Developing, implementing, and testing a parent feedback instrument for public school boards and employees

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Developing, implementing, and testing a parent feedback instrument
for public school boards and employees

by

Doyle Francis Scott

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Educational Administration)

Major Professor: Richard P. Manatt

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1999

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has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University

Signature was redacted for privacy.

Major Professor

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For the Major Program

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Graduate College
This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Starr,
and to my five daughters, Cara, Lisa, Amanda, Laura, and Megan.
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CHAPTER I. THE PROBLEM

When a student sees a parent and school join forces for his or her own benefit, miracles can happen (Welsh, 1997). Yet, school employees often fail to contact parents as often as they should to gain assistance. And people often wonder why this happens. Certainly, one of the reasons is that many school employees feel they hear from parents only when they are protesting a punishment or they are trying to pressure them into raising a grade (Welsh, 1997). Further, most school employees have encountered outspoken parents who view themselves as educational experts. These parents have definite opinions about how schools should be run and how their children should be taught. Although these parents may not actually be educational experts, they do have a valuable contribution to make. Research has shown time and again that parental involvement in instructional activities is beneficial and can be linked to student achievement (Fullen, 1982).

Overview

So what difference does it make if a school is filled with employees who are reluctant to talk to parents? According to sociologist Christopher Lasch in The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy, "Democracy requires a vigorous exchange of ideas and opinions" (p. 113). But he adds that "many of the ‘best people’ have always been skeptical about the capacity...of ordinary citizens to grasp complex issues or make critical judgments" (p. 113). Yet, the fuses of ideological conflict are often ignited when parents are not included in reform discussions, or when they perceive that they are losing local control of school to policy wonks and the professionals who work in state capitals, Washington, and privately funded foundations (Dykstra & Fege, 1997).
Writing about businesses in his book, *Fast Forward: The Best Ideas on Managing Business Change*, James Champy (1996) says that early in most organizational changes, no one may know what these changes will mean to the individual. "Concerns cannot be met by a one-way form of communication," he warns. "We must mobilize managers to have conversations with people across the organization about the drivers and implications of the change program. It's in the give and take of discussion that people will discover the truth about what's likely to happen" (p. 10). Yet, some of today's school leaders complain that discussions with parents frequently stymie progress as much as they support it (Dykstra & Fege, 1997).

Therefore, schools are left with the concern that if they go to parents to gain input, they may find needed changes halted. But if they fail to do so, support for and confidence in schools are eroded. So what are the leaders of today's schools to do? Perhaps Richard A. Gibboney put it best when he writes in his book, *The Stone Trumpet*, "Widespread and fundamental school reform will only come when the larger society demands and forces it" (p. 252).

**School/home communication**

According to the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs developed by the National Parent Teacher Association, when there is communication, too often school or program communication is *one-way* without the chance to exchange ideas and share perceptions. Further, effective home-school communication is the *two-way* sharing of information vital to student success. So a key component to building successful partnerships with families is an increased emphasis on two-way communication. Traditionally, schools send informational notices or requests to parents who are then expected to read and take the appropriate action. Schools usually assume parental support for their requests and expectations and rarely ask parents to express their opinion or reaction (Barnett, 1995).
In reviewing the literature for this study, it has become evident that schools desire acceptance and support from parents yet do not truly want to ascertain how the parents feel about what is happening at the school. In other words, school district employees want the parents on the bandwagon with them, but they do not really want to learn how those parents feel about the direction that bandwagon is headed.

Historically, school managers have placed much reliance upon informal and ad hoc means of feedback. Most often, ad hoc feedback arises by means of events, policies, or institutions that are primarily concerned with other purposes. These include primary/middle school visits, open evenings, open-door policies, and via parent-teacher associations (Bagley, Woods, & Glatter, 1996). This emphasis upon "soft" information, often in the form of anecdote and hearsay, should not automatically be dismissed as less valid than more systematic or planned feedback. For example, Mintzberg (1989) warns of an excessively detailed and technical approach to this activity, which runs the risk of a form of "analysis paralysis."

Parental feedback in evaluation

Despite a decade of feverish activity during the 1980s to evaluate teachers with more precision, principals, working solo, could not do it with any real discrimination (Manatt, 1997). In an attempt to improve education, some schools are turning to parents for feedback to the system about the performance of teachers, administrators, and the schools in general. Some feel feedback from a variety of sources has a better chance to impact an employee's behavior. It is hard to say "My boss is just saying that because he/she doesn't like me," when all of the feedback from all the sources is delivering the same message.

A potential example of planned feedback is occurring in the Rochester, New York school system. Saying that parents of schoolchildren should be treated like "customers," the Rochester
City School District is considering using parents' opinions in the formal evaluation of teachers. Rochester officials want parents to fill out surveys once a year for each of their child's teachers, answering questions about how adept the teacher seems to be at instructing their child and how thoroughly the teacher informs parents about the child's progress. This proposal comes out of a recent strain of thinking in education circles that business concepts like customer satisfaction and "total quality management" can be translated to schools (Belluck, 1997).

Meanwhile, the Albuquerque, New Mexico schools are looking at a similar proposal. Instead of giving lip service to community input, the school district is making the changes it needs to allow people from the community to give input into teacher performance and become truly involved in the operation of the school (Pugh & Johnson, 1997).

In still other districts, at each parent-teacher conference session, parents are provided with a five-question report card to complete. Questions apply to the performance of the teachers and the entire school. The opportunity to submit their own evaluations has encouraged high parental attendance at such events, in some cases as high as 95 percent. Teachers using the report card are pleasantly surprised by the positive and supportive feedback from parents (Manatt, 1997).

However, when both parents and teachers have been allowed to give feedback, generally teachers have a more positive attitude toward programs, facilities, and personnel specifically than do parents, probably because teachers possess greater knowledge and understanding of the school system (Oaster, 1980).

Where tried, parent evaluations must be integrated into the formal evaluation process in such a way that their feedback will be used. Research suggests that general monitoring and oversight by parents, for example, through an organized communication network, can produce a "value added" component (Michigan State Board of Education, 1990). "In fact, in one study the feedback from the parents proved the most useful in evaluating the organization's effects"
(Belknap & Richards, 1984). In another, using feedback gave the district and schools an opportunity to assess how effective the schools were according to the perceptions of parents, students, teachers, and community members (McClure, 1993).

Is parental feedback for every school? Perhaps not, as some schools are more open than others to the receipt of parental viewpoints (Bagley et al., 1996). But in looking at the effectiveness of parent surveys as a form of assessment, several researchers (Glenn, 1989; Hoerr, 1989; Stewart, 1992) reported that parent surveys are excellent tools for determining the effectiveness of parent-teacher relationships. Hoerr (1989) further advocated the use of parent questionnaires for increasing the effectiveness of communication between teachers and parents.

Summary

Schools can no longer operate in isolation. The expectations of society, whether expressed by individual parents, identifiable groups, or government legislation, mean that schools need to be aware of views being expressed. They must take account of the public perceptions of how well they are performing and be prepared to respond to those articulated concerns which are genuinely representative (Bagley et al., 1996).

Effective long-term parent involvement is a two-way street. According to Grant (1989), we have to meet parents on their own ground; they have to meet us on our ground. It is important that we share views and our professional knowledge with parents. But we must also be taught by parents.

Statement of the Problem

Gathering, analyzing, and responding to feedback from all groups interacting with a school will provide a comprehensive base to examine strengths and weaknesses. Presently, teacher
evaluation focuses on supervisor, and less frequently, teacher input while building and district evaluation is virtually nonexistent. The problem for this study is to identify a pool of items upon which an evaluation instrument can be established to evaluate the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings, and that can be utilized by school district administrators and boards of education regardless of their background and training. The problem can be clarified by the following questions:

1. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the board of education, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

2. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the district administration, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

3. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the programs, policies, and procedures of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

4. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about school administration of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

5. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the teachers and professional staff of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?
6. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the support staff of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

7. For each district and for all districts combined, what questionnaire items, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will the parents think are satisfactory?

8. For each district and for all districts combined, what questionnaire items, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will the parents think are not satisfactory?

9. For each district surveyed and for all districts combined, what five questions will the parents report have the highest satisfaction?

10. For each district surveyed and for all districts combined, what five questions will the parents report have the lowest satisfaction?

11. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the board of education, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will have a reliability index of .75 or higher?

12. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the district administration, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will have a reliability index of .75 or higher?

13. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the programs, policies, and procedures of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will have a reliability index of .75 or higher?
14. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the school administration of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will have a reliability index of .75 or higher?

15. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the teachers and professional staff of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will have a reliability index of .75 or higher?

16. What items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the support staff of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will have a reliability index of .75 or higher?

17. With a confidence level of 95 percent, what margin of error can be specified for each district and for all districts combined?

**Purposes of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to create an instrument of reliable items, which parents believe are important for parents to rate, and that school districts can use to survey parents. As a result of a review of the literature and feedback from a judgment panel, a preliminary pool of items was generated which could be observed and rated by an assortment of raters with knowledge about the performance of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.
Objectives of the Study

In order to accomplish the purposes of this study, it was necessary to address the following objectives:

1. To develop a list of questions, based on a review of the literature, about the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.

2. To select the school districts for the study from a list of school districts volunteering to participate in a study of this nature.

3. To obtain human subjects release from the Iowa State University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects.

4. To validate and delimit the initial list of criteria using a judgment panel of practitioners, researchers, and district stakeholder committees.

5. To develop a survey instrument and determine response modes to be administered to parents and stakeholders to enable them to rate the performance of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.

6. To analyze the results of the survey to establish a list of reliable items that parents believe are important for parents to rate.

7. To develop conclusions based upon the finding of the study regarding parent evaluation of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and
procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school
buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the
support staffs of individual school buildings.

8. To create a model instrument to be used by school districts in the 1998–99 school year.

Hypotheses to be Tested

This investigation sought to identify discriminating, reliable, and valid criteria to be used by
schools to create evaluation instruments for parents. Specific hypotheses to be tested were:

1. The reliability of the items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the board of
education, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will
be greater than or equal to .75.

2. The reliability of the items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the district
administration, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel,
will be greater than or equal to .75.

3. The reliability of the items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the programs,
policies, and procedures of an individual school building, made up of items from the
literature and selected by a judgment panel, will be greater than or equal to .75.

4. The reliability of the items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the school
administration of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature
and selected by a judgment panel, will be greater than or equal to .75.

5. The reliability of the items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the teachers and
professional staff of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature
and selected by a judgment panel, will be greater than or equal to .75.
6. The reliability of the items on a parent evaluation questionnaire about the support staff of an individual school building, made up of items from the literature and selected by a judgment panel, will be greater than or equal to .75.

Basic Assumptions

This study was based upon the following assumptions:

1. That school employees' performance can be described in terms of competencies and descriptors.

2. That the people within the building's performance can be described in terms of competencies and descriptors.

3. That parents' satisfaction with the district's performance and conditions for children can be described in terms of competencies and descriptors.

4. That reliable criteria, which the parents think is important to evaluate, will improve the effectiveness of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.

5. That raters will each complete the survey instrument independently.

6. That the criteria will describe effective practices for the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.
7. That performance criterion can be described adequately enough to permit raters to make valid judgments.

8. That raters will provide an honest assessment of the performance of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.

9. That the schools volunteering to take part in the study will represent the various boards of education, district administrations, programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, school administrations of individual school buildings, teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and support staffs of individual school buildings found in the population.

**Delimitations or Scope of Investigation**

There are a number of delimitations that need to be dealt with in this investigation. Efforts were made to ensure that this study was rigorous and made a valuable contribution to the scientific knowledge base on effective schools research, requiring careful examination of the following delimitations:

1. This study did not attempt to determine the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings' effectiveness as determined by learner outcomes. The questionnaires contained items found in literature reviews, employee job descriptions, school policy
books, research on effective teaching, current evaluation instruments, and research relative to effective training for school employees.

2. Because of the sensitive nature of evaluation of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings, and the likelihood of a large number of those randomly selected declining to participate, it was impractical to utilize a random sample of boards of education, district administrations, programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, school administrations of individual school buildings, teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and support staffs of individual school buildings. So a judgment sample of two districts was used.

3. The study did not attempt to use schools located across the United States and instead used an opportunity sample composed of two school districts located in New England.

4. Persons selected as respondents for this research were to have had exposure to the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings being rated. This study did not attempt to determine if the raters had authority to evaluate, only that they were knowledgeable concerning the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings,
the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.

5. The study was conducted during the spring of the 1997–98 school year.

Human Subjects Release

The Iowa State University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research insists that researchers make sure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are adequately protected, that risks are outweighed by the potential benefits and expected value of the knowledge sought, that confidentiality of data is assured, and that informed consent be obtained by appropriate procedures. These procedures were approved by the committee and closely followed in this study. Where germane, consent was obtained by appropriate procedures. Consent to participate in the project in the form of modified consent was assumed by those voluntarily completing and returning the questionnaire.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review process for this study initially began by conducting searches through the ERIC system. This was followed by identifying relevant articles contained in bibliographies of prior research studies, accessing the Dissertation Abstracts, Educational Administration Abstracts, and Library Indexes. Searches were also conducted on the Internet via two search engines, Yahoo at http://www.yahoo.com, and Alta Vista at http://altavista.digital.com, as well as searches in various college library websites. Assistance was also received from Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and electronic mail was provided from AskERIC at ERIC/EECE <askeece@uiuc.edu>. Finally, personal contacts were made with expert faculty in the areas of the Menne/Tolsma statistics, parent feedback, and questionnaires. The process provided a rich array of findings regarding theory, knowledge of prior results, and contemporary practice.

