the need
to know others, and the need for varied instructional
methods. Eichhorn then described a successful middle school
program as one that is directly related to these student
traits and needs. Such a program has a controlled but non-
rigid school atmosphere, encourages activity, has a variety
of learning experiences, and provides opportunities for
group interaction and physical activities. "A middle grade

school that is dynamic, exciting, and industrious will be academically effective" (Eichhorn, 1983, p. 47).

The Middle School Concept

As noted earlier, the middle school concept developed out of criticism of the junior high school's inability to address the needs of the students from ages 11 to 14. "The current assembly line posture of schools for this middle level (referring to junior high schools) cannot accommodate the human needs that students bring to it" (Toepfer, 1973, p. 5). Wiles (1976) concluded that the junior high school had become too content-based and academically-oriented, while the new middle school concept embodied the developmental needs of the transescent learners. The changes proposed by early middle school advocates not only involved structural changes in grade organization but also a renewed effort toward establishing a truly student-centered educational setting.

The middle school was seen as an opportunity for educators to make changes in the educational programs which would more appropriately meet the needs of students in the stages of early and pre-adolescence. The Emergent Middle School (Alexander et al., 1969) promoted a school which provided an educational program especially adapted to the wide range of individual differences and needs of the "in-between-ager," while providing continuity of education and needed innovations in curriculum and instruction.

Even though it began as a reaction to the junior high, advocates have continually stressed the uniqueness of the middle school concept. This uniqueness was explained by Atkins (1968) as being not so much a matter of organization, courses, groupings, staffing, or schedules as it is a matter of attitude, expectation, sensitivity, and perception. Atkins promoted a middle school program that featured four learning situations: diagnostic teaching, individualized instruction, self-direction, and learner-centered evaluation.

Alexander (1971) viewed the middle school as a unique educational approach focused squarely on the period of growth and development between childhood and adolescence, and not as an extension upward of the elementary school or as an extension downward of the high school. Lounsbury and Vars (1971) promoted the middle school concept as a "new opportunity, a new rallying point, a fresh start" (p. 19). Overly (1972, p. 15) stated that "humanizing education, or providing a needed humaneness toward youth during a unique growth and development period" was the real intent of the middle school.

Building from the characteristics of the transescent, the middle school philosophy stressed the need for transition between the elementary and secondary schools. Batezel (1968) believed that a sound middle school program should include gradual transition from the self-contained classroom of elementary school to the departmentalized

organization of the secondary school. He noted that during this transition it was important that every student had at least one teacher whom the student knew well and who knew the student well. The school organization had to be flexible enough to provide the middle school children with an environment in which their needs were most important. Likewise, McGlasson (1973) proposed that a middle school should be

> a program of transitional education which assists boys and girls to move from elementary to secondary education with maximal success. It may include various grade levels or it may be non-graded, depending on the characteristics and needs of the boys and girls of the school district (p. 28).

Curtis and Bidwell (1970) stated that the middle school should be based upon the assumptions of complete personalization of purposes, of criteria for achievement, and of instructional procedures for the emerging adolescent. It is essential for the development of a plan for instruction to take into account the range of differences found among middle school students. Instructional programs must recognize the differences in individual students and in their stages of maturation. These differences must be reflected in the purposes, methods, and objectives of the middle schools.

Wall (1981) also stated that a good middle school curriculum is one that reflects the diverse physical, mental, and emotional levels of the students. Physical and cognitive activities need to be structured with frequent

transitions and variations, keeping in mind that middle

school students have an estimated attention span of only 20

minutes.

> A curriculum that keeps early adolescents'
> characteristics in mind and stretches activities
> from concrete to formal, using a variety of
> subjects and teaching approaches, will be a middle
> school success (Wall, 1981, p. 9).

As the middle school movement grew during the 1970s and

1980s, middle school advocates developed specific lists

devoted to the articulation of curricula and programmatic

goals. In 1977 the National Middle School Association

adopted five "priority goals" which were considered to be

generally acceptable to middle school planners and

practitioners.

> 1. Every student should be well known as a
>   person by at least one adult in the school
>   who accepts responsibility for the student's
>   guidance.
> 2. Every student should be helped to achieve
>   optimum mastery of the skills of continued
>   learning together with a commitment to their
>   use and improvement.
> 3. Every student should have ample experiences
>   designed to develop decision-making and
>   problem-solving skills.
> 4. Every student should acquire a functional
>   body of fundamental knowledge.
> 5. Every student should have opportunities to
>   explore and develop interests in aesthetic,
>   leisure, career, and other aspects of life.
>   (NMSA, 1977, p. 16)

Howell (1980) made six recommendations for the

implementation of the middle school concept: 1) the program

should reflect the needs of individual students; 2) the

curriculum and schedules should accommodate an appropriate

amount of independent study time according to the maturity

of the individual students; 3) the program should
incorporate a non-graded schedule that permits social and
academic integration on a daily basis; 4) the curriculum
should focus on teaching individuals how to learn; 5) the
school climate should focus on the individual socially,
psychologically, and academically; and 6) the need for
special teacher training necessary to cope with the emerging
adolescent should be recognized.

Molitor and Dentler (1982) developed a list of eight of
the most frequently expressed aims of the middle school
philosophy.

1. The middle school program should emphasize
    individual personal growth. It should be
    `child-oriented` rather than `subject-
    oriented.`
2. The middle school program should focus on the
    `whole child` and encourage his development in
    all areas: physical, social, intellectual, and
    emotional.
3. The middle school program should adapt to the
    great differences in maturity, learning
    styles, and levels of ability among children
    in the middle grades. The program should
    provide opportunities for working with each
    child at his own level and on his individual
    needs and interests.
4. The middle school program should emphasize
    broad learning and exploration. The program
    should avoid premature specialization or
    channeling of student interests.
5. The middle school program should focus on the
    continued development of basic skills and
    critical thinking and learning skills. There
    should be less emphasis on the acquisition of
    specific information in the content areas.
6. The middle school program should emphasize
    integration of information within and across
    subject areas.
7. The middle school program should be
    distinctive from other levels of education,
    and provide a smooth transition from the
    self-contained elementary classroom to the
    more complex environment of the senior high.

8.   The middle school program should recognize
     the increased sophistication of today's
     children, yet avoid placing them in social
     situations for which they are not ready
     (p. 17).

Another important theme found in the literature

concerning the articulation of the middle school concept

dealt with retrospective analysis of the middle school

movement by leading middle school advocates. Many of these

articles addressed the problem of middle level schools

created by changing only the grade structure and name from

the traditional junior high but maintaining the previous

curriculum plan and/or instructional organization. During

an interview in 1982, Alexander stated, "I think the middle

school could become a declining institution too, if we

continue to focus on the organization rather than on age

grouping and the program" (p. 4). Likewise, Yoder (1982)

wrote that it is not the label one places on a building that

is important, but rather the program that exists inside.

     The extent to which the middle school becomes a
     viable educational alternative to traditional
     schools is directly proportional to the ability of
     middle school educators and researchers to
     identify and investigate the developmental needs
     and learning capacities of the students which it
     serves (Thornburg, 1981, p. 134).

In 1988, Alexander reviewed the priority goals that

the National Middle School Association had adopted in 1977

and commented upon the efforts made to achieve them. He

concluded that, although some middle schools were trying to

have every student well-known by at least one adult through

home base or advisory group plans, most schools still

lacked full commitment to and implementation of the idea.
Alexander noted that the elementary-middle-secondary school
plan was making more provisions toward helping every student
achieve optimum mastery of the skills of continued learning
than had either the elementary-secondary or the elementary-
junior-senior high. Alexander also wrote that the middle
school practices of interdisciplinary team teaching and
planning were conducive to providing students with ample
experiences in problem-solving and decision-making skills,
as well as providing them with a functional body of
fundamental skills. According to Alexander, these goals
were being implemented in exemplary middle schools across
the country, but he expressed some skepticism regarding "how
widely such critical middle level elements are found in all
of our roughly 12,000 schools in the middle" (p. 109).

Middle School Characteristics

The development and articulation of middle school
characteristics has been a vital part of the professional
literature pertaining to middle level education. A review
of the literature revealed several lists of characteristics
deemed necessary by middle school advocates to effectively
meet the varying differences in the physical, social,
emotional, and intellectual needs of pupils during their
middle school years. Johnson (1980) stressed the importance
of having a well-defined purpose based upon theory and
philosophy of middle schools advocated by nationally

recognized authorities in the field and upon the

characteristics deemed essential by such authorities and

supported by research. The National Middle School

Association emphasized this position in the publication This

We Believe.

> The middle school stands for clear educational
> concepts which evolve from a melding of the
> nature of the age group, the nature of learning,
> and the expectations of society. There should be,
> then, certain conditions, factors, and
> programmatic characteristics that are identifiable
> and that would be present in a true middle school
> (NMSA, 1982, p. 1).

Compton (1968) provided 10 elements that should be

shared by middle schools as an "alternative to the status

quo."

1. Articulation with the elementary school to
   ensure easy transition for youngsters.
2. Team teaching by subject matter specialists
   in areas of general knowledge which are
   closely related.
3. Skill laboratories staffed by technologists
   with subject matter competencies to provide
   remedial, developmental, and advanced
   instruction in such skills as reading,
   listening, writing, mathematics, science,
   foreign language, art, music, and physical
   education.
4. Independent study for all students,
   commensurate with the topic selected for
   study and the student's needs, interests, and
   abilities.
5. A home-base group assigned to a teacher with
   special training in guidance and counseling,
   as well as the time and opportunity to aid
   children with personal and academic problems
   on a regularly scheduled basis.
6. A program of activities in which each student
   will be able to participate--based on the
   personal development of students rather than
   on enhancement of the school's prestige or
   the entertainment of the public.
7. A plan of vertical school organization
   providing for continuous progress of
   students.

8. Valuative techniques in light of individual
    progress, rather than the prevalent punitive
    system of assigning grades in terms of some
    elusive `average´ for a particular
    chronological age group.
9. A program tailored to the needs of each
    student, with individualized student
    schedules.
10. An instructional and administrative staff
    with an understanding of the in-between-
    agers, competence in teaching at least one
    subject area, and a genuine desire to provide
    the best possible program for these
    youngsters (pp. 108-110).

Gibson (1978) surveyed middle schools from all parts of

the United States in 1969 and from his study outlined seven

characteristics of middle schools.

1. A span of at least three grades to allow for
    a gradual transition from elementary to high
    school practices.
2. Emerging departmental structure in each
    higher grade level to effect gradual
    transition from self-contained to
    departmentalized situations.
3. Flexible approaches to instruction, team
    teaching, flexible scheduling,
    individualization of instruction, independent
    study, and tutorial programs.
4. Required special courses taught in
    departmentalized form and frequently with an
    interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary
    approach.
5. A guidance program as a distinct entity to
    fill the special needs of this age group.
6. A faculty with both elementary and secondary
    certification.
7. A limited attention to interscholastic sports
    and social activities (pp. 18-19).

Moss (1971) stated that "middle schools in words

(theory) may not be the same in actuality (practice)"

(p. 71). Moss listed 15 desirable characteristics of good

middle schools but stated that no one school necessarily

possesses all of these 15 characteristics.

1. Commitment to the age group 10-15 is evidenced by teachers and administrators.
2. A clearly defined statement of the middle school has been cooperatively developed.
3. Continual review of the middle school objectives and operation of the curriculum is carried out by teachers, administrators, and students.
4. The guidance program is a total school concern.
5. A block of time or core program is provided for at least two, but preferably for all, years of the middle school.
6. Flexibility is built into the middle school.
7. Personalized learning is a major part of the curriculum.
8. In-depth units are planned for varying ability levels in science, mathematics, the language arts, and social studies.
9. A strong health education program is a major feature of the middle school curriculum.
10. An evaluation program includes student and parent conferences, letters, and check lists.
11. The arts are given greater prominence in the curriculum.
12. Physical education activities are related to the developmental characteristics of middle school students.
13. A wide variety of interest electives, open to all students, are featured in the curriculum.
14. Modern language instruction is provided for all students.
15. Outdoor education programs are the concern of all teachers (p. 72).

Riegle (1971) developed a questionnaire which effectively measured the level of implementation of 18 basic middle school characteristics and then compared Michigan schools with nationally recognized exemplary middle schools. Referred to only as "The Questionnaire" in his 1971 dissertation, this instrument later became known as the Middle School Practices Index. Crowder (1982) reported that Riegle's survey instrument had been used in several middle school research studies since 1971, including those of Kramer (1974), Raymer (1974), Caul (1975), Beckman (1978),

and Wah (1980). Riegle's list of 18 recommended principles
is presented in Appendix A.

In Oklahoma, the Riegle instrument was used in research
studies by Butler (1983) and Jennings (1985). Butler (1983)
surveyed 69 of the 93 middle schools in the state and found
a low level of implementation of middle school concepts.
Butler concluded "that Oklahoma may have experienced a `band
wagon´ approach to middle school education" and that the
middle school movement in Oklahoma "appears to lack
direction" (p.56). Jennings (1985) also found a generally
low level of implementation of middle school concepts in
Oklahoma. "Oklahoma middle schools appeared to be
developing patterns in the curriculum, activities and other
areas that appear in the traditional junior high school"
(p. 77). "School administrators have demonstrated only
nominal adherence to accepted middle school characteristics/
principles" (p. 78). From those findings, Jennings
concluded that "Oklahoma middle schools generally are
functioning more in name than in fact" (p. 78).

In addition to being used widely in empirical research
studies, Riegle's work was also the basis for an article by
Georgiady, Riegle, and Romano in the April 1974 issue of the
NASSP Bulletin. The authors presented a group of 17
characteristics derived from their review of the literature
and discussions with leading practitioners. Their article
"What are the Characteristics of the Middle School?"
included the following subtitles: (1) Continuous Progress,

(2) Multi-material Approach, (3) Flexible Schedules, (4)

Social Experiences, (5) Physical Experiences and Intramural

Activities, (6) Team Teaching, (7) Planned Gradualism, (8)

Exploratory and Enrichment Studies, (9) Guidance Services,

(10) Independent Study, (11) Basic Skill Repair and

Extension, (12) Creative Experiences, (13) Security Factor,

(14) Evaluation, (15) Community Relations, (16) Student

Services, and (17) Auxiliary Staffing.

According to Trauschke and Mooney (1972), the following

characteristics best describe the middle school

organization.

1. A middle school takes full cognizance of the
   dynamic physical, social, and intellectual
   changes that are occurring in young people
   during the 10-14 year old age span, and
   provides a program with a major purpose of
   creating a facilitative climate so that the
   transescent can understand himself and the
   changes that are occurring in and around him.
2. Location of the ninth grade in the high
   school.
3. Provision of opportunities for innovation
   (team teaching, individualized instruction,
   flexible scheduling, and continuous
   progress).
4. De-emphasis on marching band, interscholastic
   athletics, and dances.
5. Opportunities for exploratory and enrichment
   activities.
6. Instructional staffs which combine the usual
   talents of elementary-orientated teachers
   with the specialized talents characteristic
   of secondary teachers (p. 171).

In 1975, a publication by the Association for

Supervision and Curriculum Development, The Middle School We

Need (Gatewood & Dilg), proposed the following

characteristics for a middle school seeking to make

education relevant to the needs and interests of the

individual.

1. A unique program adapted to the needs of the pre- and early adolescent learner.
2. The widest possible range of intellectual, social and physical experiences.
3. Opportunities for exploration and development of fundamental skills needed by all while making allowances for individual learning patterns. It should maintain an atmosphere of basic respect for individual differences.
4. A climate that enables students to develop abilities, find facts, weigh evidence, draw conclusions, determine values, and that keeps their minds open to the new facts.
5. Staff members who recognize and understand the student's needs, interests, backgrounds, motivations, goals, as well as stresses, strains, frustrations, and fears.
6. A smooth educational transition between the elementary school and the high school while allowing for the physical and emotional changes taking place due to transescence.
7. An environment where the child, not the program, is most important and where the opportunity to succeed is ensured for all students.
8. Guidance in the development of mental processes and attitudes needed for constructive citizenship and the development of lifelong competencies and appreciations needed for effective use of leisure.
9. Competent instructional personnel who will strive to understand the students whom they serve and develop professional competencies which are both unique and applicable to the transescent student.
10. Facilities and time which allow students and teachers an opportunity to achieve the goals of the program to their fullest capabilities (pp. 2-3).

Kindred, Wolotkiewiez, Mickelson, Coplein, and Dyson (1976) developed a practitioner's handbook in which they highlighted the characteristics of a transitional school organized in accordance with the developmental needs of the middle school student. They noted that a middle school should have a unified curriculum, emphasizing the

continuation of basic education in the fundamentals. The middle school program should emphasize self-actualization and self-direction by providing opportunities for students to explore some of their own interests and to make tentative decisions about their futures. The middle school program should promote the use of innovative teaching methods and techniques. Finally, the middle school must focus upon the cultivation of individual and social skills to best prepare early adolescents for productive lives in an ever-changing society.

Brown (1981) listed 21 characteristics supported by the then-current literature and validated by 15 middle school supporters. Those characteristics

> have a planned sequence of concepts in the general educational areas; a major emphasis on interests and skills for continued learning; a balanced program of exploratory experiences and other activities and services for personal development; and appropriate attention to developing values (p. 18).

Brown's 21 characteristics included the following topics:

1. Grade Organization
2. Team Teaching
3. Instructional Planning
4. Student Groupings
5. Flexible Scheduling
6. Continuous Progress
7. Individualized Instruction
8. Independent Study
9. Instructional Materials
10. Basic Skills
11. The Exploratory Strand
12. Reading Skill Development
13. Creative Experiences
14. Social Development
15. Intramural Sports
16. Focus on Growth and Development
17. Individualized Guidance Services
18. Home Base Program

19. Value Clarification
20. Student Evaluation
21. Transition from Elementary to High School
   (pp. 18-19).

In an article focusing upon the role of the middle school principal as instructional leader, Ferguson (1981) attributed the development of a successful middle school to 15 characteristics.

1. Every student receives instruction and help with basic skills, with emphasis placed on reading.
2. Each student is able to explore a wide variety of learning areas and activities, with emphasis upon expressive arts and career education . . .
3. The curriculum emphasizes the changes taking place in the world and how young adolescents cope with changes.
4. The curriculum helps students to learn how to study and appraise their own interests and talents.
5. Democratic ideals are stressed and practiced by students, teachers, and administrators.
6. Students are allowed initiative and choices in what they do and how they do it.
7. Homework is utilized . . . (a) to provide practices for reinforcing basic skills, (b) to develop students' responsibility for their own learning.
8. Every student is well known by at least one teacher.
9. Guidance and special resource teams are important parts of the learning program. . . .
10. Time for exploration activities is provided with the daily class schedule.
11. The progress of each pupil is measured in relation to his/her own past achievement.
12. Emphasis is on intramural sports.
13. Student report cards are supplemented with parent-teacher contacts and a variety of written reports.
14. Opportunities for cooperative teacher planning are provided.
15. The principal gives highest priority to the improvement of instruction (pp. 162-165).

In The Exemplary Middle School, Alexander and George (1981) provided 12 essential characteristics of a successful

middle school: (1) a philosophy statement and school goals based upon the educational needs of the transescent, which are used in program planning and evaluation; (2) a system of planning and evaluation specifically designed for the middle school program and which involves all concerned persons in the school community; (3) a curriculum which provides for continuous progress, basic skills, interaction, and personal development; (4) a guidance program that relies on individual faculty members well known to the individual student; (5) interdisciplinary teams which plan, teach, and evaluate specific thematic units; (6) non-traditional student grouping for instruction which facilitates multi-age instructional arrangements to maximize continuous progress; (7) block and/or core scheduling for flexibility and efficiency; (8) planning and use of facilities to provide flexibility for varied program opportunities; (9) a balanced variety of instructional strategies to accommodate the learning needs of all students; (10) a staff development program to provide continual faculty renewal on middle school issues and to permit opportunities for staff input and leadership; (11) a plan for evaluating student progress in the achievement of stated school goals; and (12) continual examination of the middle school population to identify and address changing needs and conditions of the future.

Wiles and Bondi (1981) presented 20 similar characteristics in their book The Essential Middle School:

1. A philosophy and objectives cooperatively developed by community and staff and that are based on the uniqueness of the middle school student.
2. Staff members who recognize and understand the unique emotional, physical, and social problems of the middle school student.
3. Auxiliary staffing such as teacher aides, parent volunteers, community helpers.
4. An environment which assures all students the opportunity to succeed.
5. A general education curriculum with emphasis on learning how to learn.
6. Learning experiences that provide continuous progress and assure articulation from elementary to high school.
7. Cooperative teaching such as team teaching and interdisciplinary team planning.
8. An open climate that encourages students to develop problem solving skills and to be receptive to new ideas.
9. An exploratory or personal interest program to help students discover more about themselves and the world around them.
10. Independent study time with a resource teacher.
11. Opportunities to express creative talents such as dramatic and music programs, newspapers, and art.
12. A multimaterial approach to all classes.
13. A media center which houses a wide range of materials and opportunities for students to produce media of their own.
14. Flexible class schedules that are based on the instructional needs of students.
15. A strong intramural program that replaces the traditional competitive athletic programs.
16. Appropriate social experiences that provide for the unique needs of this age group.
17. Appropriate guidance services that include teacher-pupil counseling and trained guidance counselors.
18. Physical facilities which allow for a diversity of grouping patterns and activities.
19. Continuous inservice education that emphasizes the uniqueness of the middle school student.
20. A community relations program that provides information about school programs and activities, and involves parents and other community members in the decision making process of the school (pp. 319-20).

In 1982 the National Middle School Association (NMSA) published This We Believe, a booklet which identified 10 essential ingredients of effective middle school programs. Those schools (1) have teachers committed to transescents; (2) have a balanced curriculum based on the individual needs of the transescent student; (3) operate a range of organizational teaching arrangements; (4) use varied instructional strategies; (5) provide exploratory opportunities to students; (6) provide comprehensive advising and counseling; (7) allow for continuous progress; (8) provide for evaluation of individual student progress; (9) require cooperative planning by teachers; and (10) maintain a positive school climate.

Lipsitz (1984) conducted a major study to determine the characteristics of effective middle level schools. She asked 100 national researchers and practitioners to nominate effective middle level schools and to identify five common characteristics of those schools. All but one of the nominated schools were called middle schools. The most commonly identified characteristics included high overall scores on standardized achievement tests, low absenteeism, low incidence of vandalism and victimization, little or no evidence of graffiti, general parental satisfaction, a reputation for excellence, and joy on the part of the students. According to Lipsitz, the most striking feature of the selected schools had to be the willingness and ability to adapt all school practices to the individual

differences in intellectual, physical, and socio-emotional development of their students. Lipsitz found that the identified effective schools emphasized academic achievement, expected proper behavior from students; stressed an elementary school approach to instruction while resisting departmentalization, demonstrated feelings of caring for one another from both students and teachers, encouraged teachers to use cooperative planning and interdisciplinary team teaching, and constantly maintained a positive school climate. Lipsitz concluded that effective middle level schools demonstrate six overall characteristics: (1) a coherent philosophy about how young adolescents learn, (2) consistency of expectations, (3) a positive feeling about young adolescents, (4) high energy levels for job performance, (5) teachers who are acknowledged as professionals, and (6) organizational ingenuity that reduces teacher and student isolation.

George and Oldaker (1985) identified and surveyed 130 exemplary middle schools. They found that, among these exemplary schools, 90% were organized into interdisciplinary teams; 94% used flexible scheduling, often in blocks; 93% had advisor-advisee periods; and 99% focused the curriculum on students with a wide variety of exploratory courses. When considering the perceptions of the middle level educators in these schools, 62% described increases in academic achievement; 80% reported increases in student emotional health, creativity, and confidence; 90% noted the

belief that student self-concept and social adjustment improved; 95% perceived that student attitudes toward school improved; 75% described better school attendance; 94% reported an increase in staff morale; and 82% noticed an increase in staff participation in school activities.

Aromi, Roberts, and Morrow (1986) compared seven middle schools which had been identified as having exemplary programs in 1971 to determine their status in 1984. They found that the schools had continued their effectiveness, with improvement in exploratory activities, teacher-student guidance activities, articulation programs with the elementary and high schools, community involvement, and strategies for student self-articulation. The research study did show a decline in cooperative team planning and teaching and in the use of flexible scheduling activities.

Binko and Lawlor (1986) investigated how extensively 24 identified practices had been implemented in middle schools. By surveying teachers and administrators in 75 school districts, they determined which practices were most evident and which were least evident in the schools. The five practices most evident were:

* Emphasis on basic skills
* Differentiation of teaching methods according to student ability
* Utilization of media
* Differentiation of subject area objectives according to ability
* Encouraging creative ideas by students (p. 83).

The five practices rated least evident included:

* Interdisciplinary team-teaching
* Single discipline team-teaching

* Teacher functioning in role of counselor
* Provisions for mini-courses
* Use of a non-graded organization (p. 83).

Swiger (1987) wrote that there are four essential
components upon which the effectiveness and overall success
of a middle school program depend. The four components are
interdisciplinary instruction, teacher characteristics,
guidance activities, and intramural activities. He stated
that the "aim of interdisciplinary instruction becomes not
just the teaching of students, but is, more importantly, the
promotion of communication, coordination and cooperation
among subject matter specialists" (p. 51). Swiger noted
that teacher characteristics are "the catalyst that makes
all organizational and programmatical aspects of the middle
school function appropriately to meet the needs of the
learner" (p. 57) but are also an area of grave concern for
middle school advocates because of the lack of special
training and the tendency to have a district's poorer
teachers assigned to the middle level school. Because it
should focus upon the role of the teacher in providing
guidance activities for transescents, Swiger noted that the
success of the guidance program will be significantly
interrelated with the interdisciplinary team and teacher
characteristics components of a successful middle school
program. The fourth essential component identified by
Swiger is the use of a well-organized intramural program to
provide activities for individual differences, needs, and
interests of the transescent student. Intramurals offer

students the opportunity to explore various physical

education activities and the chance to develop emotional and

social stability through their interaction with peers.

Merenbloom (1988) developed 11 characteristics of an

effective middle school by accumulating literature from the

middle school movement and effective school research.

According to Merenbloom, the key to the successful

implementation of these characteristics is the active

involvement of teachers in the staff development process.

An effective middle school:

1. Features a program that responds to the physical, intellectual, social-emotional and moral needs of early adolescents.
2. Has a set of documents to guide all aspects of the program.
3. Possesses a definite curriculum plan that includes organized knowledge, skills, and personal development activities.
4. Has a clearly established program of studies based upon the concept of exploration and provides opportunities for student growth.
5. Builds on the strengths of elementary education and prepares students for high school.
6. Employs teachers who focus on the learning needs of pupils by using appropriate teaching strategies.
7. Creates teaching teams using blocks of time to best deliver the instructional program.
8. Emphasizes the guidance and counseling function of staff members by providing for a home-base program, stressing the importance of self-concept, and providing a positive climate.
9. Promotes flexibility in implementing the daily, weekly, and monthly schedule to meet the varying needs of students.
10. Actively involves parents in various aspects of the school experience.
11. Evaluates the program on a regular basis and makes changes that enhance the learning (pp. 5-9).

A final list of characteristics was provided by Alexander and McEwin (1989), who in 1988 replicated a 1967-68 national survey of middle schools. These authors reported that over the 20 years "impressive numbers of schools did succeed in becoming `real' middle schools" (p. 2). They listed six characteristics or earmarks generally considered as critical in achieving educational quality in middle schools.

1. An interdisciplinary organization, with a flexible scheduled day. . . .
2. An adequate guidance program, including a teacher advisory plan. . . .
3. A full-scale exploratory program. . . .
4. Comprehensive curriculum provision for the broad goals of personal development, continued learning skills, and basic knowledge. . . .
5. Varied and effective instructional methodology for the age group. . . .
6. Continued orientation and articulation for students, parents, and teachers (pp. 3-7).

The earmarks against which we checked some of our data about school characteristics should be present in all good schools in the middle, although we expect that changes will develop and other earmarks will be added. Continued discussion, experimentation, and evaluation are essential for agreement on the essential goals and practices of schools in the middle (Alexander & McEwin, 1989, p. 7).

School Climate in the Middle School

Although there is an abundance of information and research on school climate, research addressing the more narrowly defined topic of middle school climate is limited. This portion of the review of literature provides a brief overview of the attention to school climate in educational

research followed by an examination of specific studies
which were focused on school climate in middle level
schools.

The measurement of school climate has proceeded along a
number of rather divergent lines, being associated with
institutional demands on students, average student
characteristics, teacher attitudes or perceptions, and
student satisfaction with school (Anderson, 1985). One of
the earlier approaches to analyzing school climate was
developed by Halpin and Croft (1963). After having
collected data from six different regions of the country,
they developed a scale for measuring schools along a
continuum from "Open Climate" to "Closed Climate." The
instrument which they developed, the Organizational Climate
Descriptive Questionnaire (OCDQ), was based upon the
assumptions that something actually exists which is properly
called organizational climate and which is related to and
determined by the actual and perceived behavior of
principals and teachers.

Likert (1967) developed a climate assessment instrument
called the Profile of Organizational Characteristics (POC).
The POC focused upon the superordinate-subordinate
relationships within the organization. Those relationships
are ranked along a continuum from Exploitative to
Participative and the organization is then categorized as
one of four systems: Exploitative-Authoritative, Benevolent-
Authoritative, Consultive, or Participative.