Several limitations of the search procedure should be noted:

1. No systematic studies of sources outside the United States were included.

2. Many of the articles were opinion reports and may not have been statistical in nature.

3. Previous research efforts by Hidlebaugh (1973) reported parent ratings have not been the subject of research insofar as that writer had been able to discover, nor was there evidence of their use in school systems. Furthermore, Martone (1981) reported parent evaluation of program benefits is limited in the literature. The present research had the same difficulties in 1998.

4. Other contributions to the existing body of literature may have been excluded from the present study due to time constraints.
Overview

The review of literature and related research concentrates on parental impact on schools. It begins by defining parental involvement in schools. A history of parents and their involvement in schools is then examined. From this involvement, attitudes of parents are developed, and these and student attitudes are examined as they relate, or do not relate, to the attitudes of parents. Ways of gaining input are then discussed and this is followed with a general discussion of evaluation and, specifically, how parents are becoming involved in school evaluation. With these explained, the ways schools are developing and using parent questionnaires are discussed, followed by how the results of the information from questionnaires are being used. Finally, if parents feel they are disenfranchised from the schools, they may exercise an option being used in many states and countries—school choice. The goal of this section is to demonstrate that "Feedback, not Wheaties, is the breakfast of champions" (Manatt, 1988).

Parental Involvement

While there is much research in support of parental involvement, educators differ in how they define it. Fantini (1980) cites four major forms, and they are: instruction at school (parent aides) and at home (parents as tutors); governance; home-school relations (projects to increase community support); and community service (adult education, use of facilities). The Michigan State Board of Education (1990) expands that by noting that these contacts may take the form of conferences, notes, visits to the home, and/or workshops for parents and teachers.

Parents have been recognized by all shades of political opinion as an important group which should be encouraged to participate in the school system (Bagley, Woods, & Glatter, 1996). In fact, one of the eight National Education Goals states: "Every school will promote partnerships
that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children" (National Education Goals Panel, 1997).

The benefits of parental participation in children’s education have been extensively documented, particularly in regard to the significant contribution parents play in children’s early language and literacy development (Durkin, 1966; Heath, 1983; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Wells, 1986). Over 30 years of research has also proven the positive connection between parental involvement and student success. The most comprehensive survey of the research is a series of publications developed by Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla: *The Evidence Grows* (1981), *The Evidence Continues to Grow* (1987), and *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Crucial to Student Achievement* (1995). Citing more than 85 studies, these publications document the profound and comprehensive benefits for students, families, and schools when parents and family members become participants in their children’s education and their lives. Another growing body of evidence also suggests that effective schools are characterized by (among other things) "parental involvement in children’s education and in supporting the aims of the school" (National Commission on Education, 1993).

Much research has been written about parental variables, particularly parental involvement, and student performance. Authors summarizing previous research (Clark, 1986; Moles, 1982; Walberg, 1984b) report consistent results linking increased parental involvement to student achievement. Even the form of parental involvement does not seem to matter as long as it is "well planned, comprehensive, and long-lasting" (Moles, 1982, p. 44).

Herman and Yeh (1980) indicated that parental involvement in the school leads to positive satisfaction of parents and teachers and increased student achievement. Parents’ perceptions of their own level of input and influence in the decision-making process of school policies were seen as a direct correlate to parental satisfaction. The more influence the parents perceived that they
had in decision making influenced 1) their perceptions of parent-teacher relationships and 2) their satisfaction regarding the learning situation. In addition, the results indicated that the amount of parent interest and participation in the child’s program was positively related to the child’s success and achievement.

Burns (1982) found involving parents in the school creates observable benefits for students, parents, and staff. Further, when schools plan for parent involvement and they are committed to it, benefits occur. Walberg (1984a) noted cooperative partnerships between the home and the school can dramatically raise educational productivity.

One study did report findings contrary to the others. Anderson (1987) instituted a parent information program and measured its effects on parental involvement, parental perceptions, children’s achievement, and the relationship between changes in parental involvement and changes in student achievement. Although he did find gains in parental involvement, parental perceptions, and student achievement, there was no significant relationship between changes in parental involvement and changes in student achievement.

According to the National Parent/Teacher Association, the benefits of increased parental involvement are:

- When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents’ education level.
- The more extensive the parent involvement, the higher the student achievement.
- When parents are involved in their students’ education, those students have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and complete homework more consistently.
- When parents are involved, students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior.
- Students whose parents are involved in their lives have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education.
- Different types of parent/family involvement produce different gains. To have long-lasting gains for students, parent involvement activities must be well-planned, inclusive, and comprehensive.
- Educators hold higher expectations of students whose parents collaborate with the teacher. They also hold higher opinions of those parents.
• In programs that are designed to involve parents in full partnerships, student achievement for disadvantaged children not only improves, it can reach levels that are standard for middle-class children. In addition, the children who are farthest behind make the greatest gains.

• Children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals collaborate to bridge the gap between the culture at home and the learning institution.

• Student behaviors, such as alcohol use, violence, and anti-social behavior decrease as parent involvement increases.

• Students are more likely to fall behind in academic performance if their parents do not participate in school events, develop a working relationship with their child’s educators, or keep up with what is happening in their child’s school.

• The benefits of involving parents are not confined to the early years; there are significant gains at all ages and grade levels.

• Junior and senior high school students whose parents remain involved, make better transitions, maintain the quality of their work, and develop realistic plans for their future. Students whose parents are not involved, on the other hand, are more likely to drop out of school.

• The most accurate predictor of a student’s achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student’s family is able to 1) create a home environment that encourages learning; 2) communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children’s achievement and future careers; and 3) become involved in their children’s education at school and in the community. (National PTA, 1997, p. 7)

As is evident, the research shows that effectively involving parents and families in support of children and their education produces meaningful and lasting results (National PTA, 1997). Further, parent and family involvement increases student achievement and success (National PTA, 1997). But the concern with many of the parental involvement studies is that there has been little in the way of long-term follow-up of results. Many of the programs were instituted for a few months to a year with student achievement or performance measured only during the research period. Samuels (1990) reported it would be useful to collect longitudinal data of students’ achievement in situations where the parent programs were continued and in those where it was not.

Any successful parental involvement thrust will require a direct engagement between the school and the home, one that takes into consideration the values of the family and the community
(Dykstra & Fege, 1997). But historically, schools have been reluctant to make parents their partners and, in the same vein, parents have not been especially inclined to volunteer at schools and specifically at high schools (Fisher, 1994). And most parent involvement programs have been largely restricted to one-way communication from the school to the parents where typically the teacher invites parents "up to the school" to learn from teachers about how to help their children at home (Power, 1992). Parents respond to a school's request of becoming involved according to the ways schools ask them to; the more serious the request and the more specific it is, the more likely it is to achieve involvement (Brookover et al., 1982).

Even with the preponderance of research establishing the connection between effective parent involvement and student achievement, few teachers receive substantive preparation in how to partner with parents (National PTA, 1997). In fact, according to the National PTA (1997), no state requires a separate course in parent involvement for teacher licensure.

History of Parental Involvement

Historically, parents have shared a measure of responsibility with professionals in determining educational goals for children. However, the degree of parent contribution has varied since the introduction of public education in America (Martone, 1981).

During the 1600s, parents played a key role in educational decision making. Krausharr (1976) defined involvement of parents as a continuing European pattern. Parents assumed responsibility for determining courses of study and setting educational goals. He also labeled tutoring in homes, small group instruction in Dame Schools, and curriculum in Field Schools as "extensions of family influence not evidence of government function" (p. 7).
Katz (1976) further defined the 17th century concept of education:

Education was not restricted to formal instruction provided in schools but included a variety of informal activities that fell under the rubric of child rearing or child training. As members of a religious community struggling for survival in the wilderness, the early Puritan parents had a moral obligation to educate their children, thus bringing them up properly as good Puritans. Failure to do so was seen as a threat to the moral and economic well being of the Commonwealth. (Katz, 1976, p. 11)

As increased responsibility for education was assumed by the states, the role of the parent was affected by social change. Commager (1976) explained the transition:

The new caused evaporation and removal of institutions that had carried on a major part of education in the old world: the church to impose discipline, the powerful state to force obedience to a wide range of ancient laws, class system to limit social expectations and impose conduct standards and even the family could not play the role in education and discipline that it did in the old world. (Commager, 1976, p. 8)

Further limiting of family involvement was reported by Brodinsky (1977). The reduction of direct parent participation resulted from the appointment of lay boards to oversee the operation of schools. During the second quarter of the 19th century, state legislated governing boards represented parents in educational decision making and selection of teachers and materials.

Cuban (1976) recounted the emergence of the superintendent and principal as board appointed supervisors and instructional leaders during the early 19th century. Educational administrators assisted governing boards in establishing programs for children and operating public schools. Throughout the next 150 years, school leaders directed educational programs with limited input from the American parent. When school leaders or methods of instruction were questioned, resentment often resulted. Professional educators worked to keep the schools free from interest groups. In 1940 an educational resolution listed parents among special interest groups whose participation should be monitored (Cuban, 1976).

For many years, parents assumed a minor role in the planning, operation, and evaluation of educational programs. However, parent involvement in educational planning and evaluation
escalated during the 1960s with the introduction of federal programs for the educationally and culturally disadvantaged student (Martone, 1981). Zipperer (1978) analyzed the surge of parent participation during the decade:

Although parent awareness and involvement is not new, a revival of such programs has been realized since 1965 in American schools, due in part to mandates for involvement in Federal Programs such as Head Start, Follow Through and Title I. (Zipperer, 1978, p. 29)

Hiemstra (1972) supported the movement toward parent inclusion through federal mandate. School-home programs stimulated social, physical, and intellectual development of both children and parents. Enrichment of the home environment from birth through the first several years of school received particular emphasis. Beezer (1978) reaffirmed the need for parent involvement. Parents had demonstrated the desire to become involved in educational programs. However, professionals had expressed reluctance to broaden participation. Federal legislation through judicial decision provided the key to the schoolhouse door.

Student and Parent Attitudes

According to Walsh (1996), there was a time in America when school officials assumed they were the experts and everyone else was wrong. But because school districts are now under siege, they feel a need to get closer to their customers (Walsh, 1996). Since the late 1920s when Thurstone started investigating attitude measurement, psychologists and sociologists have been trying to explain the concept of attitude and its effect on behavior (Samuels, 1990).

Most writers agree that attitudes are learned. Furthermore, some of that learning takes place through direct experience while some can be influenced by indirect means. On the one hand, a child may come in contact with the object or person, have some affective reaction, make an evaluation of it, and form an attitude. On the other hand, he or she may hear an evaluation about
an object from another person, attributing a "bad" or "good" quality to it, thus influencing the child’s attitude formation (Samuels, 1990). It is also speculated that parental attitudes influence children’s attitudes. If, for instance, parents teach or in some way communicate negative attitudes about schools to their children, the result will be children who dislike school. And there has been a dearth of empirical evidence for such beliefs and assumptions (Samuels, 1990).

According to Samuels (1990), there is little written about the relationship of school attitude to the combination of three different aspects of a child’s life: cognitive (achievement), demographic (gender), and family/environmental (parent attitude). Further, limited research has been conducted on parent attitude with respect to student attitude, but there have been numerous studies investigating parental variables and student performance. Of particular importance is a study where the issue of the parent’s role in the development of a child’s attitude is compared to the possible effect of positive or negative feedback that may be communicated to the child either directly or indirectly (Samuels, 1990).

Triandis (1971) explains attitude change with respect to the different components of attitude. The findings included that the effective dimension could be changed by direct experiences with the attitude object. For instance, a child may have a negative attitude toward a handicapped person. But a positive experience with a person in a wheelchair may change his or her attitude towards the handicapped. The cognitive component could change as a result of either direct experience, or indirectly, by receiving new information about the object.

Cantril’s (1934) second method of attitude acquisition stated that "many general attitudes may be aroused indirectly and before any specific situations to which the attitude may refer have been encountered by the individual" (p. 14). He gave as an example an attitude toward "foreigners," instilled in a child by a parent before that child has had any contact or experience of
his or her own. Again, only if the child has sufficient intelligence and maturity will the relationships involved in the attitude be understood.

In Triandis' (1971) discussion of personality variables and their relationship to attitude, he stated:

A person can influence another to the extent that he is (a) trustworthy (b) attractive (c) powerful...a child's parents have all three characteristics and are therefore the chief agents of attitude formation. Later in life, teenagers' peers may be most attractive, and they become chief influences. We learn few attitudes through direct experiences with the attitude object and many through other people. (Triandis, 1971, p. 129)

A similar comment was made by Allen (1960) as he wrote about attitudes toward authority. The initial world for the child is home, where the mother and father play chief roles in the formation of the child’s perceptions and feelings about "authority figures." The way a child learns to respond to authority is then brought into school to the authority figures in that institution.

Perhaps the child’s attitudes and behaviors will remain the same, or they may be altered and modified as a result of different experiences.