Walberg and Anderson (1968) developed the Learning
Environment Inventory (LEI) to assess student perceptions of
school climate. This instrument has subtests in the areas
of Cohesiveness, Diversity, Formality, Speed, Environment,
Friction, Goal Direction, Favoritism, Cliqueness,
Satisfaction, Disorganization, Difficulty, Apathy,
Democratic, and Competitiveness. The LEI thus defined the
social/psychological aspects of school climate. Walberg
(1970) noted that while much of the reliable variance in
student academic performance was attributed to student
aptitude, a significant amount was attributable to climate.

Stern (1970) developed the Organizational Climate Index
based upon Murray's Needs/Press Model. This instrument and
other related questionnaires were used to determine the
extent to which psychologically relevant structures existed
in the environment for facilitating or impeding the
expression of a need. From the data generated by Stern's
instruments, environments could be placed into different
classifications called cultures. Stern's work initially
dealt with university-level groups, but his instruments were
later modified to measure climate variables at the high
school and elementary school levels.

The School Climate Profile was developed by the Charles
F. Kettering Task Force (Fox et al., 1974). It emerged from
a project called "Principal as a School Climate Leader"
(PASCL). This instrument, also referred to as the CFK Ltd.
Profile, was used to assess the consensus of school

administrators and practitioners about the day-to-day
aspects of climate. The task force report contained two
major goals of school climate for students: (1) to provide a
wholesome, stimulating, and productive learning environment
conducive to academic achievement and personal growth of
youth at different levels of development and (2) to provide
a pleasant and satisfying school situation within which
young people can live and work. The task force study
identified eight factors which result from the interaction
of the school's programs, processes, and physical
conditions. Those factors, listed below, were said to
determine the quality of the school's climate.

1. Respect. Students, teachers, and
    administrators should see themselves as
    persons of worth.
2. Trust. Confidence that others can be counted
    upon to behave in an honest manner.
3. High Morale. People feeling good about what is
    happening.
4. Opportunities for Input. Opportunity for
    involvement in contribution of ideas and
    knowing that they will be considered.
5. Continuous Academic and Social Growth. Each
    person needs to develop additional academic,
    social, and physical skills, knowledge, and
    attitudes.
6. Cohesiveness. Quality of a person's feelings
    toward a school.
7. School Renewal. The school as an institution
    should develop improvement projects.
8. Caring. Every individual in the school
    should feel that some other person is
    concerned about him as a human being (Fox
    et al., 1974, pp. 7-8).

The NASSP School Climate Survey, part of the National
Association of Secondary School Principals Comprehensive
Assessment of School Environments (CASE), was developed by
the NASSP Task Force on Effective School Climate. According

to Halderson (1988), the instrument was generated from a
comprehensive review of both school climate and effective
schools literature as well as an analysis of existing
climate instruments. The NASSP School Climate Survey
collects data on 10 subscales regarding perceptions of: (1)
Teacher-Student Relationships, (2) Security and Maintenance,
(3) Administration, (4) Student Academic Orientation, (5)
Student Behavior Values, (6) Guidance, (7) Student-Peer
Relationships, (8) Parent and Community-School
Relationships, (9) Instructional Management, (10) Student
Activities.

From this brief overview of some of the major
contributors toward the assessment of school climate, it can
be seen that the analysis of school climate does indeed hold
promise for relevant educational research. Parker (1980)
stated that many aspects of the organizational environment
are potentially relevant to learning and stressed the
necessity for school administrators to strive for
improvement in the climate of their schools. As Hunsaker
(1978) noted, it is necessary for professionals to
demonstrate positive attitudes when working with students if
schools are to emerge with a positive climate for learning.

McLeod (1989) recognized that school climate is
positively related to school effectiveness and that through
a comprehensive assessment of school climate, including the
identification of various stakeholders' perceptions, school
officials can identify specific school-related problems.

Identifying those areas and patterns of concern can provide
a baseline from which to develop school improvement
programs. Likewise, Howard, Howell, and Brainard (1988)
noted that the assessment of the school's climate is one
important step in the process of school improvement.

> Effective schools share a number of characteris-
> tics. But one consistently rises to the top: a
> winning school climate. School improvement is a
> process, not an event. It is seldom orderly,
> often unpredictable. It usually occurs in stages.
> Each individual in a school can affect its
> climate. But by working together--through a
> `process´ of school improvement--you can have an
> even greater effect (Sweeney, 1988, p. 5).

Sweeney concluded that teachers teach best and students
learn and enjoy more in a positive, vital, and robust
learning environment or climate. From this perspective, it
is not surprising that there have been a number of studies
which have specifically addressed the variable of school
climate in relation to middle level educational issues.

Smith (1977) used a modified version of the CFK Ltd.
Profile to assess differences in perceptions of school
climate among administrators, teachers, and students in
various junior high school settings. He found that
administrators generally had a more favorable perception of
school climate than did the teachers and that teachers
responded more favorably than did the students. Smith also
indicated that individuals in smaller schools had a more
positive perception of school climate. Smith recognized
that schools differ in many respects, but one of the
discernable differences is the school climate.

Evans (1975) administered the <u>Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire</u> to teachers at 19 middle schools and 16 junior high schools in Ohio. He reported no significant differences between middle school faculties and junior high school faculties in their perceptions of school climate.

Crowder (1982) surveyed 167 middle schools randomly chosen from Oklahoma and its bordering states. The study examined the relationship between the level of implementation of middle school characteristics and the students' perceptions of school climate. The implementation of middle school characteristics was measured by an instrument developed for that particular study. Students' perceptions of school climate were measured by the <u>CFK Ltd. Profile</u>. Crowder found that middle school characteristics were related to school climate. Of the 55 hypotheses tested, 20 were found to be significant at the .05 level. Table I lists the significant relationships between the implementation of middle school characteristics and the students' perceptions of school climate.

> If, in fact, it is the educational leader's task to maximize the potential for increasing student outcomes, and if the school climate is a determining factor in this process, it appears a necessity for the leader to determine which organizational characteristics facilitate this extremely critical segment of the child's education and incorporate them into the child's environment (Crowder, 1982, p. 9).

Draud (1980) conducted a study to determine if the grade organization of middle schools and junior high schools

TABLE I

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS
IN CROWDER'S 1982 STUDY

Middle School Characteristics	Climate Factors
Developmental Skills Program Affective Aspects Recognition of Social Needs Enrichment/Exploratory Program Varied Instructional Materials Developmental Guidance Program Evaluation and Reporting	Opportunity for Input
Physical Aspects Varied Instructional Materials Developmental Guidance Program Community as a Resource	High Morale
Recognition of Social Needs Enrichment/Exploratory Program Developmental Guidance Program	Cohesiveness
Developmental Skills Program Varied Instructional Materials Community as a Resource	Trust
Affective Aspects Varied Instructional Materials	School Renewal
Physical Aspects	Respect
Varied Instructional Materials	Continuous Academic and Social Growth
Varied Instructional Materials	Caring

had any effect on students' and teachers' attitudes toward

school. He found that middle school students showed more

positive attitudes toward student-teacher relationships,

student-administration relationships, and student

participation than did junior high students. Middle school teachers showed more positive attitudes toward teacher salaries, teacher status, and community support. Junior high students had more positive attitudes regarding student-counselor relationships, while junior high school teachers had more positive attitudes concerning rapport among fellow teachers and cooperation among curriculum areas. Draud concluded that his results showed no significant differences between junior high schools and middle schools.

Clemens (1983) surveyed 207 middle school and junior high school teachers regarding their attitudes toward their students. She found that middle school teachers were more concerned about the socio-emotional needs of the transescent but that there were no significant differences between their attitudes regarding the physical, intellectual, and overall developmental needs of the transescent.

Summary

The review of literature was focused upon: (1) the characteristics of the middle school student, (2) the philosophy and goals of the middle school concept, (3) the development of middle school characteristics and lists of essential elements, and (4) the role of school climate in educational research and specific middle school studies relating to school climate.

The middle school student, termed transescent in much of the literature, is between 10 and 14 years old and is

often at an awkward stage of physical, emotional, and
intellectual development. The transescent will change
drastically during the middle school years, from a child to
an adolescent. The physical changes of the middle school
student are accompanied by emotional uncertainties and
social needs. Intellectually, the transescent may or may
not be ready to think at the formal stage of development,
causing some to be bored and others to be frustrated by a
standardized curriculum. Additional complications for the
transescent are created by the social/moral dilemmas
encountered in modern society. The staff of a successful
middle school must address all of these issues if they are
to truly serve the individual students.

From this concern for the students, and the perceived
inability of the junior high school to meet their needs, a
move to restructure the educational organization for the
middle level student was begun in the 1960s. Leading middle
school advocates developed programs and published books
directed toward this restructuring. THe middle school
movement caught on and was in full swing throughout the
1970s and 1980s. The middle school concept was directed
toward meeting the physical, emotional, intellectual, and
social needs of the transescent while providing a smooth
transition from elementary school to high school.

An important part of the middle school movement was the
development and articulation of middle school character-
istics by practitioners and researchers. The literature

devoted to middle level education abounds with lists of characteristics, elements, components, ingredients, and earmarks of successful schools. Common to many of these lists are such topics as transitional goals, guidance programs, flexible scheduling, exploratory programs, social and physical activities, staff development, and instructional strategies. These lists highlight the programmatic characteristics of middle schools which would effectively address the individual needs of the students.

The last focus of the review of literature was concerned with school climate and its role as an important element of educational research and reform. A genuine caring and concern for people will be evident in a successful middle school. Such a positive school climate is needed to support the growth of early adolescents in the social, emotional, physical and intellectual areas. On the other hand, effective middle school programs positively affect student and staff behavior and attitudes, which inevitably improve the overall school climate. The implementation of suggested middle school characteristics and the improvement of school climate could well be two sides of the same coin, both being needed in the development of a successful middle level educational program.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND DESIGN

This study was conducted to determine the degree to
which the middle school concept was being implemented by
public school systems across the State of Oklahoma. A
significant part of this study was devoted to the
determination of the level of implementation of middle
school practices as outlined by the professional literature
and as measured by the Middle School Practices Index.

In addition, this study was designed to examine school
climate among selected middle schools of Oklahoma. School
climate is an area in which there may be sharp distinctions
between more effective and less effective schools (Sweeney,
1988). According to Gottfredson and Hollifield (1988, p.
63), "School Climate . . . determines whether the school can
achieve excellence or will flounder ineffectively."

Therefore, this study was designed to specifically
address the following four research questions:

1. What is the current level of implementation of
recommended middle school practices across the state of
Oklahoma?

2. How does the current level of implementation of
recommended middle school practices compare to the earlier

studies of Butler (1983) and Jennings (1985)?

3. Is there a significant difference in school climate, as perceived by teachers, in schools that have a higher level of implementation of recommended middle school practices as compared to schools that have a lower level of implementation?

4. What significant relationships exist between the levels of implementation of the 18 specific recommended middle school practices and the 10 areas of school climate?

Population and Sample

According to the 1989-90 Oklahoma Educational Directory (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1989), Oklahoma public school districts contained 156 schools identified as middle schools. This number included all schools with grades 5-6-7, 5-6-7-8, 6-7, 7-8, or 6-7-8, as listed in the directory, regardless of whether they were called middle schools or junior high schools. This number did not include any schools with the grade combinations 5-6, 7-8-9, or 8-9. Three accredited schools which were housed with, and shared administrators with, either the elementary or the high school in the district were excluded from the study. The remaining 153 middle schools in the State of Oklahoma constituted the population for this study.

Instruments

Two different instruments were used to collect data for this study. The level of implementation of selected middle school concepts was measured by the Middle School Practices Index (MSPI) (Appendix B). The NASSP School Climate Survey (Appendix C) was used to identify perceptions of the school environment. Proper permission to use these instruments was obtained. Both of these instruments are described in this portion of the chapter.

The MSPI was developed by Riegle (1971) to determine the level of implementation of 18 basic middle school practices. Riegle's 18 middle school practices (Appendix A) were compiled through an extensive review of the literature and were submitted to a committee of middle school experts for suggestions and modifications. The instrument was then reviewed by a research consultant and validated for the purpose of Riegle's study (Jennings, 1985). The 18 characteristics measured by this instrument have continued to be supported by the professional literature as important and unique to the middle school philosophy of education.

The MSPI has been used extensively in middle school research since its initial development in 1971. Pook (1981) used the MSPI in a study of Colorado middle schools. To validate the instrument, he had it reviewed by four national experts. With slight revision, the questionnaire was judged to have a 0.70 point biserial correlation coefficient between school scores and expert judgment. Pook

also reported the Hoyt estimate of reliability for the MSPI to be 0.90.

Butler (1983) used a modified version of the MSPI to survey all 93 middle schools then operating in Oklahoma. The modifications did not invalidate comparisons with other MSPI studies. Butler sent the MSPI to five middle school leaders in the Oklahoma-Arkansas Middle School Consortium for review and suggestions for modifications. The five experts did not recommend any modifications. Jennings (1985) also used the MSPI to survey all Oklahoma middle schools.

The NASSP School Climate Survey is part of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments (CASE). This package was developed by the NASSP Task Force on Effective School Climate. The NASSP School Climate Survey is a relatively new instrument which asks each individual to "serve as an informant . . . in terms of what he or she believes most people hold to be true about that characteristic of the school's environment" (Halderson, 1988, p. 3). The NASSP School Climate Survey is used to collect data about perceptions on topics identified by 10 subscales.

Teacher-Student Relationships. Perceptions about the quality of the interpersonal and professional relationships between teachers and students.

Security and Maintenance. Perceptions about the quality of maintenance and the degree of security people feel at the school.

Administration. Perceptions of the degree to
which school administrators are effective in
communicating with different role groups and in
setting high performance expectations for teachers
and students.

Student Academic Orientation. Perceptions about
student attention to task and concern for
achievement at school.

Student Behavior Values. Perceptions about
student self-discipline and tolerance for others.

Guidance. Perceptions of the quality of academic
and career guidance and personal counseling
services available to students.

Student-Peer Relationships. Perceptions about
students' care and respect for one another and
their mutual cooperation.

Parent and Community-School Relationships.
Perceptions of the amount and quality of
involvement in the school by parents and other
community members.

Instructional Management. Perceptions of the
efficiency and effectiveness of teacher classroom
organization and use of classroom time.

Student Activities. Perceptions about
opportunities for and actual participation of
students in school-sponsored activities
(Halderson, 1988, p. 3).

According to Halderson (1988), the instrument was generated

from a comprehensive review of both the climate and

effective schools literature and an analysis of existing

climate instruments. The survey instrument was refined

through a series of national pilot tests and normative

studies. The average internal consistency reliability of

the climate subscales was reported to be 0.81. The task

force "placed great emphasis on scale and item

conceptualization" and used "exploratory and confirmatory

factor analysis in field testing" (p. 3) to support strong

content and construct validity for the climate instrument.

Data Collection and Analysis

The MSPI (Appendix B) was mailed to the principals of the aforementioned population of 153 accredited middle schools in Oklahoma. The survey was accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope and with a cover letter (Appendix D) explaining the nature of the study and the confidentiality of the participants. Responses to the first mailing were received from 91 principals. A second request (Appendix D) for participation was mailed to those principals who had not responded. An additional 26 surveys were returned, bringing the total number of returned surveys to 117, representing 77% of the total population of middle schools. Three returned surveys were not completed and thus were discarded. The final number of respondent schools was thus 114, representing 75% of the population.

Responses to the MSPI questions were scored according to the specifications set forth by Riegle. The mean of means for each of the 18 middle school principles was determined by summing the scores of the questions on each characteristic. Percentages were computed for each characteristic, and a total composite score was determined for each school. Schools were ranked according to the total MSPI score. The top 10% of the sample (12 schools) were identified as the high level of implementation schools, and the bottom 10% of the sample (12 schools) were identified as

the low level of implementation schools. The principals of
these "high" and "low" schools were contacted to see if they
would be willing to allow their faculties to participate in
the school climate portion of the study. Of the identified
schools, all 12 in the high group and 10 of the 12 in the
low group agreed to participate in the school climate
portion of this study.

The NASSP School Climate Survey forms (Appendix C) were
either mailed or hand delivered to all of the participating
schools. Specific instructions and guidelines for
administering the instrument were delivered along with the
forms. Principals were encouraged to have their faculty
members complete the surveys during a regular faculty
meeting. Completed surveys were received from all 12 of the
high group schools and 9 of the 10 low group schools.

The returned surveys were scored according to the
specifications outlined in the NASSP Examiner's Manual. The
process involved generating subscale raw scores, determining
subscale standard scores, and plotting group summaries and
profiles.

The data from the two instruments were analyzed with an
IBM personal computer using the SYSTAT computer program.
Using the DATA and EDIT modules, subscale scores for the two
instruments were generated for each school. The
descriptive information gathered during the MSPI survey
(i.e. student population, number of teachers, number of
administrators) was also programmed into the computer.

From this data set, statistical procedures using the STATS (Univariate Statistics) module were used to analyze and compare mean scores on the MSPI and the school climate surveys. A T-statistic and related probability score were generated for the school climate subscales by sorting the schools by high and low groups according to their MSPI scores and using the STATS module with the STATISTICS / TUKEY command. A Pearson's correlational and probability analysis was computed on the possible relationships between the 18 MSPI characteristics and the 10 subscales of the NASSP School Climate Survey by using the CORR (Correlations) module with the PEARSON (variable-variable) / PROB command.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This study was designed and conducted with the intent
of examining the current status of the middle school
movement in the State of Oklahoma. The collected data and
the resulting analysis are provided in this chapter.

The chapter begins with a review of descriptive
information concerning Oklahoma's middle level schools.
This information was derived from the 1989-90 Oklahoma
Educational Directory and from the information sheet which
accompanied the MSPI questionnaire. The second portion of
the chapter contains a presentation and analysis of the data
gathered via the MSPI concerning the current level of
implementation of 18 recommended middle school practices.
These data were used to compare the current level of
implementation of middle school practices to those
presented in earlier studies and as a framework for
examining teachers' perceptions of school climate within the
middle school setting. The last phase of the presentation
and analysis of data is focused on the identification of
significant relationships which might exist between the 18
recommended middle school practices and the 10 school
climate subscales.

Descriptive Information

According to the <u>1989-90 Oklahoma Educational</u>
<u>Directory</u>, there were 153 accredited schools which met the
definition of a middle school, that being a school which
included at least two consecutive grades in the sixth
through eighth sequence and which contained no grades lower
than grade five or higher than grade eight. The
organizational structures of these schools fell into five
categories, as shown in Table II for both the 153 schools in
the population and for the 114 respondent schools. The
discrepancy between the two sets of figures can be explained
by the fact that there are several schools which are
accredited by the state for grades 6-8, but whose middle
level grades were found to actually be organized 5-6-7-8.

TABLE II

GRADE ORGANIZATIONS OF OKLAHOMA MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Grades	All Middle Schools		Respondent Schools	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
6-7-8	121	79.1	84	73.7
7-8	24	15.7	14	12.3
5-6-7-8	3	2.0	14	12.3
6-7	4	2.6	1	0.9
5-6-7	1	0.7	1	0.9
Totals	153	100.1	114	100.1

Middle schools are located within school districts of all sizes across the State of Oklahoma. The K-12 enrollment of districts which included middle schools ranged from 300 to 42,000. As shown in Table III, most of Oklahoma's middle schools are located in relatively small districts, with 33% of the schools operated in districts with less than 1,000 students and 34% in districts with 1,000 to 1,999 students. While these schools represented 67% of the total respondent schools, they enrolled only 43% of the students. The remaining one third of the respondent schools housed 57% of the students. Oklahoma's two largest school districts, Oklahoma City and Tulsa, accounted for all of the respondent middle schools from districts greater than 20,000 students. The middle schools from districts with 10,000 to 20,000

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENT MIDDLE SCHOOLS BY
DISTRICT SIZE AND AVERAGE ENROLLMENT

District Enrollment	Middle Schools		Middle School Students		Average Middle School Enrollment
	No.	%	No.	%	
less than 1,000	37	33	6,654	15	182
1,000--1,999	39	34	12,570	28	322
2,000--3,999	10	9	4,950	11	495
4,000--9,999	7	6	4,967	11	710
10,000-19,999	8	7	6,753	15	844
20,000 or more	13	11	8,998	20	692
Totals	114	100	44,892	100	394

students were located in either Tulsa or Oklahoma City suburban school districts.

Table IV contains additional descriptive data representative of Oklahoma middle schools. The data were gathered from the information sheet which accompanied the MSPI survey. The average respondent school district had 6,760 students, but the median enrollment was only 1,400 students, once again stressing that most of Oklahoma's middle schools are from relatively small districts. The middle schools ranged in enrollment from 94 students to 1,057 students, with the average school having 394 students.

TABLE IV

ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING OF RESPONDENT
MIDDLE SCHOOLS

	Range Minimum Maximum		Mean	Median
District Enrollment	300.0	42,000.0	6,760.5	1,400.0
Middle School Enrollment	94.0	1,057.0	393.8	347.5
Number of Teachers	7.0	70.0	25.6	22.5
Students per Teacher	5.2	25.4	15.2	15.2
Number of Counselors	0.0	3.0	1.2	1.0
Students per Counselor	105.0	762.0	333.0	340.5
Number of Administrators	0.5	3.0	1.4	1.0
Students per Administrator	94.0	525.0	266.3	252.0

Data concerning the administrative and instructional staff is also provided in Table IV. The number of teachers in respondent middle schools ranged from 7 to 70, with a mean of 25.6 and a median of 22.5. The number of students per teacher had a range of 5.2 to 25.4. The data relating to counselors is especially pertinent since both the recommended middle school practices and the school climate indicators have strong ties to guidance programs and activities. Of the 114 schools, 14 (12%) had no counselor and another 14 (12%) reportedly had a part-time counselor. For those schools with counselors, the student-counselor ratio ranged from 105 to 762 (a half-time counselor for 381 students). The average student-counselor ratio was 333 students per counselor. Nearly one half of the schools (48%), with student populations ranging from 105 to 600, had just one counselor while 24 schools (21%) had two counselors. These schools had student populations ranging from 350 to 1,050. Seven percent of the schools, with populations ranging form 480 to 1,057, each had three counselors on the middle school staff.

In regard to the administration of the respondent Oklahoma middle schools, over half of the schools had one full-time principal while an additional one third reported having two administrators. The middle school enrollments of those schools with one administrator ranged from 94 to 465 while those schools with two administrators ranged from 260 to 1,050. Only one school with two administrators had fewer

than 400 students. As indicated in Table IV, the average number of administrators per school was 1.4 with an average student-administrator ratio of 266 to 1.

A typical middle school in Oklahoma, if such an institution really existed, would more than likely be part of a school district of approximately 1,400 students in a small town setting. It would consist of grades 6-7-8 and would have a student enrollment of approximately 350 students. There would be 22 teachers, 1 counselor, and a principal, possibly with a half-time assistant.

Implementation of Recommended Practices

The MSPI was designed to measure the level of implementation of 18 recommended middle school practices. This section of the chapter contains a description and analysis of the data gathered via this instrument regarding middle schools in Oklahoma. The 18 practices are listed in Appendix A. The key words which will be used to refer to the different 18 practices throughout this chapter are presented in Table V. Scores for the MSPI are computed as mean percentages, allowing for comparisons of schools with different grade organizations. The current level of implementation for each practice is also shown in Table V.

The results of the survey showed that the level of implementation of recommended middle school practices in the State of Oklahoma is low. The mean percentage scores for the individual practices ranged from a low of 16.37 for

TABLE V

CURRENT LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF 18 MIDDLE
SCHOOL PRACTICES IN OKLAHOMA

Middle School Practices	Mean Percentage
Continuous Progress	40.02
Multi-Material	64.09
Flexible Schedule	28.76
Social Experiences	53.26
Physical Experiences	54.73
Intramural Activity	25.75
Team Teaching	22.67
Planned Gradualism	16.37
Exploratory and Enrichment	44.69
Guidance Services	54.39
Independent Study	38.03
Basic Learning Skills	56.99
Creative Experiences	31.74
Student Security	55.71
Evaluations	58.40
Community Relations	35.49
Student Services	61.64
Auxiliary Staff	40.47
Total MSPI	43.51

Planned Gradualism to 64.09 for Multi-Material. The mean
of the 18 individual percentage scores was 43.51, showing
that as an at-large group Oklahoma middle schools revealed
implementation of the recommended practices at less than
half of the level considered to constitute full
implementation.

Those practices in which Oklahoma scored the lowest
included Planned Gradualism (16.37), Team Teaching (22.67),
Intramural Activity (25.75), Flexible Scheduling (28.76),
and Creative Experiences (31.74). The extremely low score
for Planned Gradualism illustrates that, in general,
Oklahoma middle schools do not address the need for
gradual, planned transition from elementary school to high
school. Of the 114 respondent schools, 74 schools (63%)
reported a zero level of implementation and another 26
schools (23%) reported an implementation level of less than
35%. Most schools reported a completely departmentalized
educational program for all grades, whereas a program that
moves from a largely self-contained to a partially
departmentalized program is recommended.

Oklahoma's low scores in Team Teaching and Flexible
Scheduling are directly related to this characteristic. A
total of 57 schools (50%) scored zero on Team Teaching,
while only 19 schools (17%) revealed a mean percentage score
above 50. Therefore, the team teaching concept allowing for
students to interact with a variety of teachers in an
integrated curriculum is practically non-existent within

many of the middle schools of Oklahoma. Likewise, the use
of flexible scheduling, such as short time modules
controlled by teachers or of block time designated for
subject-integrated teaching teams, is not evident in
Oklahoma middle schools. Since most of the middle schools
are completely departmentalized, the master schedule
consists of rigid time periods for specific classes. Of
the 114 respondent schools, 100 (89%) scored less than 50 on
Flexible Scheduling.

Intramural Activities was another area of very low
implementation. Responses to the MSPI items addressing this
practice generally required a choice between intramural and
interscholastic sports. As evidenced by the low mean
percentage score of 25.75 for Intramural Activities, the
emphasis in many Oklahoma middle schools is on
interscholastic sports. In fact, of the 114 respondent
schools, 44 (39%) reported no implementation of intramural
activities and another 26% of the schools scored less than
30% on this practice. Generally speaking, middle school
students in Oklahoma do not have the opportunity to
participate in organized team activities except within the
realm of competitive, interscholastic athletics, even
through intramural activities have consistently been
advocated as a must if a middle school program is to
successfully meet the needs of all of its students.

Another one of the State's lower scoring areas was
Creative Experiences. The total mean percentage score of

31.74 represents an implementation level equivalent to approximately one third of that recommended. Oklahoma middle schools are lacking in programs designed to provide middle school students with the opportunities to express themselves through creative, student-created and student-directed activities such as student newspapers, drama and musical productions, and talent shows.

The middle schools of Oklahoma scored mean percentages between 35 and 50 on five of the practices measured by the MSPI. Regarding Community Relations, the score of 35.49 represents a moderately low implementation level of programs which should include community service projects, an active parents' organization, and an efficient informational network. The respondent schools scored 40.47 on the practice of Auxiliary Staffing, indicating a higher, but still low, level of utilization of diversified personnel such as paid paraprofessionals, teacher aides, parent volunteers, and student aides within the middle school programs across the state.

Also falling into this range of scores were the practices of Independent Study (38.03), Continuous Progress (40.02), and Exploratory and Enrichment Studies (44.69). These areas are to some extent related to each other in that they are all influenced by how well the middle school program addresses the individual interests and academic progress of its students. These relatively low scores indicate that the middle school programs across the state do

not provide students with the individualized attention represented by a full implementation of these recommended middle school practices.

Eight practices measured by the MSPI instrument had mean percentage scores between 50 and 65. Although these are the practices on which the middle schools of Oklahoma scored the highest, they represent implementation at only one half to two thirds of the recommended levels. These eight practices include Social Experiences (53.26), Guidance (54.39), Physical Experiences (54.73), Security (55.71), Basic Learning Skills (56.99), Evaluation (58.40), Student Services (61.64), and Multi-Materials (64.09).

Regarding Social Experiences, middle school programs across the state produced a moderately high score. Factors which influenced this score include staff sponsorship of clubs, student participation in club activities, and school practices regarding dances and other social activities.

Middle school practices regarding Guidance also produced a moderately high score. This middle school practice takes into account the availability of guidance personnel to students, the development of group guidance activities, and the manner in which the counselors work with the teachers in providing guidance skills. The total mean percentage score of 54.39 was indicative of the fact that 40 of the sample schools had Guidance scores in the moderately high range and an additional 31 schools produced scores in the high range, including 9 schools that had

implementation levels of 100%.

The middle schools across the state also did relatively well in implementing those practices represented by the Physical Experiences items on the MSPI survey. Having physical education programs available to all students generated a major portion of the implementation level of 54.73% regarding this practice. Higher implementation scores could have been produced by having more individualized physical education instruction and by stressing both the developmental and competitive aspects of physical education.

The Student Security characteristic was designed to measure middle school practices directed toward providing each transescent with a teacher who relates to that student in a knowing and positive manner and with a supportive peer group that meets regularly. The mean percentage score of 55.71 was one of the higher scores of the 18 characteristics measured.