Parental attitudes were the focus of a dissertation by Harris (1982). His interest was in determining whether there were differences between parents’ attitudes and their children’s perceptions of those attitudes. Subjects were fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students in southwestern Pennsylvania. Of six factors investigated, Harris found significant differences between parents and children for five of them. He also found that children have difficulty predicting parental responses and felt this might lead one to question the degree of parental influence on children’s attitudes. Since perception must be a precursor to attitude formation, perhaps children do not have accurate or sufficient information from parents to allow similar attitudes to develop. The lack of meaningful relationship between student attitude and parental attitude may be surprising, but since it has not been extensively studied before, it is also not inconsistent with previous findings (Samuels, 1990).
In the past years, more studies of parental variables have emerged. However, their focus has been on parental involvement and student achievement rather than on student attitudes. Since educators acknowledge the importance of students’ effective entry characteristics to learning outcomes (Bloom, 1976; Walberg, 1984b), the role of parents’ effect (specifically attitudes toward the school) cannot be ignored.

In 1962 an environmentalist stated that the "culture of school is feminine," emphasizing conformity, neatness, dependence, and nonaggression (Riessman, 1962). As a result of those values, boys would actually receive more disapproval in response to their behaviors, thus affecting their attitude toward the school environment. On the other hand, Whaley-Klahn, Loney, Weissenburger, and Prinz (1976) hypothesized that this differential treatment is merely the teacher’s response to differences in conduct and attitude that boys may bring to the school setting.

What about parental beliefs and expectations? Do they really affect students’ attitudes, or are students’ attitudes related to parents’ attitudes simply by chance or coincidence? How is it possible to determine whether unfavorable attitudes result in poor school grades, which may in turn result in poor attitudes? Jackson and Getzells (1959) question where these cyclical processes begin.

For schools to truly understand parental attitudes, they must first be able to measure them, and there are several tests that measure parent attitudes. For example, the Parent Attitudes Towards School Effectiveness (PATSE) was developed in 1985 to measure parent attitude toward school effectiveness characteristics (Gable, Murphy, & Clark, 1985). The authors of the PATSE report that "researchers can be confident in employing the PATSE subscales and total scores diagnostically as reliable indicators of parental attitudes toward the identified school effectiveness characteristics" (p. 12).
In a study by Clark (1986) that used PATSE, it was found that neither parents' level of education, family structure (i.e., number of parents living at home), nor the number of children living at home are related to parent attitudes characteristics.

Samuels (1990) also used PATSE and found a negative correlation of grade level of students with school/community relationships. The conclusion was that as the grade level increased, the parent attitude was less favorable. Samuels also found a negative correlation between grade and high expectations. This was felt to suggest that as grade increases, the parents feel less positive about teachers' high expectations for their students.

To improve attitudes, many writers are encouraging schools to be more involved in public engagement. According to Cohen (1998), public engagement differs from public relations. Typically, public relations is intended to bring audiences around to a certain point of view, which, like it or not, is what school districts have been doing for ages. Public engagement, on the other hand, means having a conversation which calls for listening, responding, and educating—not just "getting the word out." Through this process each side learns about the other, and, it is hoped, thoughtful conversations lead to collaborative action on substantive issues, such as standards development and implementation.

It is believed that meaningful community involvement sets in motion a chain of events that transforms the culture of the school and often the community that school serves (Hatch, 1998). Further, common patterns among schools suggest that community involvement contributes to improvement in:

- the physical conditions, resources, and constituencies that support learning; the attitudes and expectations of parents, teachers, and students; and the depth and quality of the learning experiences in which parents, teachers, and students participate. (Hatch, 1998, p. 16)
Another way to improve parental attitudes is through visits to schools. In a study by Clark (1986), it was found that parents whose average visit to the school is between one and three hours have more favorable attitudes toward safe and orderly environment, clear school mission, high expectations, and an overall rating of school effectiveness than parents whose average visit is less than one hour.

Some schools are also using parents in volunteer programs. Although a number of these programs exist, data to measure parent attitudes toward the programs were limited (Martone, 1981).

Finally, the influence a parent has on a child is not unidirectional. The child/parent relationships is interactive. Perhaps the child's attitude toward school could affect or change the parent's attitude rather than vice versa (Samuels, 1990).

Ways of Gaining Parental Input

According to Brandt (1998), educators must reach out to parents and members of the public because, with the outcome based education debacles and their aftermath, our most pressing need is to reestablish public support for the public schools.

An important issue for schools committed to obtaining parental feedback and viewpoints is the development of strategies appropriate for the task. For example, a secondary school's inaccessibility to parents necessitates increasing the emphasis placed on other channels to ascertain parental perspectives. Examples of systemic and planned attempts by schools to identify and interpret parental viewpoints include surveys by means of a questionnaire, use of secondary source survey data, a school strengths and weaknesses exercise, selective monitoring of pupils' primary school origins, monitoring of baptismal records, and numbers of children in primary schools (Bagley et al., 1996).
National reform groups, state education agencies, and school districts have in recent years dramatically increased their use of surveys and focus groups to help guide policy and reconnect with a disaffected public. Surging interest in the sophisticated techniques reflects educators' newfound awareness that public engagement must be considered every step of the way if efforts to improve schools are to succeed (Walsh, 1996). The voice of the customer is one that will help provide accurate direction for a school district, large or small.

Typically, districts rely on committees and task forces with their stakeholder representatives to gain community feedback and buy-in to decisions. Unfortunately, this doesn't always yield a balanced, accurate voice. Volunteer participants represent only a small sampling of individual viewpoints and opinions (Scullen & Mitchell, 1997).

According to Bagley, Woods, and Glatter (1996), an alternative used in many schools is informal feedback, and there are many ways schools can gain this. It can be obtained from parents and other people in a school's community and is sometimes given through chance conversations or contact initiated by parents. A major opportunity for informal feedback that is used by many schools and taken by many parents is open evenings. These provide informal opportunities for parents to ask questions (Bagley et al., 1996). Informal feedback can be utilized in many ways including such things as program development (Belknap & Rickards, 1984).

There are usually two kinds of informal feedback. The first is the feedback that comes from parents who are at school for another reason than to give the school feedback and they pay the school a compliment. People tend to like to say things that please someone else so most schools should try not to be too influenced by that. The other feedback is from the grossly dissatisfied parent who complains. There is as much danger that schools not get that out of perspective as well (Bagley et al., 1996).
How people interpret what they are told, or find out through systematic information gathering, or observe in the form of information that is presented to them is not a straightforward matter. Not all parental feedback is or should necessarily be acted upon. The whole process of interpretation requires intensive and critical attention that is "school-community" orientated, is aimed at ensuring that the school is meeting the needs and aspirations of its existing parents and pupils, and is inclusive (i.e., involves all parents and pupils) (Bagley et al., 1996).

According to the National PTA (1997), when parents and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are more easily solved, and students make greater progress. To use quality improvement language, appraisal of instruction requires that teachers listen to their customers, namely parents, students, and other teachers (Manatt, 1997). And although public engagement requires planning and energy, it depends not so much on organizational design as on attitude and personal characteristics (Brandt, 1998).

Evaluation

Evaluation is the process used to determine if an employee is effectively performing his or her assigned tasks. In education, evaluation takes many forms from formal visits by administrators to contacts that occur by accident between a teacher and a parent. But most teacher evaluation models ignore the most important question: Do students learn (Manatt, 1997)?

Some school districts have begun to create new evaluation systems that are more promising than the old. The old system, still widely practiced, calls for a single evaluator—usually the principal—to pass judgment on a teacher’s ability. This places an enormous responsibility on principals who may not possess the necessary skills or experience (Manatt & Kemis, 1997). To overcome this weakness, many different alternatives have been examined and tried. Among them have been attempts with "merit pay." At one point, so many schools were looking at or
implementing it that it was seen as a national drive. What has more recently emerged from this is a way to improve student achievement, especially in struggling city school systems, by linking teacher compensation and rewards more directly to how well students do (Belluck, 1997).

Another new method of evaluation being tried in some schools is surveys from parents about the effectiveness of a teacher. Once returned, the principal and other administrators take the surveys into account when evaluating the teacher’s performance, a rating that could affect whether the teacher receives the contractually negotiated pay raise that year or a desirable teaching assignment. By doing this, parents have legitimate input to the administrators who evaluate teachers (Belluck, 1997, p. B10).

When parent evaluations are used, Martone (1981) found they strengthen educational programs and promote understanding between the school and home. Further, evaluation by citizen participants lend a new dimension to program success. When evaluation does result in program change and refinement, the tax paying citizen receives a further guarantee of objective review and honest correction of existing programs (Martone, 1981).

And evaluation surveys can be used for other purposes. For example, in one study of day care schools by Popplewell and Winget (1980), parent evaluations were used in reinforcing strengths and correcting deficiencies in the operation of homes with the feedback being shared with providers, licensing workers, trainers, and others interested in family day care. The results included the general feeling among licensing workers that the parent-user evaluations were highly useful in reinforcing strengths, but it was only moderately useful in correcting deficiencies.

Another study looked at parent feedback to principals. In this one it was found that there was clear evidence that the principal’s effectiveness can be modified by data collection and evaluation techniques if this process is tied to the principal’s job description (Prince, 1987).
As DeValois (1998) pointed out, for too long schools have based their decisions on gut instinct as opposed to data when what is needed is a wide-scale attempt to base decisions on data. To achieve that, any effective evaluation system should contain many parts. If parental feedback is to be used, it should not be the only part of the performance appraisal but rather a data gathering tool (Manatt & Kemis, 1997).

Finally, it is extremely important to remember that in any evaluation system, whether using feedback from parents or not, the employer must remember the #1 rule of performance management: No Surprises! The employee should know well in advance of the performance appraisal that parental feedback will be used. They should know what weighting the parental feedback will play in the overall review, what the instrument or tool will look like, and what questions will be asked (Manatt, 1997).

Parent Questionnaires

Some schools are looking at using tools such as parent questionnaires to help assess the effectiveness of the school district, individual buildings within the district, or individual staff within each building. These questionnaires have the potential to give the district and schools an opportunity to assess how effective the schools are according to the perceptions of their parents, students, teachers, and community members (McClure, 1993). In one school district considering questionnaires, officials said their intent was to make the schools more accountable to the parents of its 36,000 students. They also said the questionnaires might encourage more parents to become actively involved in their children's schooling (Belluck, 1997).

The major focus of most questionnaires is to assist schools and districts in identifying areas with strengths and needs as perceived by parents, students, and staff. The questionnaire results can also serve as a measure of success or progress in reaching superintendent/school board,
district, division, and school objectives (McClure, 1993). Further, asking parents their attitudes toward a given school’s effectiveness includes them in the process of school-wide self-scrutiny and change (Clark, 1986).

Where questionnaires are being examined for potential use, teachers fear that most of the parents who would take the time to fill out the questionnaire would be those with complaints. As Belluck (1997) has written, a teacher might feel parents with criticisms or concerns about teachers should convey them directly to principals in letters or phone calls. Some teachers might worry that parents, in bypassing the teacher and sending questionnaires directly to the principal, might criticize a teacher’s technique without understanding it. Parent questionnaires "might get parents more involved, but if they don’t know what they’re talking about it could be bad for the teacher" (Belluck, 1997).

Another concern expressed by teachers and administrators is that survey results could be used to negatively compare the performances of principals, teachers, students, and schools. According to Scullen and Mitchell (1997), to resolve this it is necessary to include all stakeholder voices during the writing process. They have found that by doing this the survey can be clarified so that all can support the concept.

But the decision of whether or not to use questionnaires involves many more issues than just staff concerns. Among the questions to be answered are who would design the questionnaires and who would collect them. For example, district officials might want a standard questionnaire form to be developed by a central committee of teachers, administrators, and parents, while the union might want each school to develop its own. Additionally, the union might want the questionnaire questions to deal exclusively with the teacher’s relationship with parents, while district officials might want to allow other questions, including parents’ observations about student progress and the teacher’s professionalism (Belluck, 1997).
Where questionnaires have been tried, they have been met with varying results, especially when the number of people responding is looked at. For example, in a study by Hecht, Dwyer, Wills, and Roberts (1993), a district administered a questionnaire and ultimately had to do a second. In the first questionnaire administration, they allowed parents to mail back their questionnaires directly to the researchers. The initial attempt had such poor return rates from parents (below 20 percent from each of two schools issued questionnaires) that a second administration was needed. This second administration yielded a cumulative 81 percent average return rate for parent respondents. Rich (1998) found getting people to return the surveys was difficult, with the highest response at the elementary level. To be effective, the number of parents responding to questionnaires needs to be high, especially at the secondary levels, if the response ratings are to be representative (McClure, 1993). As Belknap and Rickards (1984) noted, techniques for surveying parents need to be developed which will increase the collection of meaningful feedback.

Oppenheim (1966) discussed the possibility of bias when a portion of the sample does not respond. In that study there was a 64 percent response rate. Although this was seen as very good for mail questionnaires, it still left 36 percent who did not respond. The question was whether those nonrespondents were similar or dissimilar to the individuals who did reply. Oppenheim suggested "comparing early respondents with late respondents (in terms of their answers to the questionnaire), since it had been found that respondents who send in their questionnaires late are roughly similar to nonrespondents" (p. 34).