The Basic Learning Skills implementation level of 56.99 illustrated a moderately successful attempt by Oklahoma middle school educators to address specific problems in the basic skills development of their students. This recommended middle school practice was implemented to a greater degree than were other practices directed toward the individual needs and academic progress of students, such as Continuous Progress, Independent Study, and Exploratory and Enrichment. Only 14 sample schools had an implementation

level in the low range under 35%. This practice is similar
to Student Services, in that many of the practices it
attempts to measure are required by state and federal
regulations concerning special education and remedial
programs. Thus the higher score may not be as much
indicative of implementing recommended middle school
practices as it is of implementing mandated programs.

The Evaluation scores of the 114 respondent schools
produced a mean percentage score of 58.40, making it the
third highest MSPI sub-score. Even though it is one of the
more successfully implemented practices, it still does not
represent a high level of implementation of middle school
practices. An example of Evaluation would be the regular
use of parent-teacher-student conferences to evaluate
student progress on an individualized basis.

Student Services was another area of relatively high
scores for the respondent schools. With a mean percentage
score of 61.64, this was the second highest total score of
the 18 MSPI sub-scores. This practice was determined by
only one item on the survey, in which principals identified
certain specialized services available to their students.
These services included those provided by guidance
counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, speech
therapists, special reading teachers, special education
teachers, diagnosticians, and visiting teachers. Many of
these services are generally required by state or federal
regulations for most schools, making it difficult for any

school to not have a relatively high level of implementation for this practice.

Of the 18 practices measured by the MSPI, Oklahoma middle schools scored the highest on the Multi-Materials practice. Only 17 of the 114 respondent schools scored below 50% on this practice, while 55 schools had mean percentage scores above 65. Based upon these scores, teachers in the middle schools across the State of Oklahoma had easy access to instructional materials and supervised classroom activities designed around materials other than the basic textbooks. Oklahoma middle schools were reported to have ample numbers of volumes and a variety of instructional materials in their media centers which were frequently supervised by certified librarians. These characteristics produced a total mean percentage score of 64.09 for this practice.

Comparison of Implementation Levels

A second goal of this study was to determine what changes, if any, had been made in the degree to which the middle schools of Oklahoma have incorporated recommended practices into their programs. Earlier studies by Butler in 1983 and Jennings in 1985 had involved middle schools from across the state and had used the MSPI as the data gathering instrument. Table VI compares the mean scores obtained by those earlier studies with the scores in this current study.

TABLE VI

COMPARISON OF CURRENT MSPI MEAN PERCENTAGE SCORES
WITH THOSE FROM EARLIER OKLAHOMA STUDIES

Middle School Practice	Butler 1983* (n = 69)	Jennings 1985 (n = 72)	Thomas 1991 (n = 114)
Continuous Progress	50.00	49.00	40.02
Multi-Material	64.00	66.75	64.09
Flexible Schedule	20.00	25.31	28.76
Social Experiences	49.00	54.24	53.26
Physical Experiences	57.00	56.19	54.73
Intramural Activity	33.00	26.95	25.75
Team Teaching	19.00	18.93	22.67
Planned Gradualism	19.00	11.33	16.37
Exploratory and Enrichment	34.00	42.92	44.69
Guidance Services	75.00	64.08	54.39
Independent Study	41.00	32.18	38.03
Basic Learning Skills	56.00	54.44	56.99
Creative Experiences	40.00	38.47	31.74
Student Security	46.00	55.87	55.71
Evaluations	40.00	44.00	58.40
Community Relations	33.00	36.43	35.49
Student Services	75.00	63.88	61.64
Auxiliary Staff	44.62	42.28	43.51
Total MSPI	44.62	42.28	43.51

* Except for the Total MSPI score, the 1983 scores
were given in whole numbers.

As the data in Table VI indicate, there has been very little change in the overall implementation of recommended practices in the middle school programs of Oklahoma during the past eight years. This is especially evident by comparing the total MSPI scores of 44.62, 42.28, and 43.51. While there have been some changes within the specific practices, the overall pattern has remained relatively constant in the years between the different studies.

Of the 18 practices measured by the MSPI, 9 had experienced very little change in their mean percentage scores from 1983 until 1991. These practices that changed very little over the eight-year period include Multi-Material, Social Experiences, Physical Experiences, Team Teaching, Planned Gradualism, Independent Study, Basic Learning Skills, Community Relations, and Auxiliary Staff. Three of these practices did, however, show a "roller-coaster" effect. Planned Gradualism, Independent Study, and Auxiliary Staff each dropped 8 to 10 points between 1983 and 1985 and then rose 5 or 6 mean percentage points between 1985 and 1991.

Oklahoma middle schools registered a decline in the degree of implementation for five of the practices. A slight but steady drop of 5 percentage points was recorded for Intramural Activity, and a drop of just over 8 percentage points accompanied the scores for Creative Experiences. The score for Continuous Progress stayed steady for the first two surveys, but dropped 9 points by

the current survey. A steady decline accompanied the
practice of Student Services as it fell from 75.00 in 1983,
to 63.88 in 1985, and then to 61.64 in 1991. The largest
change in any of the practices occurred in Guidance
Services as it dropped 20.6 points between 1983 and 1991.

Noticeable gains were made in four areas. A steady
increase in the scores associated with Flexible Schedule
resulted in a net gain of 8.8 percentage points. Similar
percentage increases were noted for Exploratory and
Enrichment (10.7) and Student Security (9.7). The only
substantial increase registered between 1983 and 1991
accompanied the practice of Evaluation, for which the
implementation level from 40% in 1983, to 44% in 1985, and
then to 58.4% in 1991, for a total increase of over 18
percentage points.

While it is interesting to note these specific changes,
the overall picture illustrates that actually very little
change has occurred in Oklahoma concerning the
implementation of the middle school concept. The total MSPI
scores for the three surveys were in the low implementation
level, all clustered around 43% for the recommended
practices. On those practices for which the middle schools
of Oklahoma scored very low in 1983 and in 1985, such as
Flexible Schedule, Intramural Activity, Team Teaching, and
Planned Gradualism, they continued to score very low in
1991. Likewise, on those characteristics for which the
Oklahoma middle schools fared better during the earlier

surveys, such as Multi-Material, Physical Experiences, Basic
learning Skills, and Student Services, they continued at
similar levels in 1991.

Measurements of School Climate

Another goal of this study was to determine if there
was a significant difference in school climate, as perceived
by teachers, between schools that had a higher level of
implementation of recommended middle school practices and
schools that had a lower level of implementation. The
identification of the high and low schools was determined by
their composite MSPI scores, with the highest and lowest 10%
of the respondent schools being selected to participate in
the school climate portion of this study.

The MSPI mean percentage scores for the high and low
groups of schools are presented in Table VII. The group of
schools representing the high level of implementation of
recommended practices had an average MSPI score of 62.55,
compared to an average score of 27.26 for the low group of
schools. The high group of schools produced implementation
levels of greater than 65% for 9 of the practices and scored
below the 50th percentile on only 4 practices. The group of
high implementation levels schools did very well on the
practices of Continuous Progress, Multi-Material, Guidance
Services, Student Security, and Student Services. The low
level of implementation schools revealed implementation
levels below one third of that possible for 10 of the 18

TABLE VII

COMPARISON OF THE MSPI SCORES FOR THE HIGH
AND LOW IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL SCHOOLS

| Middle School Practices | Implementation Level Schools | |
	High	Low
Continuous Progress	80.83	30.11
Multi-Material	78.00	51.33
Flexible Schedule	39.75	16.56
Social Experiences	62.92	42.22
Physical Experiences	69.67	46.22
Intramural Activity	47.17	2.33
Team Teaching	61.58	0.00
Planned Gradualism	30.67	0.00
Exploratory and Enrichment	69.33	37.78
Guidance Services	70.67	40.11
Independent Study	50.00	18.22
Basic Learning Skills	53.33	40.89
Creative Experiences	65.42	12.22
Student Security	70.08	23.78
Evaluations	63.33	41.78
Community Relations	60.67	18.89
Student Services	84.58	53.00
Auxiliary Staff	67.92	15.56
Total MSPI	62.55	27.26

practices. Very low scores accompanied the low group for
the practices of Flexible Schedule, Intramural Activity,
Team Teaching, Planned Gradualism, Creative Experiences, and
Auxiliary Staff. The high group of schools had
implementation levels of at least 50 percentage points
higher than the low group for four practices: Continuous
Progress, Team Teaching, Creative Experiences, and Auxiliary
Staff.

The group profiles of the teachers' perceptions of
school climate for both the low and high implementation
level schools are presented in Figure I. Figure I shows the
specific data obtained from this study plotted on a
reproduction of the sample printout provided in the CASE
Examiner's Manual. As indicated by the visual, both groups
of schools scored very close to the national norm on all ten
subscales. The high group of schools scored higher on seven
of the ten school climate indicators, and less than one
point separated the two groups on the other three scores.

The mean scores and standard deviations for the ten
school climate subscales for both the low and high
implementation level schools are presented in Table VIII.
The school climate subscale scores for the low group of
schools ranged from 47.67 for Student Behavior Values to a
high of 52.11 for Security and Maintenance. Only one of the
ten subscale scores for the low group of schools was
substantially above the national norm of 50. The climate
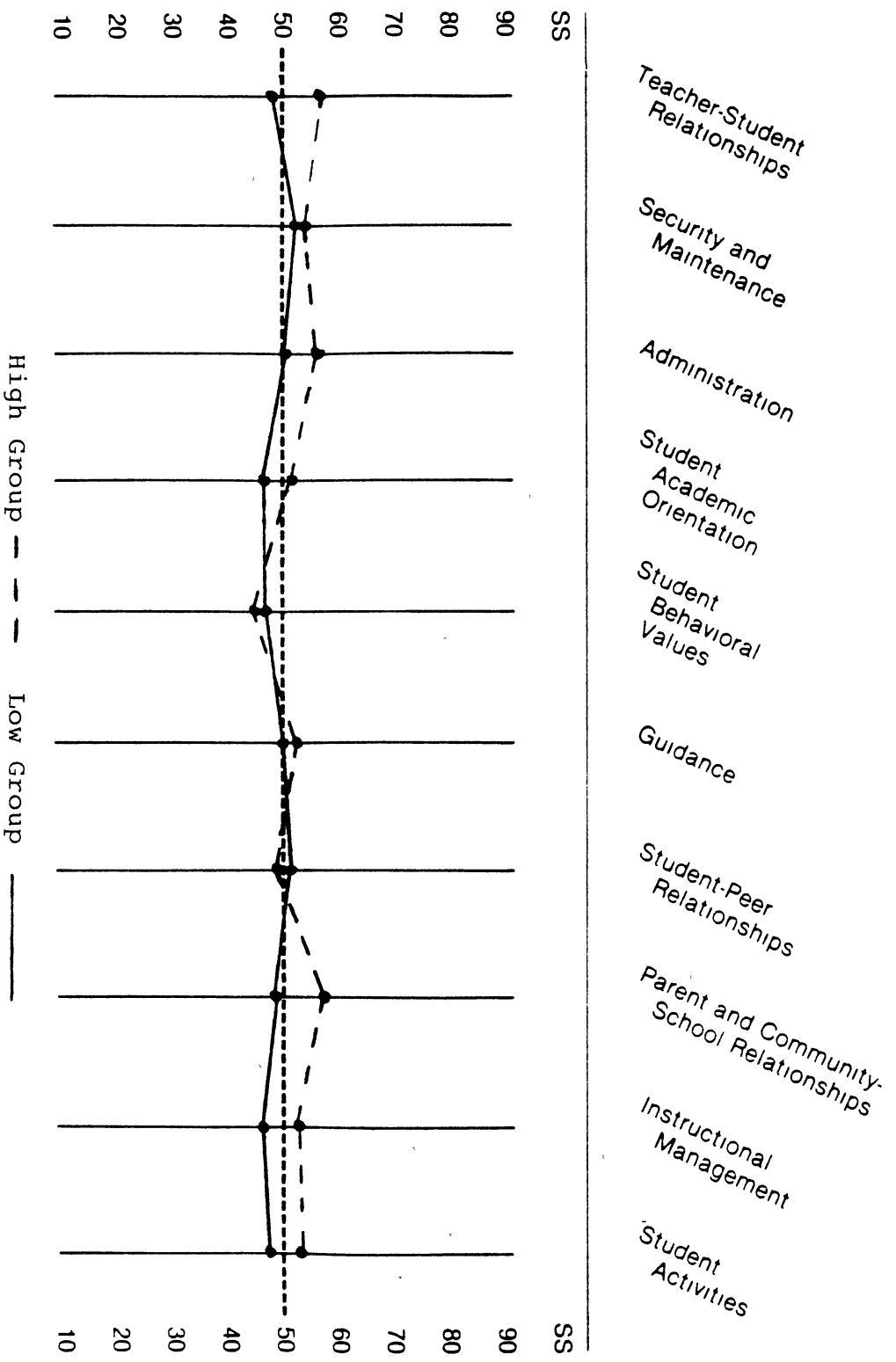
Figure 1. Group Profiles of School Climate Indicators

High Group — — —   Low Group ————

TABLE VIII

COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE FOR HIGH AND LOW MSPI IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL SCHOOLS

| School Climate Subscales | Implementation Level Schools | | | | |
| | High (n = 12) | | Low (n = 9) | | |
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-Score
Teacher-Student Relationships	54.92	4.14	49.78	5.97	-2.33 *
Security and Maintenance	51.25	8.74	52.11	6.03	-0.25
Administration	54.42	7.00	50.11	5.23	-1.55
Student Academic Orientation	50.58	6.97	47.67	6.48	-0.98
Student Behavior Values	46.83	4.53	47.67	3.74	-0.45
Guidance	51.42	5.35	50.11	4.62	-0.59
Student-Peer Relationships	49.58	5.98	50.44	5.36	-0.34
Parent and Community-School Relationships	55.42	6.11	49.11	4.83	-2.55 *
Instructional Management	51.50	6.60	47.22	3.31	-1.78
Student Activities	51.08	3.78	48.56	4.22	-1.44

* Significant at the .05 level.

subscale scores for the group of schools scoring higher on their level of implementation of middle school practices ranged from a low of 46.83 for Student Behavior Values to a high of 55.42 for Parent and Community-School Relationship. Only Student Behavior Values (46.83), which measures teachers' perceptions about student self-discipline and tolerance for others, was under the national norm.

Although the high group of schools had scored higher on seven of the subscales, the differences for only two of the indicators proved to be statistically significant. A significant difference was noted at the .05 level for the subscales of Teacher-Student Relationships and for Parent and Community-School Relationships.