To increase response rates, some schools use systematic coercion, which is a method of offering rewards for participation and sanctions for nonparticipation. As an example, some teachers may offer students extra credit or additional free time if their parents participate in an activity such as a school open house. This is an accepted part of the American public school
culture, accepted by both students and parents alike. Using this allows survey researchers to take more liberties with questionnaire design and administration since they know the respondent group is inherently more likely to complete the instrument faithfully (Hecht et al., 1993).

An example of a widely used questionnaire is the school/community relationships subscale and the high expectations subscale of the state of Connecticut Parent Attitudes Towards School Effectiveness (PATSE) questionnaire that is used as measures of parent attitude. The reported alpha reliabilities for the school/community relationships subscale is .83, and the high expectations subscale is .78 (Gable et al., 1985). The authors of the PATSE report that "researchers can be confident in employing the PATSE subscale and total scores diagnostically as reliable indicators of parental attitudes toward the identified school effectiveness characteristics" (p. 12). The response format is a five-point Likert-type scale. Chrispeels (1984) stated, where used, parents can become involved with making schools more effective by responding to an instrument designed to measure parent perceptions of school effectiveness characteristics, and by participation on schools' action planning teams to help improve schools.

Schools must remember that when issues are raised in questionnaires by parents, staff must ask themselves, "Are they the criticisms we expect to hear because we can't be everything to all parents?" However, in saying this, caution must be exercised because implicit in this response is the notion that the school is prepared to be responsive to some parents but not to others (Bagley et al., 1996).

Another issue revolves around the impact other factors have on students. Herbert Walberg (1984b) has written several articles about the importance of including the home and other environmental influences as key factors in a student's school performance. He conceptualized educational inputs and outputs much the same as Benjamin Bloom (1976), but made the point that the child's environment also makes a significant contribution to all learning outcomes: affective,
behavioral, and cognitive. To illustrate the point, he quoted the following statistic: "The 12 years of 180 six-hour days in elementary and secondary school add up to only about 13% of the waking, potentially educative time during the first 18 years of life" (p. 22). Much of the out-of-school time, especially in the early years, is under the control of parents. Thus, it follows that the attitudes and behaviors of parents must be taken into account when considering a model for the input side of education.

As has been noted, many believe it is important for a school district to get feedback on its performance, just as a business does. Like the corporate community, schools must actively seek and consciously utilize responses from their customers regarding their schools and programs (DeValois, 1998). And the key to positive parent and community relations is not particular practices or organizational structures but the point of view they represent (Brandt, 1998).

To conclude, parents and community members are grading schools and are seeing themselves as customers. Such reports can be a good thing. Educators can make the most of them, getting credit for what they do well and making sure that the report cards help both teachers and parents work together to improve student learning. When this is done, educators come to understand that the purpose of questionnaires is to find out what was on parents' and students' minds and to deal with issues before they become problems (Rich, 1998).

Use of the Data

Manatt (1988), in suggesting that "Feedback, not Wheaties, is the breakfast of champions," stressed the importance of communicating with all groups affected by a school. Although research indicates that teacher, parents, and student participation could facilitate communications and provide a source of relevant information, few systems incorporate this input (Ferrare, 1990).
And those that have incorporated feedback face the difficult task of deciding what to do with the data that are collected. In other words, once deluged with all these data, how can or should a school use these data?

While not yet developed, Belluck (1997) noted that one district believes surveys could notch up the performance level a little bit and get teachers to improve. While not seen as a dramatic thing, it is believed to be an essential element to improve teaching. However, there is also concern among the staff that the possibilities for abuse are very high and surveys have the potential for encouraging a popularity race.

Goldberg (1990) used an evaluation form about a new math program that was being implemented. This was distributed to each parent. It was designed to obtain information and provide parents with a structure to express their reactions. The results of the surveys were used to determine what additional information parents needed about the program.

The major focus of a survey developed by McClure (1993) was to assist schools and a particular district in identifying areas of strengths and needs as perceived by parents. According to McClure, the survey results could serve as a measure of success or progress in reaching superintendent/school board, district, division, and school goals/objectives. Moreover, individual schools could develop their own plan for how the survey results could assist them with school or program improvement.

McClure did recommend using the results for a longitudinal study to see how the attitudes of parents were changing from year to year. In this study, to further validate the survey results, the comments of parents, students, and teachers were transcribed by school, topic, and effective school criteria. This information was then sent to the individual school principals, to the superintendent, and to other key decision makers at the district office for further analysis.
In checking parental attitudes toward a retest policy, Snow (1993) surveyed 20 parents. The parent survey not only assessed beliefs concerning the policy itself, but also questioned parental views on the fairness of teacher implementation of such retesting. The results were used to assist the district in their use of this procedure.

The purpose of a survey developed by Lawler-Prince, Grymes, Boals, and Bonds (1994) about the results of a program for three- and four-year-old children was to determine if parent-staff contacts had been improved, if parent participation had improved, and if parent and staff understandings of developmental programming had improved. Areas of strength were identified, as well as areas where parents needed additional information.

Prince (1987) developed 10 different sampling instruments which were used to collect data from teachers, parents, central office staff, students, and board members about the performance of principals. The results were given to the principals and used by the superintendent as part of the principal evaluations.

Gordon S. Black Corporation is a firm that, at the request of school districts, surveys parents, students, teachers, and staff. They do the survey by telephone or by mail, and report they have worked with 75 client districts. As part of their process, once completed, the results are analyzed to help schools identify experiences that contribute most to stakeholder satisfaction and dissatisfaction. These are then converted into impact models which take into account both how often an issue is occurring and the extent to which it correlates with the satisfaction of one of the groups. Areas can then be prioritized so that improvement(s) that will have the most impact on satisfaction can be implemented. Black is quick to point out that areas targeted for improvement may or may not be low performing, but they do have a strong correlation with satisfaction (Black, personal communication, November 14, 1997).
In an opinion article by Cohen (1998), it is suggested that public engagement is crucial to achieving deep, long-standing reform. But it can be a scary business. Districts that are not used to listening to various stakeholders, inside and beyond the system, may not like what they hear, and the information they receive can contradict their assumptions about where the school system should be heading. These comments suggest the indispensability of maintaining a balance between leadership and responsiveness. Genuine leadership, Cohen asserts, "involves active listening. But leadership is lost when listening becomes a matter of following the public parade to its lowest common denominator."

Cohen further contends that:

Sustaining public engagement in the face of such risks is difficult and not for the faint of heart. But as administrators survey the landscape, they are beginning to recognize that insular ways and means are not working. They are coming to the inescapable conclusion that if they do not engage the public, as well as their own internal audiences, their efforts to achieve change—if not altogether derailed—will continue to stall. (Cohen, 1998, p. 3)

To conclude, parents and community members are increasingly grading schools and seeing themselves as customers. And schools are using these in many and diverse ways. Such reports can be a good thing. "Educators can make the most of them, getting credit for what they do well and making sure that the report cards help both teachers and parents work together to improve student learning" (Rich, 1998).

School Choice

For many reasons, people have become less trusting of nearly all institutions but especially of governments at all levels. The estrangement of the public from public institutions is aggravated by the demands of life in a high-pressure society and by massive demographic changes. Public schools are frequently the target of negative reports in the mainstream media, and some
conservative groups gleefully exploit every instance they find of questionable actions by educators, regardless of how atypical they may be (Brandt, 1998).

This lack of trust has created parental dissatisfaction which, in many states, has resulted in legislation making parental choice of the school their children attend the norm. Where this is happening, it is believed schools will raise standards and become more "consumer responsive" in order to compete for parental custom and to maintain or increase pupil numbers, with good schools growing and bad ones closing (Bagley et al., 1996).

Where school choice occurs, to survive schools must learn to market themselves. For marketing to be effective, schools need to have a clear view of what parents think, how they make decisions, and what they look for in a school. It also requires schools to have effective means of acting on this knowledge and understanding (Bagley et al., 1996).

To market themselves, many schools are creating tools to give to parents that are "school shopping." Depending on the creativity of their producers, these reports are more or less effective in providing parents and others with understandable and useful information with which to judge the effectiveness of their children's schools. Although an increasing number of states, such as California, require schools to report to parents on students' collective test scores, dropouts, and a few additional statistics, many school districts in other states (particularly smaller ones) have provided parents with little systematic information on school effectiveness (Jaeger, 1994).

However, marketing in the public sector is in its infancy compared to marketing in the private sector. Companies realize that they will be unable to satisfy all the demands placed upon them. In order to be effective and survive, they make careful and informed decisions about the audiences at which their products are aimed and the markets in which they will compete (Bagley et al., 1996).
School choice is also occurring worldwide. For example, the current British Conservative government has placed a great deal of emphasis on market forces as a means of improving education and giving parents more influence. In their view, schools will be encouraged to become more responsive to the needs of the communities they serve if the schooling system takes on some of the key characteristics of a market culture (Bagley et al., 1996).

**Summary of Literature**

Research has shown time and again that parental involvement in instructional activities is beneficial and can be linked to student achievement (Fullen, 1982). And historically parent involvement has been widespread in the schools. However, in the past century parental involvement has declined. Perhaps that is why parental attitudes toward schools has also declined.

But parental participation involves more than just sending notes home to parents. It involves asking people to serve on committees, to assist with class functions, and to honestly seek and use ideas and input from parents. And if schools really value parents and their input, then they will want parents' honest evaluation of the school, of school buildings, and of the individual employees. Parent evaluations must be integrated into the formal evaluation process in such a way that their feedback will be used. And data suggest that general monitoring and oversight by parents, for example, through an organized communication network, can produce a "value added" component (Michigan State Board of Education, 1990).

How this information is gathered will be the duty of the school and parents to decide. There are many options including questionnaires with questions that fit on many pages, to questionnaires that fit on post cards, to phone surveys, to surveys conducted by people stopping patrons at the local shopping centers, to surveys at athletic contests, and on and on.
Once the data are gathered, the school must decide how to use the data. The best plan is to decide in advance of asking the questions what information is needed and what it will be used for and then to put that plan into action once the data are collected.

Many people believe the schools are no longer meeting the needs of students. And some believe that school choice will cause schools to improve. And if they do not, they will lose so many students they will not be able to survive. If individual schools are not responsive to the needs of students and to the wishes and requests of parents, and if school choice is available, then the potential closing of schools that are not responsive to the needs and the desires of the community may be a real possibility.

While Johnson and Pugh (1997) have noted schools are only as good as a community wants to make them, it is also critical for the schools to allow the community and parents to give the needed input to make the schools better. When such important stakeholders in the school's mission are overlooked, reform efforts may be destined for failure. It is therefore critical to include parents in the process of change (Fisher, 1994).

Table 1 is a summary of the research literature for evaluations which include input from nontraditional groups. It reveals that teacher performance evaluation instruments can be created; effective evaluation should include information from many sources including supervisors, peers, clients, and the public; various methods of planned and systematic citizen and parent evaluation can be done and used by supervisors; parent feedback will reinforce strengths but only moderately correct weaknesses; attitude surveys with discriminating items can be created by stakeholders; and getting parents to respond to surveys is a problem.

Table 2 summarizes the research literature for parental involvement. It reveals that parental involvement in schools can improve the achievement and success of children, their families, and the school's staff; and effective schools seek parental involvement.
Table 3 is a summary of the research literature for parental attitudes. It reveals that parents’ attitudes toward school may be different from students’ attitudes toward school, and the students may be unaware of that difference; there is no relationship between attitude and achievement; attitudes of students vary by gender; and parents who spend more time in school have more favorable attitudes toward the school.
### Table 1. A summary of the research literature for evaluations which include input from nontraditional groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Hidlebaugh</td>
<td>A teacher performance evaluation instrument can be created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Martone</td>
<td>Evaluation of programs by citizen participants lends a dimension to program success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Bagley, Woods, &amp; Glatter</td>
<td>Schools need planned and systematic methods of gaining parental feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Belknap &amp; Rickards</td>
<td>Recommend using various methods of feedback to obtain evaluation data from parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Manatt</td>
<td>Effective evaluation should include information from all who have contact with the employee including supervisors, peers, clients, and the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Manatt &amp; Kemis</td>
<td>Principals can use 360 degree feedback as a tool for their evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Popplewell &amp; Winget</td>
<td>Parent feedback evaluations were found to strongly reinforce providers' strengths and to only moderately correct providers' weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Prince</td>
<td>The principal's effectiveness can be modified by parent and teacher surveys and evaluation techniques if this process is tied to the principal's job description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>McClure</td>
<td>An attitude survey to measure effective school components and school improvement areas was developed by parents, students, teachers, and community members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Hecht, Dwyer, Wills, &amp; Roberts</td>
<td>Nonresponse to surveys to parents and students is a problem and noted systematic coercion appears to be the best alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Jaeger</td>
<td>What parents most want to know about the schools is different from what school administrators think they want to know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Ferrare</td>
<td>Discriminating items for student feedback on principal performance were developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Goldberg</td>
<td>Developed a survey for parent feedback to a school and instructor about a new math program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>McClure</td>
<td>Developed a survey to assist schools and a particular district in identifying areas with strengths and needs as perceived by parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Snow</td>
<td>Developed and implemented a parent survey on a test retaking policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. A summary of the research literature for parental involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Michigan State Board of Education</td>
<td>Parental involvement may increase student achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Henderson &amp; Berla</td>
<td>Documents positive relationships between some form of parental involvement in a child’s education and measurable benefits for children, their families, and schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Henderson &amp; Berla</td>
<td>When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school but throughout life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>National Commission on Education</td>
<td>Effective schools have parental involvement in children’s education and in supporting the aims of the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Moles</td>
<td>Well-planned, comprehensive, and long lasting parental involvement is linked to student achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Herman &amp; Yeh</td>
<td>Increased parental involvement results in positive increases on a number of school variables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Burns</td>
<td>Involving parents in the school benefits students, parents, and school staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984a</td>
<td>Walberg</td>
<td>Educational productivity rises when there is a partnership between home and the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>No significant relationship between changes in parental involvement and changes in student achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Powers</td>
<td>A partnership between teachers and parents helped the teacher gain insights into students and helped the parents become more interested in learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Brookover, Beamer, Efthim, Hathaway, Lezotte, Passalacqua, &amp; Tomatzky</td>
<td>The more serious and specific the school’s request for parental involvement, the more likely it is to achieve involvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. A summary of the research literature for parental attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Samuels</td>
<td>Found no relationship between attitude and achievement. Found no relationship between parents’ attitude and their student’s attitude toward school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Harris</td>
<td>Determined there were differences between parents’ attitudes and their children’s perceptions of those attitudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Riessman</td>
<td>The culture of the school is feminine, which helps explain the difference in attitudes of the different genders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>The more time spent in schools, the more favorable the parent’s attitude toward the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

This study developed and tested a pool of reliable and valid items which parents felt were important for parents to rate. These items are to be used to give parent feedback to the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings. The development of the questionnaire, the identification of the subjects participating, procedures for data collection, instrument validity and reliability, confidence intervals, human subjects release, and the statistical analyses used are discussed in this chapter.