Correlations Between Middle School Practices
and School Climate Indicators

The last data analysis pertaining to this study was designed to determine if significant relationships existed between the levels of implementation for recommended middle school practices and the indicators of school climate. A correlational analysis involving the 18 middle school practices measured by the MSPI and the 10 subscales of the NASSP School Climate Survey was conducted. The statistical analysis identified 19 significant relationships between the recommended middle school practices and the school climate indicators. Table IX presents a summary of these identified significant relationships.

TABLE IX

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
MIDDLE SCHOOL PRACTICES AND SCHOOL
CLIMATE INDICATORS

Middle School Practices	r	p	School Climate Indicators
Continuous Progress	.425	.055	Parents and Community-School Relationships
Social Experiences	.521	.015	Instructional Management
Exploratory & Enrichment	.598	.004	Teacher-Student Relationships
	.542	.011	Administration
	.434	.050	Guidance
	.677	.001	Parents and Community-School Relationships
	.517	.016	Instructional Management
Guidance	.468	.032	Guidance
Creative Experiences	.725	.001	Teacher-Student Relationships
	.654	.001	Administration
	.658	.001	Student Academic Orientation
	.705	.001	Parent and Community-School Relationships
	.538	.012	Instructional Management
Evaluation	.430	.052	Teacher-Student Relationships
	.478	.028	Administration
	.500	.021	Parent and Community-School Relationships
	.478	.028	Instructional Management
	.448	.042	Student Activities
Auxiliary Services	.583	.006	Parent and Community-School Relationships

Of the 18 recommended middle school practices, 7 had statistically significant relationships with the indicators of school climate. Three practices, Exploratory and Enrichment, Creative Experiences, and Evaluation, were each significantly related to five school climate indicators. The other four middle school practices, Continuous Progress, Social Experiences, Guidance, and Auxiliary Services, were each related to one school climate indicator.

Of the 10 school climate indicators, 7 had significant correlation coefficients when compared with the middle school practices. Parent and Community-School Relationships was significantly related to five of the middle school practices, followed by Instructional Management which had significant relationships with four of the middle school practices. Two of the school climate indicators, Teacher-Student Relationships and Administration, had significant correlations with three of the recommended practices. The school climate indicator Guidance was related to two of the middle school practices, with the remaining two indicators showing significant relationships with only one middle school practice each.

Summary

The results of this study found the level of implementation of recommended middle school practices in the State of Oklahoma to be low. The respondent middle schools implemented the recommended middle school practices at a

level of 43.51 percent of what would be considered full implementation of the identified practices as measured by the MSPI. The mean percentage scores for the individual practices ranged from a low of 16.37 for Planned Gradualism to a high of 64.09 for Multi-Material.

There has been very little change in the overall implementation of recommended practices in the middle school programs of Oklahoma during the past eight years. Of the 18 practices measured by the MSPI, 9 experienced very little change, 5 registered a decline, and 4 had an increase in their mean percentage scores among the three studies. The greatest decline was registered for Guidance with a decrease of over 20 percentage points between 1983 and 1991. The largest increase was recorded for the practice of Evaluation with an increase of more than 18 percentage points in its implementation level. Other than these few exceptions, however, very little change has actually occurred in Oklahoma concerning the implementation of the middle school concept.

The examination of the differences between the perceptions of teachers from high level of implementation schools and teachers from low level of implementation schools regarding school climate produced some promising results. The high level of implementation schools scored higher on seven of the ten school climate indicators, while less than one point separated the two groups on the other three scores. A significant difference was noted at the .05

level for two subscales.

A correlational analysis identified 19 significant relationships between the recommended middle school practices and the school climate indicators. Seven of the 18 recommended middle school practices had statistically significant relationships with the indicators of school climate, while seven of the 10 school climate indicators had significant relationships with the middle school practices.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS
AND COMMENTARY

This final chapter of the study provides an overview
of the entire process. The first portion contains a summary
of the study, including purpose, design, and findings.
Then, two separate sections are used to report the
conclusions and recommendations that were derived from the
findings. The final portion of the chapter contains a
commentary which reflects on the current and future status
of middle level education.

Summary

The middle school movement emerged in the 1960s from
the criticism of the organizational structure and
instructional program of the junior high school. The middle
school concept provided alternatives to those
characteristics of the junior high school which many
educators perceived to be inappropriate for early
adolescents. This philosophy, and the new organizational
structure which accompanied it, was widely accepted across
the country. The increase in the number of middle schools
has been impressive. However, the actual implementation of

97

recommended middle school practices has not been as
successful.

This study was designed to assess the current status of
middle schools in Oklahoma. A significant part of this
study was devoted to determining the level of implementation
of middle school practices. This information was then used
to compare the current level of implementation with levels
identified in earlier studies. The second purpose of this
study was to determine whether a relationship existed
between the level of implementation of middle school
practices and school climate. School climate is an area in
which there have been found to be sharp distinctions
between more effective and less effective schools.
Therefore, this study was designed to specifically address
the following four research questions.

1. What is the current level of implementation of
recommended middle school practices across the state of
Oklahoma?

2. How does the current level of implementation of
recommended middle school practices compare to the earlier
studies of Butler (1983) and Jennings (1985)?

3. Is there a significant difference in school
climate, as perceived by teachers, in schools that have a
higher level of implementation of recommended middle school
practices as compared to schools that have a lower level of
implementation?

4. What significant relationships exist between the

levels of implementation of the 18 specific recommended middle school practices and the 10 areas of school climate?

Two different instruments were used to collect data for this study. The level of implementation of selected middle school concepts was measured by the Middle School Practices Index. The MSPI collects data relative to 18 identified recommended middle school practices. The NASSP School Climate Survey was used to identify teachers' perceptions of the school environment. This instrument produced standardized scores for 10 subscales.

The population for this study consisted of the 153 schools identified as middle schools by the 1989-90 Oklahoma Educational Directory. This number included all schools with grades 5-6-7, 5-6-7-8, 6-7, 7-8, or 6-7-8 as listed in the directory. The MSPI was mailed to the principals of the sample middle schools. Surveys were returned from 114 schools, representing 75% of the total population of middle schools. Two subgroups of respondent schools were then identified for the analysis of school climate. The 10% of the respondents (12 schools) which had scored highest on the MSPI were designated as the high level of implementation schools, and the lowest scoring 10% (12 schools) were labeled as the low level of implementation schools. The teachers of these schools were asked to complete the school climate survey. Completed surveys were received from all 12 of the high group schools and 9 of the 10 low group schools (The administration of two schools had declined to allow

such participation).

Current Level of Implementation

The results of the MSPI showed a relatively low level of implementation of recommended middle school practices in such schools in the State of Oklahoma. The mean percentage scores for the individual practices ranged from a low of 16.37 for Planned Gradualism to 64.09 for Multi-Material. The mean of the 18 individual percentage scores was 43.51, showing that the respondent schools, as a group, provided evidence that the recommended middle school practices had been implemented at less than one half of the possible level of implementation.

Comparison With Earlier Studies

There has been very little change in the overall degree of implementation of recommended practices in the middle school programs of Oklahoma during the past eight years. This is especially evident by comparing the total MSPI scores obtained by three studies. Butler (1983) found the level of implementation to register a mean percentage score of 44.62, while Jennings (1985) determined the total mean percentage to be 42.28. The current level of implementation was computed at 43.51.

Of the 18 practices measured by the MSPI, 9 had experienced very little change in their mean percentage scores. Oklahoma middle schools registered a drop in 5 of

the practices, while noticeable gains were found in the 4 remaining practices. On those practices for which the middle schools of Oklahoma had scored very low in 1983 and 1985, they continued to score very low in 1991. Likewise, on those characteristics for which the Oklahoma middle schools had fared better during the earlier surveys, they continued to do better in 1991.

Measurements of School Climate

The school climate subscale scores for the low implementation group of schools ranged from 47.67 for Student Behavior Values to a high of 52.11 for Security and Maintenance, with 6 of the 10 subscale scores being slightly under the national norm of 50. The subscale scores for the group of schools scoring higher on their level of implementation of middle school practices ranged from a low of 46.83 for Student Behavior Values to a high of 55.42 for Parent and Community-School Relationship. Nine of the 10 subscale scores for this group were at or slightly above the national norm of 50. Only Student Behavior Values, which measures teachers´ perceptions about student self-discipline and tolerance for others, was under the national norm.

Although the high group of schools had scored higher on seven of the subscales, on only two of the indicators were the differences found to be statistically significant. A significant difference was noted at the .05 level for the

subscales of Teacher-Student Relationships and Parent and Community-School Relationships.

Significant Relationships

The analysis identified 19 statistically significant relationships between the recommended middle school practices and the school climate indicators. Of the 18 recommended middle school practices, 7 had statistically significant relationships with indicators of school climate. Three practices, Exploratory and Enrichment, Creative Experiences, and Evaluation, were each significantly related to 5 school climate indicators. Of the 10 school climate indicators, 7 were found to have significant correlation coefficients with middle school practices. Parent and Community-School Relationships was significantly related to 5 of the middle school practices and Instructional Management was found to have significant relationship to 4 of the middle school practices.

Conclusions

1. The middle school continues to be a popular organizational option for grades from five through eight. The number of middle schools continues to grow. However, there is a wide variance within statistics that attempt to describe such schools. There is very little uniformity among Oklahoma middle schools concerning both demographic characteristics and instructional programs.

2. The middle school programs found in Oklahoma exist
more in name only than in the actual implementation of
accepted middle school practices. As evident by the total
MSPI mean percentage score of 43.51, Oklahoma middle schools
do not display to a high degree the characteristics that
have come to be commonly accepted as indicative of a true
middle school program.

3. On a statewide basis, there has been virtually no
change in the implementation level of recommended practices
within the middle school programs during the past eight
years. This is based upon the comparison of studies
completed in 1983 and 1985 with this current study.

4. Middle school practices and school climate
indicators are related. Whether the implementation of
practices influences school climate or vice versa, there is
a degree of commonality between the two conceptual entities.
Of the 10 school climate indicators, 7 were found to be
higher in the schools which had implemented middle school
practices to a higher degree.

5. Positive relationships between the school and the
community and between students and teachers are very
important aspects of successful middle level programs. This
was strongly indicated by the statistically significant
scores in both the comparison of school climate indicators
for high and low implementation level schools and the
correlational analysis of middle school practices and school
climate indicators.

6. Programs designed to specifically provide for a smooth transition from elementary school to high school are virtually nonexistent in the middle school programs of Oklahoma. This is evident by the extremely low mean percentage scores obtained for Planned Gradualism, Flexible Schedules, and Continuous Progress.

7. The middle school programs in Oklahoma do not incorporate curricular factors designed to address the individual needs of their students with a curriculum that emphasizes variety, student interests and student participation. This is evident by the low scores in the areas of Exploratory and Enrichment, Independent Study, and Creative Experiences.

8. The middle school programs of Oklahoma generally do not include intramural activities designed to provide students with the opportunity to participate in physical activities and to discover talents without the pressures of interscholastic sports, as evident by the mean percentage score of 25.75 for Intramural Activity.

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

This study was conducted with the intent to enhance the field of professional knowledge concerning the nature and quality of education for transescent learners. Directed toward this goal, the following recommendations are made for consideration by researchers and practitioners.

1. Studies should continue to be conducted which

identify successful middle school programs and then analyze the different components and recommended practices which exist within those schools. An indepth ethnographic study of this nature could possibly promote the middle school concept with positive examples of successful programs.

2. Related studies should be conducted which identify middle school programs that have been in existence for longer periods of time and then investigate the programs which exist within those schools. Since the number of middle schools continues to increase, many of the schools included in a statewide survey may not have been in existence for very long. The exclusion of these recently converted schools from a comparative study could provide more useful knowledge concerning changes in the implementation of middle school practices over a period of time.

3. Additional investigations of school climate and its relationship to middle level educational programs could prove to be most beneficial. Studies which include the perceived views of students, teachers, administrators, and parents would provide additional understanding of the possible relationships between school climate and middle level programs.

4. A middle school self-evaluation could be included in the annual accreditation report submitted by each school to the State Department of Education. This evaluation could be developed around the Middle School Regulations currently

published in the <u>Administrators' Handbook</u>. The Philosophy
and Purpose section and the Middle School Progress Criteria
section address many of the recommended characteristics.
Such an evaluation would provide administrators and other
interested parties with more immediate information regarding
the type and extent of implementation of recommended middle
school practices.

5. As part of the requirements for receiving a middle
school/junior high school endorsement on teaching
certificates, the State Department of Education may need to
require professional study or other training that would
provide teachers with a better understanding of the needs of
the transescent learner. Currently the endorsement is based
solely upon completing a determined number of hours in a
specific field of study and passing a competency test in
that area.

6. The State Department of Education needs to review
its grade organization criteria and develop new middle
school standards which include all relevant grade
organizations. Currently there is no accreditation per se
for schools with grades 5-6-7-8 and 5-6-7, even though a few
such schools are listed in the <u>Oklahoma School Directory</u>.

7. Colleges of Education need to provide courses which
focus upon the unique characteristics of transescent
learners and their educational needs. These should be
incorporated within the teacher training and administrator
training programs for those individuals who will eventually

be certified to work with middle school students.

8. Practicing administrators need to assess the level of implementation of recommended practices at their particular schools and develop plans of action to address those practices most pertinent and of concern to their students and communities. Short-term goals might address those practices for which greater implementation will not require major revisions of the current curriculum. Long-term goals might involve those practices requiring major changes, for example in the master schedule and current curriculum. Community awareness and teacher inservice should be important aspects of any such plan of action.

9. School administrators and teachers must address the need for positive community relations as an important building block of a successful middle level program. A well-planned public relations program needs to be developed and implemented which not only encourages interaction among students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members, but also serves as a mechanism for articulating the needs of middle school students and the goals of the school.

10. Administrators and teachers need to be involved in professional organizations committed to appropriate middle level education. Both the National Education Association and the National Association for Secondary School Principals have made strong commitments to middle level education. Along with the National Middle School Association, these organizations have a vast array of available materials and

services which could greatly enhance professional
understanding and clearer articulation of the middle school
concept.

Commentary

This study has focused upon the status of the middle
school movement in the State of Oklahoma, specifically
addressing the implementation of recommended practices and
their relationships to school climate. A couple of
important points of interest need to be directed toward
these central issues. First, it should be noted that not
all of the 18 recommended middle school practices are unique
to middle level education. In fact, such programmatic
characteristics as multi-material approaches to instruction,
guidance services for all students, appropriate evaluations
of student progress, and effective community relations
programs are vital to successful schools at any level.
Unfortunately, those recommended practices which are unique
to the middle school concept, such as flexible scheduling,
intramural activities, planned gradualism from elementary
school to high school, and cooperative or team teaching, are
the ones of which the middle schools of Oklahoma have been
the least successful in implementing.

Secondly, the analysis of school climate between high
and low levels of implementation schools was somewhat
limited by the range of MSPI scores produced by Oklahoma
middle schools. There was not a strong representation of

schools with high levels of implementation. Since
statistical relationships were found in this study between
the recommended practices and perceptions of school climate,
these relationships could prove to be even more evident
among middle level schools which have high levels of
implementation of recommended practices.

This study has entailed a great deal of reading and
thought concerning the educational possibilities for a group
of students with unique characteristics and needs unlike any
other student population found in our public schools today.
But, as this study and others have concluded, for many of
these students the middle school concept is still only a
possibility. The middle school movement is well over 25
years old, and yet practices often continue as before. The
organization of grades has changed, the names have changed,
but the expectations of many of the people involved have not
changed. This is true not only of teachers and
administrators, but of students, parents, and community
members.

Is change possible? The answer must be a resounding
"yes" and there has been no greater opportunity than the
present to participate in these changes. The future of the
American educational system has recently become a major
political concern at all levels. Such issues as dropout
rates, declining test scores, latchkey students,
economically and academically at-risk students, loss of
local control, and inadequate educational funding have

brought the public schools to the forefront of public
attention and debate. Maybe expectations are beginning to
change. People are starting to see a need for their schools
to change, a need for schools to more appropriately address
the needs of their students. This is specifically true of
the State of Oklahoma with the recent completion of the
"Task Force 2000" report and adoption of legislation
directed toward long-term school reforms. These reforms
address such areas as innovative classroom activities,
individual and group guidance programs, improving media
centers, parent and student input in school policy-making,
and overall community and school relationships. Yes,
expectations are changing.

As expectations change, opportunities emerge. The
task for educators is to fill the void with progressive
ideas and innovations. The middle school concept provides a
ready vehicle for such educational ideas, including these
examples:

--An advisor-advisee or homeroom program designed to
deliver guidance activities to students on a regular basis
can easily include the drug awareness and AIDS education
mandates placed upon schools today, as well as an unlimited
number of guidance activities devoted to such topics as peer
pressure, study habits, and student discipline.

--An interdisciplinary or "teaming" approach to the
curriculum will make learning more meaningful and relevant
for at-risk students, as well as for other students.

--Intramural programs, exploratory classes, and club activities designed to provide appropriate physical, academic, and social activities for students might improve students' interests in school and slow the subsequent dropout rate experienced by our public schools today.

In essence, educators must seize the opportunities which accompany the demands of society, the mandates of politicians, and the changing expectations of interested parties to begin and/or improve the middle level programs available to students. Administrators must take the leadership role in this endeavor. They are in positions from which to effectively articulate the goals and objectives of the middle school movement to staff and community, to obtain needed resources and commitments, to provide the necessary staff development activities, and to provide the long-range planning and foresight to make these opportunities become realities.

This is not just optimistic idealism. There already are districts within Oklahoma that have very good middle schools with unique programs designed to meet the needs of their transescent learners. Some of the schools surveyed and visited during this study have exemplary exploratory programs, excellent media centers, group guidance programs, organized intramurals, individual learning activities, effective staff development programs, and excellent community relations. One excellent middle school program is designed around the concept of "teaming", which involves a

group of students assigned to a specific group of teachers who meet daily to plan interdisciplinary instructional units, discuss academic successes and failures, identify potential student problems, and develop cooperative guidance activities.

Yes, there are success stories to be found within the middle school programs of Oklahoma. But it will take some time and much effort before the benefits of the middle school movement can be shared by the majority of students attending middle level schools across the State of Oklahoma.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

RIEGLE'S 18 MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPLES

RIEGLE'S 18 MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPLES

Continuous progress: The middle school program should
feature a nongraded organization that allows students to
progress at their own individual rate regardless of
chronological age.

Multi-material approach: The middle school program should
provide a wide range of easily accessible instructional
materials. Classroom activities should be planned around a
multi-material approach rather than a basic textbook
organization.

Flexible schedules: The middle school should provide a
schedule that encourages the investment of time based on
educational needs rather than standardized time periods.
The schedule should be employed as a teaching aid rather
than a control device.

Social experiences: The middle school program should
provide social experiences appropriate for the transescent
youth and should not emulate the social experiences of the
senior high school.

Physical experiences: The middle school curricular and co-
curricular programs should provide physical activities based
solely on the needs of the students. A broad range of
intramural experiences that provide physical activity for
all students should be provided to supplement the physical
education classes, which should center their activity upon
helping students understand and use their own bodies.

Intramural activities: The middle school should feature
intramural activities rather than interscholastic
activities.

Team teaching: The middle school program should be
organized around team teaching patterns that allow students
to interact with a variety of teachers in a wide range of
subject areas.

Planned gradualism: The middle school should provide
experiences that assist early adolescents in making the
transition from childhood dependence to adult independence,

thereby helping them to bridge the gap between elementary school and senior high school.

Exploratory and enrichment studies: The middle school program should be broad enough to meet the individual interests of the students for which it was designed. It should widen the range of educational training a student experiences rather than specialize his training. Elective courses should be a part of the program of every student during his years in the middle school.

Guidance services: The middle school program should include both group and individual guidance services for all students.

Independent study: The middle school program should provide the opportunity for students to spend time studying individual interests or needs that do not appear in the organized curricular offerings.

Basic skill repair and extension: The middle school program should provide opportunities for students to receive clinical help in basic learning skills. The basic education program fostered in the elementary school should be extended in the middle school.

Creative experiences: The middle school program should include opportunities for students to express themselves in creative manners. Student newspapers, student dramatic creations, student oratorical creations, musical programs, and other student-centered, student-directed, student-developed activities should be encouraged.

Security factor: The middle school program should provide every student with a security group: a teacher that knows him well and whom he relates to in a positive manner; a peer group that meets regularly and represents more than administrative convenience in its use of time.

Evaluation: The middle school program should provide an evaluation of a student's work that is personal, positive in nature, non-threatening, and strictly individualized. Parent-teacher-student conferences on a scheduled and unscheduled basis should be the basic reporting method. Competitive letter grade evaluation forms should be replaced with open and honest pupil-teacher-parent communications.

Community relations: The middle school should develop and
maintain a varied program of community relations. Programs
to inform, to entertain, to educate, and to understand the
community as well as other activities should be a part of
the basic operation of the school.

Student services: The middle school program should provide
a broad spectrum of specialized services for students.
Community, county, and state agencies should be utilized to
expand the range of specialists to its broadest possible
extent.

Auxiliary services: The middle school program should
utilize a highly diversified array of personnel such as
volunteer parents, teacher aides, clerical aides, student
volunteers and other similar types of support staffing that
help to facilitate the teaching staff.

(Riegle, 1971, pp. 43-45).

APPENDIX B

<u>MIDDLE SCHOOL PRACTICES INDEX</u>

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRACTICES INDEX

Part I: Place a mark before the answer that seems best to explain your current program as it relates to the question.

1. Continuous progress programs are:

   ____ not used at this time.
   ____ used only with special groups.
   ____ used only for the first two years.
   ____ used only by some students for all their years at the school.
   ____ used by all of the students for their entire program.

2. Continuous progress programs are planned for a student over a span of:

   ____ 1 calendar year   ____ 2 calendar years   ____ 3 calendar years.

3. The multi-textbook approach to learning is currently:

   ____ used in all or nearly all courses.
   ____ used in most courses.
   ____ used in a few courses.
   ____ not used in any course.

4. The instructional materials center in the building houses:

   ____ more than 5000 books.   ____ between 4000 & 3000 books.
   ____ between 3000 & 2000 books   ____ between 2000 & 1000 books.
   ____ less than 1000 books.

5. The materials center has a paid staff of:

   ____ more than 1 certified liberian.   ____ one certified librarian.
   ____ a part-time librarian.   ____ no certified librarian help.

6. For classroom instruction, audio visual materials other than films and videos are used:

   ____ very frequently by most of the staff.
   ____ very frequently by a few of the staff and occasionally by the others.
   ____ occasionally by all the staff.
   ____ very rarely by most of the staff.
   ____ very rarely by any of the staff.

7. The basic time block used to build the schedule is:

   ____ 10 to 20 minute module.   ____ a 30 minute module.
   ____ a 45 minute module.   ____ a 60 minute module.
   ____ a combination of time so diversified that no basic module is defined.

8. Which of the below best describes your schedule at present:

   ____ traditional
   ____ traditional, modified by "block-time", "revolving period", or other such regularly occurring modifications.
   ____ flexible to the degree that all periods are scheduled but not identified in length.
   ____ flexible to the degree that changes occur within designed time limits.
   ____ flexible to the degree that students and teachers control the daily time usage and changes occur regularly.
   ____ other _____
        (Attach a copy of the master schedule if possible)

9. Sponsorships for club activities are handled by staff members who:

   ____ are assigned sponsorships without additional pay.
   ____ are paid to assume club sponsorships that are assigned.
   ____ volunteer to sponsor club activities without pay.
   ____ are paid for sponsorships that they volunteer to assume.
   ____ staff members do not work with club activities.

10. At present approximately what percent of your student body regularly participate in at least one club activity?

_____ 75 to 100 percent   _____ 50 to 75 percent
_____ 25 to 50 percent   _____ 25 percent or less
_____ none, as we have no club program

11. The physical education program is:

_____ highly individualized   _____ moderately individualized.
_____ slightly individualized.   _____ not individualized at all.

12. Inter-scholastic competition is currently:

_____ not offered at this school.   _____ offered in one sport only.
_____ offered in two sports.   _____ offered in several sports.

13. Intramural activities often use the same facilities as interscholastic activities. When this causes a time conflict, how do you schedule?

_____ this does not happen because we have no intramural programs.
_____ this does not happen because we have no interscholastic programs.
_____ intramural activities take first priority and others schedule around their needs.
_____ interscholastic activities take first priority and others must schedule around their needs.
_____ other _____

14. Team teaching programs operate for:

_____ all students.   _____ nearly all students.
_____ about half of the students.   _____ only a few students.
_____ none of the students.

15. What percentage of your staff is involved in team teaching programs?

_____ over 90 percent   _____ between 60 and 90 percent
_____ between 30 and 60 percent   _____ less than 30 percent
_____ none.

16. A student in grade six averages about how many minutes per day in a team teaching program?

_____ 180 minutes or more.   _____ between 130 and 180 minutes.
_____ between 90 and 130 minutes.   _____ between 40 and 90 minutes.
_____ less than 40 minutes.

17. A student in grades seven or eight averages about how many minutes per day in a team taught situation?

_____ 180 minutes or more.   _____ between 130 and 180 minutes.
_____ between 90 and 130 minutes.   _____ between 40 and 90 minutes.
_____ less than 40 minutes.

18. Which of the following best describes your school program as it evolves from enrollment to completion of the last grade?

_____ completely self-contained program for the entire grade span.
_____ completely departmentalized for the entire grade span.
_____ modified departmentalized (block-time, core programs, etc.)
_____ program moves from largely self-contained to departmentalized.
_____ program moves from largely self-contained to partially departmentalized
_____ other _____

19. Instruction in art is required for all students for:

_____ one year   _____ two years.
_____ three years.   _____ not at all.

20. Instruction in music is required:

_____ for one year.   _____ for two years.
_____ for three years.   _____ not at all.

21. The amount of time set aside for elective courses students may select:

_____ decreases with each successive grade.
_____ in the same for all grades.
_____ increases with each successive grade.
_____ varies by grade level but not in any systematic manner.
_____ does not exist at any grade level.

22. Guidance services are available upon request for:

_____ all students every day.
_____ all students nearly every day.
_____ most of the students on a regular basis.
_____ a limited number of students on a limited basis.
_____ other _____

23. Guidance staff members:

_____ always work closely with the teachers concerning a student.
_____ often work closely with the teachers concerning a student.
_____ seldom involve the teachers in their work with the students.
_____ always work independently of the teachers.

24. Guidance counselors are:

_____ not expected to help teachers build their guidance skills.
_____ expected to help teachers build their guidance skills.
_____ expected to help teachers build their guidance skills and they are regularly encouraged to work in this area.
_____ other _____

25. Clinics or special classes to treat the problems of students with poor basic learning skills are:

_____ not available at this time.
_____ available to all students needing such help.
_____ available only to the most critically handicapped learners.
_____ others _____

26. The amount of time provided in the classroom for instruction in basic learning skills:

_____ increases with each successive grade.
_____ remains constant with each successive grade.
_____ decreases with each successive grade.
_____ varies greatly due to the individualized program teachers operate.

27. Concerning a school newspaper, our school has:

_____ no official student school paper.
_____ an official student paper with no more than 4 issues per year.
_____ an official student paper that publishes 5 or more issues per year.
_____ other _____

28. Concerning school dramatical activities, most students:

_____ do not get experience in creative dramatics while enrolled in this building.
_____ get at least one or two opportunities to use their acting skills while enrolled in this building.

29. Dramatic productions at this school are produced from:

____ purchased scripts only.
____ materials written by students only.
____ materials written by students and purchased scripts.
____ other _____

30. This school has oratorical activities such as debate, public address, etc.:

____ as a part of its planned program of instruction.
____ as a part of its enrichment program.
____ not included in school activities.
____ other _____

31. Talents shows are:

____ not a part of our program.
____ produced by students at each grade level.
____ produced once a year on an all-school basis.
____ produced at each grade level with some of the acts entering an all-
     all-school talent show.
____ acts entering an all-school talent show.
____ other _____

32. In the operational design of this school the role of the teacher as a
    guidance person is:

____ given a very strong emphasis.
____ encouraged.
____ mentioned to the staff but not emphasized.
____ left strictly to the individual teacher's personal motivation.
____ not important in our guidance plan and therefore not encouraged.
____ other _____

33. As a general policy, in the teacher-pupil relationship:

____ no formal provisions are made for the teacher to provide specific
     guidance services.
____ teachers are expected to provide guidance services for all
     of their pupils.
____ teachers are expected to provide guidance services for only a limited
     number of pupils.
____ other _____

34. A student's academic progress is formally reported to parents:

____ two times per year   ____ four times per year
____ six times per year   ____ other _____

35. Parent-teacher or parent-teacher-student conferences are held on a school-
    wide basis:

____ not at all.   ____ once per year.
____ twice per year.   ____ three times per year.
____ four times per year.   ____ five or more times per year.

36. Community service projects by the students are:

____ not a part of our program.
____ carried out occasionally for a special purpose.
____ an important part of the planned experiences for all students while
     enrolled in this building.

37. This school currently has:

____ no parent's organization.
____ a parent's organization that is relatively inactive.
____ a parent's organization that is active.
____ a parent's organization that is very active.

Part II: For each question in this section check all the answers
          that apply.