The initial phase of the study involved developing a pool of items for parents to complete regarding the performance of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings. The items were developed from a thorough review of the literature and the examination of existing parental questionnaires.

To assist with the development of the items, a judgment panel reviewed a potential pool and selected existing items or wrote new ones. The questions went through many revisions until the final wording was acceptable. The questionnaire was printed and then mailed to parents who responded to a five-point Likert-type scale to rate the performance of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.
Initially, basic descriptive statistics were run on all items yielding means, standard deviations, minimums, and maximums. Finally, Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used to determine the reliability of the survey items. Items with reliability coefficients of .75 or beyond were identified.

Development of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire, the first phase of the study, consisted of developing items that parents could use to rate the performance of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings. Items selected for the questionnaire were developed primarily from two sources. First, a review of evaluation instruments, job descriptions, board policies, and literature listing potential questions were performed. This process yielded almost 300 potential items. Second, these items were reviewed by a judgment panel consisting of district administrators, building principals, teachers, community members, graduate students, and university professors. Many items were eliminated, and additional items were added.

Part one of the questionnaire

A final pool of 42 items was identified for use in part one of the questionnaire based upon opinions of the judgment panel. Later, an additional item was added so parents could identify the individual building being rated. Of those 43 items, three related to the school board, three related to the district administration, one was to indicate the school building being rated, 16 related to the programs, policies, and procedures of the individual school building being rated, eight were about
the administration of the building being rated, 10 were about the teaching and professional staff of
the building being rated, and two were about the support staff of the building being rated.

In addition, at the end of each section, a space was given for the parent to make comments
about that section or any issue the parent wished to write about. A larger section, for the same
purpose, was added at the end of each part.

**Part two of the questionnaire**

The second part of the questionnaire asked the parents to rate the importance of each item
the parent had rated. In other words, was this an item the parents thought they should be rating?
The same basic questions were used in part two as in part one. However, additional verbiage was
added so the questions would be read to ask whether the items under consideration should be
rated. Again, at the end of each section and at the end of the second part, a space was added for
comments.

**The cover letter**

A cover letter explaining why the district was doing the survey was developed based on
input from the participating districts and a judgment panel. The same basic cover letter was used
for each district with some minor revision including the changing of names to personalize it for
each district. This was included as the first page of the questionnaire booklet.

**The instructions**

The instructions for completing the questionnaire were developed through input from the
judgment panel, the researcher, and the National Computer Systems Corporation (NCS) of
Owatonna, Minnesota, which formatted and printed the questionnaire. NCS was consulted
because of their expertise in creating many questionnaires for different individuals, school
districts, and businesses. All writing and the final format of the questionnaire were approved by
the participating districts and the researcher before the questionnaires were printed by NCS.

The instructions for completing the questionnaire asked the raters to select an individual
building within the school district to evaluate. For all questions on part one, except the one
concerning the selection of the building to rate, a five-point Likert-type scale was used: 5 = Do not
know or not applicable, 4 = Always, 3 = To a great extent, 2 = To some extent, and 1 = Not at all.
On all questions on part two, a five-point Likert-type scale was used: 5 = Do not know/Not
applicable, 4 = Very important, 3 = Important, 2 = Somewhat important, and 1 = Not important.

For scoring purposes, Do not know or not applicable, or no mark were entered as a zero
(Hidlebaugh, 1973, p. 69). Raters were instructed to darken the proper oval on the questionnaire.
Interestingly, the scale used was opposite of most questionnaire scales but was what was requested
by the judgment panel. The instructions also asked the parent or guardian to return the
questionnaire within 10 days of receiving it. While impossible to verify, it appears that this was
largely ignored.

**The printed questionnaire**

The cover letter, instructions, and parts one and two of the questionnaire were printed in an
eight-page booklet form designed and printed by NCS. The raters recorded their evaluations of
the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of
individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers
and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school
buildings by marking ovals on the questionnaire booklets. These ovals (bubbles) were made so
they could be read by an electronic scanning response device. Each booklet was prenumbered so
when the pages were burst the scores from each parent could be kept together in case individual responses were needed to be examined. Two thousand were ordered for each district.

**Selection of Sample and Data Collection**

Finding districts to participate in a study of this nature was not easy. While several districts were contacted, the final participants (sample) consisted of an opportunity sample of two districts from separate states. Both districts expressed interest in the study and agreed to participate after some discussion with the researcher and the researcher's major professor.

**The participating districts**

Because of the sensitive nature of the responses, the names of the participating school systems have been changed to protect their identity. For purposes of this paper they are called Stream Harbor and Cotcar.

Stream Harbor is a K–12 district located near a large metropolitan area. It has a large socioeconomically and racially diverse student body. Cotcar is a K–8 district located in a rural setting. While also socioeconomically and racially diverse, it is a much wealthier district with excellent support for education within the district. Both districts are located in the northeastern United States.

All parents who participated in the administration and completion of the questionnaire represented the two districts. All data were collected in the spring of 1998.

**Selecting the names to receive the questionnaires**

Initially, a list of parents and guardians of all students was procured from each of the participating school districts. Duplicates of names were to be eliminated by the school so each
family was eligible to receive only one questionnaire. Cotcar did this, but Stream Harbor did not. Therefore, it was necessary to examine the names of the Stream Harbor students and compare those with their addresses to try to eliminate duplicates from the same family. Where duplicates were suspected, the name to be used was randomly selected. In cases where it was suspected three or more students were from the same household, names were again randomly eliminated to make sure all age children had the possibility of selection in case the name of the student shown on the label influenced the selection of the school rated by the parents. For example, if four names were believed to be from the same household, in one situation the first name might be kept with the others eliminated, in the next situation the third name might be kept, and so on.

With this done, names were randomly selected to receive the questionnaire from the remaining preprinted pressure address labels. Once a name was selected, the address label was removed and placed on an envelope. Inside the envelope was the questionnaire and a preaddressed, stamped return envelope. This packet was then mailed to the chosen parent or guardian.

**Mailing the questionnaires**

The mailings of the questionnaires to the selected parents or guardians required two separate mailings for each district. The first mailing to Steam Harbor parents and guardians consisted of 1,250 questionnaires sent on March 11, with another 750 mailed April 3. The initial mailing to Cotcar was 500 on April 11 with 139 more mailed May 2. The last returns were received from Stream Harbor on April 30, and the last returns were received from Cotcar on May 28.

There was considerable difficulty with the mailings to Stream Harbor. Within a couple weeks of the initial mailing, over 200 of the questionnaires had been returned undeliverable.
Stream Harbor's director of transportation, who had supplied the list of parents and guardians and their addresses, was contacted. When queried about the problem, he reported the city of Stream Harbor had decided to change the street names and numbers of many of the residences in town. He had not been able to supply an updated list of the new addresses since not all parents or guardians had provided the district with their new, correct addresses, or if they were supplied to the student's school, the school did not always provide the transportation director with a corrected address unless there was a specific reason they felt he should know. Further, he reported that he believed 40 percent of the addresses he had supplied were wrong.

To assist with solving this problem, approximately 200 of the undeliverable questionnaires were returned to Stream Harbor and district staff tried to locate the correct addresses of the people selected. This took several days, and it is impossible to determine how successful they were in their efforts.

Between the first mailing and when the last questionnaire was accepted, nearly 350 of the Stream Harbor questionnaires were returned undeliverable. This in part may account for the low rate of return at Stream Harbor.

Of the 3,389 questionnaires mailed, 3,200 contained return addresses to the district offices of the two districts being surveyed. The other 189 were to be returned to the researcher. This was done because of a shrinking timeline to get the descriptive statistical analyses of the results to the participating districts in a timely manner that could benefit the district before the staff left for the summer.

Those districts that participated in the study and the number of families identified, with the district names changed, are shown in Table 4.
Table 4. Participating districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District name</th>
<th>Number of families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stream Harbor</td>
<td>3,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotcar</td>
<td>1,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,895</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questionnaires properly completed**

Table 5 describes the number of parents properly completing the questionnaire. Some surveys were unusable because some were not completed, presumably because the parents exercised their option not to complete the survey. Others were not used because, contrary to the instructions, they indicated their responses were for more than one school or they indicated no school at all. All surveys not properly completed were discarded. However, the comments on all surveys, whether the survey was properly completed or not, were reported to the respective districts.

Table 5. Parent population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Questionnaires mailed</th>
<th>Questionnaires properly completed</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Confidence interval sought (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stream Harbor</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>±5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotcar</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>±5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,589</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>±5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Treatment of the completed forms

The completed forms were returned to the researcher for processing and analysis. The contents of each survey were examined. Comments were transcribed, the survey was examined to be sure it had been properly completed, and marking was checked and made clean where needed.

Once ready, the surveys were grouped by district and school within the district and scanned by the Iowa State University Test and Evaluation Services department using the Iowa State University Computation's mainframe computer. The Research Institute for Studies in Education at Iowa State assisted in processing the data and establishing files to use with the SPSS statistical software package.

All comments from parents were transcribed and presented to their respective districts. Spelling was corrected so all comments were legible, but the grammar was left as written. The school superintendent was given all comments by school and, where employees were identified by name, they were left on the pages for the superintendent to see. An additional copy was made for each building to be presented to the building administrator. In that copy the names of employees were eliminated and the results of the first six questions, which related to the board of education and district administration, were removed. So the building level administration saw only the responses that applied to their building. This procedure was recommended by the stakeholders committee of the Stream Harbor District, and was followed in the Cotcar District based on input from the Cotcar school superintendent.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

A commonly used definition of validity is that it is the degree to which a test measures what it purports to measure (Borg & Gall, 1989). To create the instrument, a judgment panel consisting of a team composed of district administrators, building principals, teachers, community members,
graduate students, and university professors was selected. This group reviewed many potential questions and wrote some. This mass authorship of the instrument has provided "social validity."

While "social validity" is important, the statistical integrity of the instrument is also of primary concern. The Cronbach coefficient alpha procedure, a general form of the Kuder-Richardson formula (K-R 20), was used to establish the reliability of the instruments. This procedure measures the internal consistency of a test based on the extent to which test takers who answer a test item one way respond to other items the same way (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Confidence Intervals

Survey researchers can never know for sure that their sample exactly mirrors the population. However, based on probability theory, samples of a certain size are likely to be representative of the population from which they are selected if all members of that population have an equal or known chance of being included in the sample (Folz, 1996). Therefore, through the process of random selection, a researcher can select a subset of the larger population that enables them to know with a certain level of confidence and a certain margin of error what people in the entire target population think. And if researchers apply the principles of probability theory, they can estimate their sample's accuracy and establish a certain level of confidence in their estimate (Folz, 1996).

As was noted, any sample by its very nature is likely to be imperfect. Consequently, there is always the possibility of some error. And since all samples are estimates, the difference between a sample statistic and the actual population parameter is known as sampling error (Folz, 1996). By definition, sampling error is the error that arises from trying to represent a population with a sample (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1994). Because of this error, researchers should not take sample results as absolutes, but rather as approximations since sample statistics may
underestimate or overestimate the actual population parameters (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1994).

Statisticians call this margin or range of error a confidence interval, and it is measured in units called standard error. The size of the standard error is the basis for measuring the accuracy of the estimates in the sample (Folz, 1996).

Confidence intervals provide a method for estimating population values, based on what is known about sample values (Borg & Gall, 1989). These intervals are a range of values that one can be confident contain the population parameter with the level of confidence being the degree of confidence that the computed interval contains the parameter being estimated (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1994). In other words, the level of confidence is the level of certainty that a particular sample's estimates fall within a specified range of a statistic (Folz, 1996).

According to Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (1994, p. 196), the general formula for constructing a confidence interval is:

\[
CI = \bar{X} \pm (t_{cv}) (s\bar{X})
\]

where
\[
\bar{X} = \text{sample mean}
\]
\[
t_{cv} = \text{critical value using the appropriate } t \text{ distribution}
\]
\[
s\bar{X} = \text{estimated standard error of the mean}
\]

Typically, in a specific research situation the level of confidence is the complement of the level of significance (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1994). For example, if a hypothesis can be specified at the .05 level of significance, then the corresponding level of confidence for constructing the confidence interval is 1-.05, or 95 percent.

For most administrative and managerial work, a confidence level of 95 percent and a margin of error of plus or minus 4 or 5 percentage points is satisfactory (Folz, 1996). Therefore,
for this study a confidence level of 95 percent with a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percent was used.

**Human Subjects Release**

The Iowa State University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research insists that researchers make sure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are adequately protected, that risks are outweighed by the potential benefits and expected value of the knowledge sought, that confidentiality of data is assured, and that informed consent is obtained by proper procedures. The procedures for this study were reviewed and approved by the committee, and the procedures were closely followed throughout the study. Consent to participate in the project in the form of modified consent was assumed by those voluntarily completing and returning the questionnaire.

**Treatment of Data**

Descriptive statistics were initially calculated, followed by specific statistical tests to address each research hypothesis.

Cronbach's coefficient alpha is used to estimate the internal consistency of a test when a single administration of a single form of the test is used (Borg & Gall, 1989). This procedure assesses the interitem consistency or homogeneity of the items and is used for measures which have multiple-scored scales. The definitional formula for Cronbach's coefficient alpha is:

$$\alpha = \frac{\frac{(k)}{cov/var}}{1+(k-1)\frac{cov/var}{var}}$$

where

- $k$ is the number of items in the scale
- $cov$ is the average covariance between items
- $var$ is the average variance of the items.
As Bohrnstedt and Knoke (1982) have noted:

Cronbach’s coefficient alpha, like a squared correlation coefficient, varies from 0 to 1. When negative values occur, the items are not positively correlated and the reliability model is violated. The larger the overall alpha coefficient, the more confident a researcher can feel that their items contribute to a reliable scale. The stronger the relationship between the items, the smaller the amount of combined variance. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha can be quite high if you have many items in the scale and if the items are highly correlated. (p. 223)

In this study, the Cronbach coefficient alpha was computed in the second phase of the investigation. It was used for all criteria on part one of the questionnaire to determine if a relationship existed between the parent’s ratings within each category, those categories being the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.
CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS

This study's major focus was the identification of valid and reliable items that parents felt were important and which could be used to give parent feedback to the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings. Data were collected using an 85-item questionnaire divided into two parts. The questionnaire was developed from a thorough review of the literature and the examination of existing parental questionnaires that were pertinent to this study.

Beginning in March 1998, questionnaires for this study were sent to randomly selected parents or guardians of students in two separate districts located in the northeastern part of the United States. Because of the sensitive nature of the responses, the names of the participating school systems have been changed to protect their identity. For purposes of this paper, they are called Stream Harbor and Cotcar.

Descriptive Analysis of All Returns

By May 28, 1998, the cutoff date to return the questionnaires to give sufficient time for analysis and to report the data to the respective schools in a timely fashion, 361 correctly completed questionnaires were returned by the parents and guardians of the Stream Harbor Schools, and 389 correctly completed questionnaires were returned by the Cotcar School parents and guardians. This provided an aggregate rater response of 29.0% with the response rate from Cotcar at 60.9% and the response rate at 18.5% from Stream Harbor. The low response rate from Stream Harbor might have occurred because the addresses provided the researcher by the district
were highly inaccurate with as many as 40 percent of the addresses incorrect. The incorrect addresses were the result of the change of the addresses of many of the houses in the city of Stream Harbor. Frequently, those changed addresses were not provided the transportation director who provided the researcher with the addresses of the parents and guardians.

Stream Harbor returns

Table 6 portrays the percentage returns for Stream Harbor by building and by level. The highest number of returns for the elementary buildings was from building three with 48 questionnaires returned that rated that building, and the lowest number of returns was for elementary four with 30 questionnaires. There were five elementary buildings and 55 percent of the 361 questionnaires returned were about those buildings. Twenty-one percent of the questionnaires returned rated the middle school, while 24 percent of the questionnaires rated the one high school.

Table 6. Stream Harbor percentage returns by building and by level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Questionnaires properly completed</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary #1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary #2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary #3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary #4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary #5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Elementary</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cotcar returns

Table 7 indicates the percentage returns for Cotcar by building and by level. Returns for the two elementary buildings made up 57.6% of the total returns for the district. Since Cotcar is a kindergarten through grade eight district and has no high school, the remaining 42.4% of the returns were about the middle school. In total, 389 questionnaires were returned about the Cotcar district.

Table 7. Cotcar percentage returns by building and by level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Questionnaires properly completed</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary #1</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary #2</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Elementary</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combined Stream Harbor and Cotcar returns

Table 8 illustrates the total returns by combining both the Cotcar and Stream Harbor responses. Of the 750 questionnaires properly completed, slightly more than half, 56.3%, rated the seven elementary buildings. About a third, 32.3%, rated the two middle schools, while 11.5% rated the one high school. It is important to remember that Cotcar does not have a high school, so it would be expected that a lower percentage of the total returns would have rated a high school.
Table 8. Total combined returns by percentage per level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Questionnaires properly completed</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Elementary</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Middle School</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Item Discrimination Questionnaire Analysis**

For the 43 questions on part one of the questionnaire, a five-point Likert-type scale was used to rate the performance of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.

For the 42 questions on part two of the questionnaire, a five-point Likert-type scale was used by the parents to rate the importance to the parents of rating the performance of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.

Points five through one on the scale were presented on the questionnaire in a response scale as 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; and 1 = Not at all.
Frequency counts of "Do not know" and "Not applicable" for part one

A frequency count was recorded for each of the responses. The "Do not know/Not applicable" or where no mark was recorded in part one of the questionnaire is shown in Table 9. Table 9 reveals that 31,500 total responses were properly recorded with 15,162 coming from Stream Harbor and 16,338 coming from Cotcar. Of the responses from Stream Harbor, 10.7% were either "Do not know" or "Not applicable," while 15.5% of the responses from Cotcar were that designation. Interestingly, the percentages of "No response" at Stream Harbor and Cotcar were nearly identical, with 1.6% at Stream Harbor and 1.5% at Cotcar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Question properly completed</th>
<th>Potential answers</th>
<th>DNK/NA</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stream Harbor</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>15,162</td>
<td>1,618</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotcar</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>16,338</td>
<td>2,536</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>31,500</td>
<td>4,154</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency counts of "Do not know" and "Not applicable" for part two

A frequency count was recorded for each of the responses. The "Do not know/Not applicable" or where no mark was recorded in part two of the questionnaire is shown in Table 10. Additionally, the inspection of Table 10 reveals there were a potential 31,500 responses to part two of the questionnaire. The percent of "Do not know/Not applicable" responses at both Stream Harbor and Cotcar were very close with 0.8% of the respondents at Stream Harbor and 0.6% of the respondents at Cotcar marking that particular oval. Leaving the answer blank, recorded as
Table 10. Part two responses of "Do not know/Not applicable" or where no mark was recorded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Question properly completed</th>
<th>Potential answers</th>
<th>DNK/NA</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stream Harbor</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>15,162</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotcar</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>16,338</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>31,500</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"No response," was also similar at both schools with a total of 624 questions for both schools receiving that designation, or 2.0%.

**Order of statistical calculation**

In this study, descriptive statistics were initially calculated, and the Cronbach coefficient alpha was computed in the second phase of the investigation. The Cronbach coefficient alpha was used for all criteria on part one of the questionnaire to estimate the interitem consistency or homogeneity of the parents' ratings within each category; those categories being the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings.

This chapter rephrases each of the research questions presented in Chapter I. The results of the statistical tests performed on the data are displayed in table form. Questions are presented and discussed in the order in which they appeared in Chapter I.
Research Question 1: What items about the board of education will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

Table 11 exhibits the mean scores of questions 1 to 3 for Stream Harbor, Cotcar, and the combined means. The highest mean response on this section for Stream Harbor, Cotcar, and for the combined mean was 3.9, very important, for question 2 on "the school board studying issues." The other questions all had means and combined means of 3.8, very important. They were question 1, "the school board should be an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and welfare of the community," and question 3, "advance notice of topics to be discussed at the board meetings."

Table 11. Importance of questions related to the board of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The school board should be an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The school board should study all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the meetings of the board of education or community councils should be given.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>737</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Very important; 3 = Important; 2 = Somewhat important; and 1 = Not important.
Research Question 2: What items about the district administration will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

Table 12 displays the mean scores for the questions related to the district administration. The mean response on each separate question is the same for Stream Harbor, Cotcar, and the combined means. All mean results are 3.8 or higher with question 4, "providing effective leadership," the highest at 3.9, very important, and "enforcing rules" and "encouraging widespread participation in planning goals," questions 5 and 6, both at 3.8, very important.

Table 12. Importance of district administration questions^a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. The district administration (superintendent, assistant superintendent, business administrator, etc.) should provide effective leadership.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The district administration should consistently enforce school rules.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The district administration should encourage parents, students, teachers, and community members to cooperate in planning and achieving the goals of the schools.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aResponse scale: 5=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Very important; 3=Important; 2=Somewhat important; and 1=Not important.
Research Question 3: What items about the programs, policies, and procedures of an individual school building will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

An examination of Table 13 reveals the combined mean responses range from a high of 4.0, very important, to a low of 3.7, also very important. For Stream Harbor, the mean responses tightly ranged from 3.9 to 3.7, very important, while the Cotcar mean responses ranged from 4.0 to 3.7, very important. The lowest combined mean responses were for question 10 about "the concerns of parents/guardians being reflected in decisions about the school," question 14, "the school’s programs should meet the requirements of students with special needs," and question 15, "the transportation services should meet the needs of students."

At Stream Harbor, the lowest mean responses of 3.7, very important, were for question 8, "the school should provide sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement," question 10, "the concerns of parents/guardians should be reflected in decisions affecting the school," and question 22, "cheating should not be a problem in the classroom."

Cotcar parents gave the lowest mean response of 3.7, very important, to question 10, "the concerns of parents/guardians should be reflected in decisions affecting the school," and question 15, "the transportation services should meet the needs of students."

Question 20, "learning should be a high priority in this school," received the highest combined mean response with a 4.0, very important.

Stream Harbor’s highest mean responses of 3.9, very important, went to question 7, "school staff should provide a clean, safe environment for learning," question 12, "the children should have access to a variety of resources," question 16, "grading policies and practices should be administered fairly," question 19, "there should not be a problem with substance abuse among students in the school," question 20, "learning should be a high priority in this school," and question 21, "the school should be preparing children for the 21st century."
Table 13. Importance of questions about the programs, policies, and procedures of an individual school building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. The school administration, faculty, and staff should provide a clean, safe environment for learning.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The school should provide sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I should be informed about the school's policies, programs, and operations.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The concerns of parents/guardians should be reflected in decisions affecting the school.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I should feel welcome in the school.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. My child should have access to a variety of resources (technology, library/media center, etc.) to help him/her succeed in learning.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The school facilities (work spaces, furnishings, etc.) should be adequate to support the instructional program.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Very important; 3 = Important; 2 = Somewhat important; and 1 = Not important.
Table 13. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. The school’s programs should meet the requirements of students with special needs (learning disabled, physically challenged, gifted and talented, etc.).</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The transportation services to and from school should meet the needs of students.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The school’s grading policies and practices should be administered fairly.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness should be demonstrated by students, teachers, and administrators at our school.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Sexual harassment should not be a problem at our school.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. There should not be a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Learning should be a high priority in this school.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The school should be preparing my child to enter the 21st century.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Cheating should not be a problem in the classroom.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cotcar’s highest mean response was also 4.0, very important, and went to question 20, "learning should be a high priority in this school."

**Research Question 4:** What items about the school administration of an individual school building will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

Table 14 discloses the mean responses for questions 23 to 30. The highest combined mean response is 3.9, very important, for question 25, "school administrators should administer discipline and educational programs fairly and consistently," and question 26, "school administrators communicating openly and honestly."

The highest mean responses at Stream Harbor were for question 26, "school administrators communicating openly and honestly," and question 30, "administrators should be accessible to meet with me about my child."

The highest mean responses at Cotcar were for questions 25 and 26, "school administrators should administer discipline and educational programs fairly and consistently," and "school administrators communicating openly and honestly."

The lowest combined mean of 3.7, very important, was for question 23, "administrators should listen to parents’ comments and suggestions," question 28, "school administrators supporting teachers appropriately in parent/teacher conflicts," and question 29, "administrators should support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict."

The lowest mean response at Stream Harbor was 3.6, very important, for question 28, "school administrators supporting teacher appropriately in parent/teacher conflicts."