38. Which of the following types of materials are housed in your instructional
    materials center?

    ____ general library books.
    ____ current newspapers.
    ____ below grade level reading material.
    ____ current magazines.
    ____ files of past issues of newspapers.
    ____ above grade level reading materials.
    ____ card catalogue of materials housed.
    ____ student publications.
    ____ files of past issues of magazines.

39. Which of the following types of materials are housed in your instructional
    materials center?

    ____ filmstrips.
    ____ collections (coins, insects, art, etc.)
    ____ motion pictures (films or videos).
    ____ microfilms.
    ____ overhead transparencies.
    ____ phonograph records.
    ____ ditto and/or mimeo machines.
    ____ photo and/or thermal copy machines.
    ____ maps, globes, and charts.
    ____ display cases or areas.

40. The master class time schedule can be changed by teachers when need arises:

    ____ by planning with other teachers on a daily basis.
    ____ by planning with other teachers on a weekly basis.
    ____ by seeking administrative approval for a special change.
    ____ by requesting a change for next semester.
    ____ by requesting a change for next year.
    ____ other _____

41. School dances are held for:

    ____ grade six.   ____ grade seven.   ____ grade eight.

42. A club program for students is offered for:

    ____ grade six.   ____ grade seven.   ____ grade eight.

43. The intramural program includes:

    ____ team games.   ____ individual sports.
    ____ various club activities. ____ other _____

44. Students are allowed to select courses of interest from a range of electives:

    ____ in grade six.   ____ in grade seven.   ____ in grade eight.

45. Electives currently offered in this building are: (add any not listed)

    ____ vocal music   ____ journalism   ____ foreign language
    ____ art   ____ drawing   ____ natural resources
    ____ band   ____ drama   ____ creative writing
    ____ speech   ____ orchestra   ____ other _____
    ____ typing   ____ wood shop   ____ other _____
    ____ unified arts   ____ family living   ____ other _____

46. How much time would you estimate the average student spends in independent
    study for each grade level listed below?

    ____ minutes per day in grade six.
    ____ minutes per day in grade seven.
    ____ minutes per day in grade eight.

47. Students working in independent study situations work on topics

_____ we have no independent study programs.
_____ assigned to them by the teacher.
_____ of personal interest and approved by the teacher.
_____ of personal interest and unrelated to classroom work.
_____ other _____

48. Students with poor basic skills can get special help in the following areas: (Check only those areas where special help on an individual basis is provided by special staff members trained to treat such situations.)

_____ reading   _____ mathematics
_____ spelling   _____ physical education
_____ grammar   _____ other _____

49. Dramatic presentations by students are:

_____ not a part of the school program.
_____ a part of the activities program.
_____ a part of certain class activities planned by the teachers.
_____ other _____

50. Formal evaluation of students' work is reported by use of:

_____ a standard report card with letter grades.
_____ teacher comments, written on a reporting form.
_____ parent-teacher conferences.
_____ standard report card with number grades.
_____ parent-teacher-student conferences.
_____ other _____

51. In regard to community relations, this school currently:
_____ does not send out a parents' newsletter.
_____ sends out a parents' newsletter when need arises.
_____ sends out a parents' newsletter on a scheduled basis.
_____ used a district-wide newsletter to send out information related to this school.
_____ uses commercial newspaper.
_____ other _____

52. The staff presents informational programs related to the school's functions:

_____ when requested by the parents.
_____ once or twice a year at regular parents' meetings.
_____ at open house programs.
_____ at regularly scheduled "seminar type" meetings planned for parents.
_____ other _____

53. From the specialized areas listed below, check each service which is available to students in your building.

_____ guidance counselors   _____ school nurse
_____ school psychologist   _____ visiting teacher
_____ speech therapists   _____ diagnostician
_____ special reading teacher
_____ clinic services for emotional disturbed
_____ special education programs for mentally handicapped.
_____ other _____

54. Teaching teams are organized to include:

_____ fully certified teachers.   _____ paraprofessionals.
_____ clerical helpers.   _____ student teachers.
_____ others _____

55. From the following list, check those types of auxiliary helpers available in your building.

_____ paid paraproffessionals.   _____ volunteers from the community.
_____ volunteers from the student body _____ students teachers and interns.
_____ high school "future teachers" students.
_____ others _____

Part III. For each question in this section please check the box or boxes that best describe your program.

56. School social functions are held at this school:

	During the afternoon	During the evening
Grade six		
Grade seven		
Grade eight		

57. The physical education program serves:

	All Students	Some Students	No Students
Grade six			
Grade seven			
Grade eight			

58. What degree of emphasis does the physical education program give to the competitive and developmental aspects of the program for boys and girls?

	Boys	Girls
Competitive Aspects	___ High ___ Medium ___ Low	___ High ___ Medium ___ Low
Developmental Aspects	___ High ___ Medium ___ Low	___ High ___ Medium ___ Low

59. Intramural activities are scheduled for:

	All Students	Boys Only	Girls Only	No Students
Grade six				
Grade seven				
Grade eight				

60. How do your guidance counselors handle group guidance sessions?

	Regular sessions several times per year	Special sessions only	None
Grade six			
Grade seven			
Grade eight			

61. Independent study opportunities are provided for:

	All Students	Some Students	No Students
Regular class time			
Time scheduled for Independent Study			

62. Daily instruction in a developmental reading program is provided for:

	All Students	Poor Readers	Not At All
Grade six			
Grade seven			
Grade eight			

The following questions are not part of the **Middle School Practices Index**, but consist of information needed to get a comprehensive understanding of the current status of middle schools in Oklahoma. Your response to these items will be greatly appreciated. General estimates of student populations will be sufficient. Give personnel numbers in full-time equivalents (ex. Principal and half day assistant = 1.5 administrators). The term middle school refers to your school regardless of the grade organization or name.

1. What is the student population for your district (K-12)? _____

2. What grades are included in your middle school?   _____

3. What is the student population for your middle school?   _____

4. Number of teachers in your middle school?   _____

5. Number of administrators in your middle school?   _____

6. Number of counselors in your middle school?   _____

7. Is your middle school housed with another school?   yes   no
   If yes, explain:_____

8. Do you have administrative duties involving other grade
   level students?   yes   no
   If yes, explain? _____

If you would like a copy of the results of this research project, please give your name and address below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX C

NASSP SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

1 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	21 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	41 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
2 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	22 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	42 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
3 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	23 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	43 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
4 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	24 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	44 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
5 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	25 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	45 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
6 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	26 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	46 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
7 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	27 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	47 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
8 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	28 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	48 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
9 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	29 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	49 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
10 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	30 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	50 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
11 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	31 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	51 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
12 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	32 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	52 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
13 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	33 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	53 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
14 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	34 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	54 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
15 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	35 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	55 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
16 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	36 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	56 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
17 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	37 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	57 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
18 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	38 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	58 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
19 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	39 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	59 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
20 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	40 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	60 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥

Directions

This survey is part of a statewide research project concerning middle level education. Your participation in this project would be greatly appreciated.

This survey asks teachers what **most people** think about the school. The survey has a number of statements that describe situations found in many schools. Most of these statements will fit your school, but for those that do not, mark the "don't know" answer.

Please detach this page and mark your answers on this answer sheet. Do not write your name on the answer sheet (your answers are confidential). Mark only one answer for each statement. Choose the answer that you think **most people** in your school and community would pick. Use the following scale for your answers.

1 = Most people would **strongly disagree** with this statement.
2 = Most people would **disagree** with this statement.
3 = Most people would **neither agree nor disagree** with this statement.
4 = Most people would **agree** with this statement.
5 = Most people would **strongly agree** with this statement.
6 = I don't know what most people think about this statement.

Return the completed answer sheet to the person or place designated by your principal.

THANK YOU for your cooperation.

KEY: *MOST PEOPLE*

1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE
2 = DISAGREE
3 = NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
4 = AGREE
5 = STRONGLY AGREE
6 = DON'T KNOW

TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

1. Teachers in this school like their students.
2. Teachers in this school are on the side of their students.
3. Teachers give students the grades they deserve.
4. Teachers help students to be friendly and kind to each other.
5. Teachers treat each student as an individual.
6. Teachers are willing to help students.
7. Teachers are patient when a student has trouble learning.
8. Teachers make extra efforts to help students.
9. Teachers understand and meet the needs of each student.
10. Teachers praise students more often than they scold them.
11. Teachers are fair to students.
12. Teachers explain carefully so that students can get their work done.

SECURITY AND MAINTENANCE

13. Students usually feel safe in the school building.
14. Teachers and other workers feel safe in the building before and after school.
15. People are not afraid to come to school for meetings and programs in the evening.
16. Classrooms are usually clean and neat.
17. The school building is kept clean and neat.
18. The school building is kept in good repair.
19. The school grounds are neat and attractive.

ADMINISTRATION (Principal, Assistant Principal, etc)

20. The administrators in this school listen to student ideas.
21. The administrators in this school talk often with teachers and parents.
22. The administrators in this school set high standards and let teachers, students, and parents know what these standards are.
23. Administrators set a good example by working hard themselves.
24. The administrators in this school are willing to hear student complaints and opinions.
25. Teachers and students help to decide what happens in this school.

STUDENT ACADEMIC ORIENTATION

26. Students here understand why they are in school.
27. In this school, students are interested in learning new things.
28. Students in this school have fun but also work hard on their studies.
29. Students work hard to complete their school assignments.

GO TO THE NEXT PAGE

KEY: *MOST PEOPLE*

    1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE
    2 = DISAGREE
    3 = NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
    4 = AGREE
    5 = STRONGLY AGREE
    6 = DON'T KNOW

STUDENT BEHAVIORAL VALUES

30. If one student makes fun of someone, other students do not join in.
31. Students in this school are well-behaved even when the teachers are not watching them.
32. Most students would do their work even if the teacher stepped out of the classroom.

GUIDANCE

33. Teachers or counselors encourage students to think about their future.
34. Teachers or counselors help students plan for future classes and for future jobs.
35. Teachers or counselors help students with personal problems.
36. Students in this school can get help and advice from teachers or counselors.

STUDENT-PEER RELATIONSHIPS

37. Students care about each other.
38. Students respect each other.
39. Students want to be friends with one another.
40. Students have a sense of belonging in this school.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

41. Parents and members of the community attend school meetings and other activities.
42. Most people in the community help the school in one way or another.
43. Community attendance at school meetings and programs is good.
44. Community groups honor student achievement in learning, music, drama, and sports.

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

45. There is a clear set of rules for students to follow in this school.
46. Taking attendance and other tasks do not interfere with classroom teaching.
47. Teachers spend almost all classroom time in learning activities.
48. Students in this school usually have assigned schoolwork to do.
49. Most classroom time is spent talking about classwork or assignments.
50. Teachers use class time to help students learn assigned work.
51. Outside interruptions of the classroom are few.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

52. Students are able to take part in school activities in which they are interested.
53. Students can be in sports, music, and plays even if they are not very talented.
54. Students are comfortable staying after school for activities such as sports and music.
55. Students can take part in sports and other school activities even if their families cannot afford it.

END OF THE SURVEY

March 26, 1990

(Principal's Name), Principal
(School's Name)
(Address)
(Town, Zip)

Dear (Mr. Last Name),

I am conducting a study of middle schools in Oklahoma as part of my work for the doctoral degree in Educational Administration at Oklahoma State University. I have worked with middle level students for eleven years, the past five as assistant principal at Cleveland Middle School. As a fellow administrator I know how incredibly busy your days can be. However, if you could find the time to complete and return the **Middle School Practices Index** by April 10th, I would be most appreciative.

The **MSPI** takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The questionnaire will provide descriptive information of what is occurring within Oklahoma's middle schools and provide data to be compared to earlier studies using this same instrument.

The identity of schools and principals participating in the survey will remain confidential. The stamped, self-addressed envelope is marked to identify participants for the purpose of second mailing and possible follow-up studies.

Middle level education is a vital, often overlooked, aspect of our public schools. Your assistance with this research project is a contribution to that cause. Thank you, (Mr. Last Name), for your cooperation and please accept my sincere appreciation for your time and effort.

If possible, please complete and return today!

Sincerely,

Doug Thomas
Assistant Principal
Cleveland Middle School

April 21, 1990

(Principal's Name), Principal
(School's Name)
(Address)
(Town, Zip)

Dear (Mr. Last Name),

Three weeks ago I contacted you concerning a research
project I am conducting as part of my work for the doctoral
degree in Educational Administration at Oklahoma State
University. Again, I ask you for your assistance in this
effort. As a fellow administrator I know how incredibly
busy your days can be. However, if you could find the time
to complete and return the **Middle School Practices Index** by
May 1, I would be most appreciative.

The **MSPI** takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.
The identity of schools and principals participating in the
survey will remain confidential. A stamped, self-addressed
envelope has been included for your convenience.

Thank you, (Mr. Last Name), for your cooperation and please
accept my sincere appreciation for your time and effort.

If possible, please complete and return today!

Sincerely,

Doug Thomas

Doug Thomas
Assistant Principal
Cleveland Middle School

Doug Thomas
P.O. Box 843
Mannford, OK   74044

May 2,1990

(Principal's Name), Principal
(School's Name)
(Address)
(Town, Zip)

Dear (Mr. Last Name),

I recently spoke with you on the phone regarding having the
teachers in your building complete a school climate survey
for me as part of a middle school research project I am
working on. Enclosed with this letter are enough survey
packets for your staff. Each packet contains an answer
sheet with directions and the two page survey.

If you would distribute the surveys to each teacher and
inform them where they can turn them in, I would be most
appreciative. Please allow the teachers a week to turn the
surveys in, and then mail the completed surveys to me in the
enclosed, self-addressed, manila envelope.

Thank you for your time and assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

Doug Thomas

Doug Thomas
Assistant Principal
Cleveland Middle School

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VITA

Douglas Dwain Thomas

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED PRACTICES AND
SCHOOL CLIMATE IN OKLAHOMA MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in San Diego, California, February
26, 1957, the son of Paul E. and Joanna F. Thomas.

Education: Graduated from Velma-Alma High School,
Velma, Oklahoma, in May 1975; received Bachelor of
Arts Degree in Social Studies Education from
Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant,
Oklahoma, in May 1979; received a Master of
Science Degree in Curriculum and Instructional
Education from Oklahoma State University,
Stillwater, Oklahoma, in December 1982; completed
requirements for the Doctor of Education Degree in
Educational Administration from Oklahoma State
University in May 1991.

Professional Experience: Teacher, Mannford Middle
School, Mannford, Oklahoma, August 1979 to May
1985; Assistant Principal, Cleveland Middle
School, Cleveland, Oklahoma, August 1985 to May
1990; Principal, Cleveland Middle School, June
1990 to May 1991.

Professional Organizations: Oklahoma Association of
Secondary School Principals; Oklahoma Middle Level
Association; National Association of Secondary
School Principals.