The lowest mean response at Cotcar was 3.7 for question 23, "administrators should listen to parents’ comments and suggestions," question 28, "school administrators supporting teachers
Table 14. Importance of questions about the administrators of individual school buildings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. School administrators should listen to parents’ comments and suggestions.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. School administrators should respond to parents’ communications in a timely manner.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. School administrators should administer discipline and educational programs fairly and consistently.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. School administrators should communicate openly and honestly with parents.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. School administrators should administer rules and policies with compassion.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. School administrators should support teachers appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. School administrators should support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. School administrators should be accessible to meet with me about my child.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Very important; 3 = Important; 2 = Somewhat important; and 1 = Not important.
appropriately in parent/teacher conflicts," and question 29, "administrators should support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict."

Research Question 5: What items about the teachers and professional staff of an individual school building will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

Table 15 shows the parent ratings of the importance of questions about the teaching and professional staff. For the 10 questions, the combined means are grouped relatively closely together with the highest combined mean being 3.9, very important, and the lowest combined mean being 3.7, also very important. Question 37, "teachers should help motivate children to work to their potential," had the highest combined mean response of 3.9. The low mean of 3.7, very important, went to question 33 about "students being given the proper amount of homework."

At Stream Harbor the responses ranged from 3.8 to 3.6, both very important. The following questions had mean responses of 3.8: question 31, "teachers should regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students," question 32, "teachers should provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning," question 34, "teachers and counselors should be concerned about my child as an individual," question 35, "teachers should hold high expectations for student learning," question 36, "teachers should be available to give students the assistance they need with assignments," question 37, "teachers should help motivate my child to work to his/her potential," question 39, "the school’s counselors and nurse should give students the help they need," and question 40, "teachers should be preparing my child to master the Stream Harbor curriculum." The low mean of 3.6, very important, went to question 33 about "students being given the proper amount of homework."
Table 15. Importance of questions about the teaching and professional staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor</th>
<th>Cotcar</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. Teachers should regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Teachers should provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. My child should be given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Teachers and counselors should be concerned about my child as an individual.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Teachers should hold high expectations for student learning.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. The teachers should be available to give students the assistance they need with assignments.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. The teachers should help motivate my child to work to his/her potential.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. When requested, teachers and professional staff should readily make themselves available for appointments.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Very important; 3=Important; 2=Somewhat important; and 1=Not important.
Table 15. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39. The school's counselors and nurse should give students the help they need.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. The teachers should be preparing my child to master the (name of school) curriculum.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>727</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At Cotcar, the responses ranged from 3.9 to 3.8, both very important. The following questions had mean responses of 3.9: question 32, "teachers should provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning," question 34, "teachers and counselors should be concerned about my child as an individual," question 35, "teachers should hold high expectations for student learning," question 36, "teachers should be available to give students the assistance they need with assignments," question 37, "teachers should help motivate my child to work to his/her potential," and question 40, "teachers should be preparing my child to master the Stream Harbor curriculum." The low mean of 3.8, very important, went to the following questions: question 31, "teachers should regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students," question 33, "my child should be given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed," question 38, "teachers and professional staff should readily make themselves available for appointments," and question 39, "the school’s counselors and nurse should give students the help they need."

Research Question 6: What items about the support staff of an individual school building will the parents believe are important for parents to rate?

Table 16 reveals that both questions about the school support staff have combined means of 3.7, very important. Question 41 noted "support staff treat children well," while question 42 said "support staff provide a good image."

At Stream Harbor, the highest mean of 3.8, very important, went to question 42, "support staff provide a good image." While question 41, "support staff treat children well," had a lower mean, it was only 0.1 lower at 3.7, which is still very important.

At Cotcar, both questions earned a mean response of 3.7.
Table 16. Importance of individual school support staff questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41. The support staff should treat my child in a manner that is acceptable to me.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. The support staff should present a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Very important; 3 = Important; 2 = Somewhat important; and 1 = Not important.

Research Question 7: For each district and for all districts combined, what questionnaire items will the parents think are satisfactory?

Research Question 8: For each district and for all districts combined, what questionnaire items will the parents think are not satisfactory?

Table 17 provides evidence about the parents' thoughts on whether they should provide ratings for the various questions on the questionnaire. The maximum number of combined cases was 743 and the minimum was 726.

The minimum mean response from Stream Harbor was 3.6, very important, for question 33 about "the amount of homework given being appropriate to help a child succeed." From Cotcar, the minimum mean was 3.6, very important, for question 14 which was about "the school's programs meeting the requirements of students with special needs."

For both districts combined, the minimum mean was 3.7, very important, which was for the following questions: number 10, "the concerns of parents/guardians should be reflected in
decisions affecting the school," number 14, "the school's programs should meet the requirements of students with special needs," number 15, "the transportation services to and from school should meet the needs of students," number 23, "school administrators should listen to parents' comments and suggestions," number 28, "school administrators should support teachers appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict," number 29, "school administrators should support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict," number 33, "my child should be given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed," number 41, "the support staff should treat my child in a manner that is acceptable to me," and number 42, "the support staff should present a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors."

The highest mean response from Stream Harbor was 3.9, very important, for the following questions: number 7, "the school administration, faculty, and staff should provide a clean, safe environment for learning," number 4, "the district administration should provide effective leadership," number 30, "school administrators should be accessible to meet with me about my child," number 26, "school administrators should communicate openly and honestly with parents," number 21, "the school should be preparing my child to enter the 21st century," number 20, "learning should be a high priority in this school," number 2, "the school board should study all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision," number 19, "there should not be a problem with substance abuse among the students in the school," number 16, "the school's grading policies and practices should be administered fairly," and number 12, "my child should have access to a variety of resources to help him/her succeed in learning."

For Cotcar, the highest mean response was 4.0, very important, for question 20, "learning should be a high priority in this school."

For the combined mean responses, question 20 also had the highest mean of 4.0, very important.
Table 17. Parents' rating of the importance of questions by district and by districts combined*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The school board should be an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The school board should study all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the meetings of the board of education or community councils should be given.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The district administration (superintendent, assistant superintendent, business administrator, etc.) should provide effective leadership.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The district administration should consistently enforce school rules.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The district administration should encourage parents, students, teachers, and community members to cooperate in planning and achieving the goals of the schools.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Very important; 3 = Important; 2 = Somewhat important; and 1 = Not important.
### Table 17. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. The school administration, faculty, and staff should provide a clean,</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safe environment for learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The school should provide sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involvement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I should be informed about the school’s policies, programs, and</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The concerns of parents/guardians should be reflected in decisions</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affecting the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I should feel welcome in the school.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. My child should have access to a variety of resources (technology,</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library/media center, etc.) to help him/her succeed in learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The school facilities (work spaces, furnishings, etc.) should be</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adequate to support the instructional program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The school’s programs should meet the requirements of students with</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>special needs (learning disabled, physically challenged, gifted and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talented, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Stream Harbor mean</td>
<td>Cotcar mean</td>
<td>Combined mean</td>
<td>Combined standard deviation</td>
<td>Combined cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The transportation services to and from school should meet the needs of students.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The school's grading policies and practices should be administered fairly.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness should be demonstrated by students, teachers, and administrators at our school.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Sexual harassment should not be a problem at our school.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. There should not be a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Learning should be a high priority in this school.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The school should be preparing my child to enter the 21st century.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Cheating should not be a problem in the classroom.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. School administrators should listen to parents' comments and suggestions.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Stream Harbor mean</td>
<td>Cotcar mean</td>
<td>Combined mean</td>
<td>Combined standard deviation</td>
<td>Combined cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. School administrators should respond to parents' communications in a timely manner.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. School administrators should administer discipline and educational programs fairly and consistently.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. School administrators should communicate openly and honestly with parents.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. School administrators should administer rules and policies with compassion.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. School administrators should support teachers appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. School administrators should support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. School administrators should be accessible to meet with me about my child.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Teachers should regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Teachers should provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Stream Harbor mean</td>
<td>Cotcar mean</td>
<td>Combined mean</td>
<td>Combined standard deviation</td>
<td>Combined cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. My child should be given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Teachers and counselors should be concerned about my child as an individual.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Teachers should hold high expectations for student learning.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. The teachers should be available to give students the assistance they need with assignments.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. The teachers should help motivate my child to work to his/her potential.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. When requested, teachers and professional staff should readily make themselves available for appointments.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. The school's counselors and nurse should give students the help they need.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. The teachers should be preparing my child to master the (name of school) curriculum.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. The support staff should treat my child in a manner that is acceptable to me.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. The support staff should present a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With scores this close to the maximum of 4.0, very important, the variability as measured by the standard deviation would be expected to be close to 0.0, and it was. The maximum combined standard deviation was 0.6 for question 33, "my child should be given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed," question 28, "school administrators should support teachers appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict," question 14, "the school's programs should meet the requirements of students with special needs," and question 10, "the concerns of parents/guardians should be reflected in decisions affecting the school."

The minimum combined standard deviation was 0.3 on question 7, "the school administration, faculty, and staff should provide a clean, safe environment for learning," question 26, "school administrators should communicate openly and honestly with parents," question 20, "learning should be a high priority in this school," question 2, "the school board should study all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision," question 19, "there should not be a problem with substance abuse among the students in the school," and question 12, "my child should have access to a variety of resources to help him/her succeed in learning."

When examining all the questions, four had standard deviations of 0.6, 19 had standard deviations of 0.5, 13 were 0.4, and six were 0.3. For the combined means, one was 4.0, 13 were 3.9, 19 were 3.8, and nine were 3.7. All, therefore, were very important to the parents.

Research question 8 asked which questions did the parents think were not satisfactory. Based on Table 17 and the above discussion which noted the minimum mean response from Stream Harbor was 3.6, very important, the minimum mean response from Cotcar was 3.6, very important, and the minimum combined mean response was 3.7, very important, it would appear the parents thought all the questions were satisfactory.
Research Question 9: For each district surveyed and for all districts combined, what five questions will the parents report have the highest satisfaction?

Table 18 documents the top five ranked questions from part one of the survey as measured by parental satisfaction. All five had the same combined mean response of 3.4, to a great extent, and were: number 8, "the school administration, faculty, and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning," number 10, "I am informed about the school's policies, programs, and operations," number 13, "my child has access to a variety of resources to help him/her succeed in learning," number 21, "learning is a high priority in this school," and number 39, "teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments."

Table 19 presents the top six ranked questions from part one of the survey for Stream Harbor as measured by parental satisfaction. Six were selected because of a tie for the fifth question. The mean response for all six was 3.3, to a great extent. Those six questions are: number 8, "the school administration, faculty, and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning," number 10, "I am informed about the school's policies, programs, and operations," number 12, "I feel welcome in the school," number 21, "learning is a high priority in this school," number 31, "school administrators are accessible to meet with me about my child," and number 39, "when requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments."

Table 20 exhibits the top 13 ranked questions from part one of the survey for Cotcar as measured by parental satisfaction. Thirteen was selected because of a tie for the fifth spot. Question 21, "learning is a high priority in this school," and question 43, "the support staff presents a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors," had the highest mean response at 3.6, almost always. Next was number 8, "the school administration, faculty, and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning," and number 39, "teachers and professional staff readily
Table 18. Top five ranked questions for parental satisfaction—districts combined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. The school administration, faculty, and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am informed about the school's policies, programs, and operations.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. My child has access to a variety of resources (technology, library/media centers, etc.) to help him/her succeed in learning.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Learning is a high priority in this school.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. When requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all.
Table 19. Top five ranked questions for parental satisfaction in Stream Harbor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Response scale*</th>
<th>Number rating</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The school administration, faculty, and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning.</td>
<td>0.8 49.3 32.7 12.7 1.9</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am informed about the school's policies, programs, and operations.</td>
<td>7.8 49.3 23.8 15.0 2.2</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel welcome in the school.</td>
<td>0.8 46.0 37.4 14.4 1.1</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Learning is a high priority in this school.</td>
<td>0.6 54.6 21.3 17.2 5.0</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. School administrators are accessible to meet with me about my child.</td>
<td>4.4 47.4 29.1 15.5 3.0</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. When requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments.</td>
<td>0.6 50.1 26.6 17.2 4.2</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Always; 3=To a great extent; 2=To some extent; 1=Not at all.
Table 20. Top five ranked questions for parental satisfaction in Cotcar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Response scale(^a)</th>
<th>Number rating quality</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 (percent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Learning is a high priority in this school.</td>
<td>1.0 64.8 25.7 6.2 1.0</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. The support staff presents a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors.</td>
<td>2.3 42.4 34.2 8.2 1.3</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The school administration, faculty, and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning.</td>
<td>0.5 58.4 34.7 4.9 0.3</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. When requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments.</td>
<td>3.9 57.6 27.2 9.5 0.5</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The school provides sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement.</td>
<td>11.6 47.3 30.8 8.0 0.8</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am informed about the school's policies, programs, and operations.</td>
<td>0.5 57.8 27.2 11.8 1.8</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel welcome in the school.</td>
<td>0.5 56.3 30.1 10.8 1.5</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Response scale</th>
<th>Number rating quality</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. My child has access to a variety of resources (technology, library/media centers, etc.) to help him/her succeed in learning.</td>
<td>5 44.2 29.0 8.5 0.3</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness is demonstrated by students, teachers, and administrators at our school.</td>
<td>0.8 51.4 36.2 10.0 0.5</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. School administrators are accessible to meet with me about my child.</td>
<td>0.3 60.7 20.3 14.7 2.8</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Teachers provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning.</td>
<td>19.0 44.5 24.2 10.0 1.0</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. The school's counselors and nurse give students the help they need.</td>
<td>0.5 46.0 44.5 8.0 0.3</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. The support staff treats my child in a manner that is acceptable to me.</td>
<td>40.4 28.5 23.1 6.7 0.5</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
make themselves available for appointments," with a mean of 3.5, almost always. Number 9, "the school provides sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement," number 10, "I am informed about the school's policies, programs, and operations," number 12, "I feel welcome in the school," number 13, "my child has access to a variety of resources to help him/her succeed in learning," number 18, "sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness is demonstrated by students, teachers, and administrators at our school," number 31, "school administrators are accessible to meet with me about my child," number 33, "teachers provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning," number 40, "the school’s counselors and nurse give students the help they need," and number 42, "the support staff treats my child in a manner that is acceptable to me," complete the top 13. All had means of 3.4, to a great extent.

**Research Question 10:** For each district surveyed and for all districts combined, what five questions will the parents report have the lowest satisfaction?

Table 21 shows the bottom six, since there was a tie for fifth, ranked questions from part one of the survey as measured by parental satisfaction. The bottom two questions both related to the school board. The lowest combined mean was 2.6, to a great extent, for question 1, "the school board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community," and question 2, "the school board studies all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision." Next, with means of 2.7, to a great extent, were numbers 3 and 20, "adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the school board meetings is given" and "there is not a problem with substance abuse among the students in the school." Finally, number 4, "the district administration provides effective leadership," and number 23, "cheating not being a problem in the classroom," had a combined mean of 2.8, to a great extent.
### Table 21. Bottom five ranked questions for parental satisfaction—districts combined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The school board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The school board studies all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision.</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the school board meetings is given.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. There is not a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The district administration (superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of special education, athletic director, etc.) provides effective leadership.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Cheating is not a problem in the classroom.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all.
Table 22 presents the bottom seven ranked questions from part one of the survey for Stream Harbor as measured by parental satisfaction. Seven was chosen since there was a tie for fifth. The bottom three all related to the school board. The lowest mean was 2.3, to some extent, for question 2 about "the school board studying issues before rendering a decision." Next, with a 2.4 mean, to some extent, was question 1, "the school board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community." That is followed by number 3, with a mean of 2.4, to some extent, "adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at school board meetings is being given," number 20, with a mean of 2.5, to a great extent, "there is not a problem with substance abuse among students," number 4, with a mean of 2.7, to a great extent, "the district administration provides effective leadership," number 19, with a mean of 2.7, to a great extent, "sexual harassment is not a problem at our school," and number 23, with a mean of 2.7, to a great extent, "cheating is not a problem in the classroom."

Table 23 exhibits the bottom 11 ranked questions from part one of the survey for Cotcar as measured by parental satisfaction. Eleven questions are reported since there was a tie for fifth place. Question 20, concerning "there not being a problem with substance abuse among the students," and question 23, "cheating is not a problem in the classroom," had the lowest mean responses at 2.8, to a great extent. Next was number 20, "there is not a problem with substance abuse among the students in the school," and number 23, "cheating is not a problem in the classroom," with respective means of 2.9, to a great extent. The remaining questions needed to complete the bottom 11 had means of 3.0, to a great extent, and were number 1, "the school board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community," number 30, "school administrators support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict," number 2, "the school board studies all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision," number 3, "adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the school board meetings is
Table 22. Bottom five ranked questions for parental satisfaction in Stream Harbor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Response scale*</th>
<th>Number rating quality</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. The school board studies all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision.</td>
<td>19.9 6.6 16.9 45.4 9.7</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The school board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community.</td>
<td>8.6 10.2 22.7 46.8 9.4</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the school board meetings is given.</td>
<td>15.5 11.6 20.5 39.3 11.1</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. There is not a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school.</td>
<td>34.3 16.1 11.9 21.3 13.9</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The district administration (superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of special education, athletic director, etc.) provides effective leadership.</td>
<td>10.0 16.1 35.2 31.6 6.6</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Sexual harassment is not a problem at our school.</td>
<td>47.1 16.3 13.3 8.9 11.9</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Cheating is not a problem in the classroom.</td>
<td>46.5 13.3 14.4 15.8 7.5</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all.
Table 23. Bottom five ranked questions for parental satisfaction in Cotcar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Response scale*</th>
<th>Number rating quality</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20. There is not a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school.</td>
<td>40.1 19.0 16.7 14.7 7.7</td>
<td>382 7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Cheating is not a problem in the classroom.</td>
<td>53.7 13.1 16.2 10.0 5.9</td>
<td>385 4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The school board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community.</td>
<td>11.6 14.7 49.6 22.1 0.5</td>
<td>383 6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. School administrators support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict.</td>
<td>59.4 12.9 13.6 9.8 3.1</td>
<td>384 5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The school board studies all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision.</td>
<td>19.8 19.8 37.0 21.9 0.5</td>
<td>385 4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the school board meetings is given.</td>
<td>13.9 26.0 36.0 20.3 2.8</td>
<td>385 4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all.
Table 23. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Response scale</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 (percent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The district administration (superintendent, assistant superintendent, business administrator, etc.) provides effective leadership.</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The concerns of parents/guardians are reflected in decisions affecting the school.</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The school facilities (work spaces, furnishings, etc.) are adequate to support the instructional program.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The school's programs meet the requirements of students with special needs (learning disabled, physically challenged, gifted and talented, etc.)</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Sexual harassment is not a problem at our school.</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
given," number 4, "the district administration provides effective leadership," number 11, "the concerns of parents/guardians are reflected in decisions affecting the school," number 14, "the school facilities are adequate to support the instructional program," number 15, "the school’s programs meet the requirements of students with special needs," and number 19, "sexual harassment is not a problem at our school."

Research Question 11: What items about the board of education will have a reliability index of .75 or higher? Additionally, Hypothesis 1 stated the reliability of the items about the board of education will be greater than or equal to .75.

In Table 24, the ranked order of the questions in terms of the highest mean response to the lowest mean response of the combined districts is displayed. It shows the highest combined mean

Table 24. Reliability for questions related to the board of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the school board meetings is given.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>545</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The school board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The school board studies all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision.</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>545</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all.
response was for question 3, "the school board gives adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at meetings," with 2.7, to a great extent, while the lowest mean response was for question 1, "the school board should be an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and welfare of the community," and question 2, "the school board studies all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision," with 2.6, to a great extent. In order to determine the reliability of the questions in this section, the Cronbach coefficient alpha was computed. The results show a reliability of 0.8. Therefore, the questionnaire achieved the desired level of reliability.

**Research Question 12:** What items about the district administration will have a reliability index of .75 or higher? Further, Hypothesis 2 stipulated the reliability of the items about the district administration will be greater than or equal to .75.

Table 25 displays the ranked order of the questions about the district administration in terms of the highest mean response question to the lowest mean response question of the combined districts. Question 5, concerning "the enforcement of rules," had the highest mean response at both schools as well as the highest combined mean response at 3.1, to a great extent. The lowest mean responses at both the schools and in total centered around "the district administration providing effective leadership" at 2.8, to a great extent. In order to determine the reliability of this section, the Cronbach coefficient alpha was computed, and there was an alpha of 0.8. Therefore, the questionnaire achieved the desired level of reliability.
Table 25. Reliability for district administration questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. The district administration consistently enforces school rules.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>516</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The district administration encourages parents, students, teachers, and community members to cooperate in planning and achieving the goals of the schools.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>516</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The district administration (superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of special education, athletic director, etc.) provides effective leadership.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all.

Research Question 13: What items about the programs, policies, and procedures of an individual school building will have a reliability index of .75 or higher? Hypothesis 3 stated the reliability of the items about the programs, policies, and procedures of an individual school building will be greater than or equal to .75.

Table 26 provides the ranked order from the highest to the lowest combined mean scores of the questions about the programs, policies, and procedures of an individual school building. Of the 16 questions, 12 had a combined mean of 3.0, to a great extent or greater, while four had a
combined mean of less than 3.0, to a great extent. The questions with the highest combined mean of 3.4 was number 8, "the school administration, faculty, and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning," number 10, "I am informed about the school’s policies, programs, and operations," number 13, "my child has access to a variety of resources to help him/her succeed in learning," and number 21, "learning is a high priority in this school." The question with the lowest combined mean response was number 20, "there is not a problem with substance abuse among the students in the school."

The highest mean response from Stream Harbor was 3.3, to a great extent, for question 21, "learning is a high priority in this school," question 8, "the school administration, faculty, and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning," and question 12, "I feel welcome in the school."

The lowest mean response from Stream Harbor was 2.5, to a great extent, for question 20, "there is not a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school."

The highest mean response from Cotcar was 3.6, almost always, for question 21, "learning is a high priority in this school." The lowest mean response was 2.8, to a great extent, for question 20, "there is not a problem with substance abuse among the students in the school," and question 23, "cheating is not a problem in the classroom."

The Cronbach coefficient alpha for this section was 0.9. Therefore, the questionnaire achieved the desired level of reliability.
Table 26. Reliability for questions about the programs, policies, and procedures of an individual school building*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. The school administration, faculty, and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am informed about the school's policies, programs, and operations.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. My child has access to a variety of resources (technology, library/media centers, etc.) to help him/her succeed in learning.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Learning is a high priority in this school.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel welcome in the school.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness is demonstrated by students, teachers, and administrators at our school.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The school provides sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. The school is preparing my child to enter the 21st century.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. The school's programs meet the requirements of students with special needs (learning disabled, physically challenged, gifted and talented, etc.)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The transportation services to and from school meet the needs of students.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The school's grading policies and practices are administered fairly.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The school facilities (work spaces, furnishings, etc.) are adequate to support the instructional program.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The concerns of parents/guardians are reflected in decisions affecting the school.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Sexual harassment is not a problem at our school.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Cheating is not a problem in the classroom.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. There is not a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 14: What items about the school administration of an individual school building will have a reliability index of .75 or higher? Hypothesis 4 stipulated the reliability of the items about the school administration of an individual school building will be greater than or equal to .75.

Table 27 displays the rank order from the highest to the lowest combined means of the questions about the individual school building administrators. One can infer from the combined means that the answer to each question would be "to a great extent." The highest rated question, with a combined mean of 3.3, noted that "school administrators are accessible to meet with parents about their children." The lowest rated one, with a combined mean of 2.9, noted that "school administrators appropriately support parents in parent/teacher conflicts."

At Stream Harbor, the highest mean response was 3.3, to a great extent, for question 31, "school administrators are accessible to meet with me about my child." The lowest mean response was 2.8, to a great extent, for question 30, "school administrators support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict."

At Cotcar, the highest mean response was 3.4, to a great extent, for question 31, "school administrators are accessible to meet with me about my child." The lowest mean response was 2.9, to a great extent, for question 30, "school administrators support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict."

The alpha for these combined totals was 0.9, and the questionnaire achieved the desired level of reliability.
Table 27. Reliability for questions about the administrators of individual school building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. School administrators are accessible to meet with me about my child.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. School administrators support teachers appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. School administrators respond to parents’ communications in a timely manner.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. School administrators listen to parents’ comments and suggestions.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. School administrators administer discipline and educational programs fairly and consistently.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. School administrators communicate openly and honestly with parents.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. School administrators administer rules and policies with compassion.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. School administrators support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all.
Research Question 15: What items about the teachers and professional staff of an individual school building will have a reliability index of .75 or higher? Hypothesis 5 expressed that the reliability of the items about the teachers and professional staff of an individual school building will be greater than or equal to .75.

An examination of Table 28 indicates all 10 items had a combined mean of 3.0, to a great extent or higher. The rank order from the highest to the lowest showed the highest combined mean of 3.4 was for question 39, "when requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments," while the lowest mean of 3.0 was for "teachers regularly communicate with parents and guardians about their students."

At Stream Harbor, the highest mean response was 3.5, almost always, for question 39, "when requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments." The lowest mean response was 3.1, to a great extent, for question 38, "the teachers help motivate my child to work to his/her potential," and question 32, "teachers regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students."

At Cotcar, the highest mean response was 3.4, to a great extent, for question 39, "when requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments." The lowest mean response was 3.1, to a great extent, for question 38, "the teachers help motivate my child to work to his/her potential," question 32, "teachers regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students," and question 34, "my child is given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed."

The Cronbach coefficient alpha for the questions about the teaching and professional staff of an individual building was 0.9. Therefore, the questionnaire achieved the desired level of reliability.
Table 28. Reliability for questions about the teaching and professional staff*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39. When requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Teachers provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Teachers hold high expectations for student learning.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. The school’s counselors and nurse give students the help they need.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. My child is given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Teachers and counselors are concerned about my child as an individual.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. The teachers are available to give students the assistance they need with assignments.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response scale: 5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all.
Table 28. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41. The teachers are preparing my child to master the (name of school district) curriculum.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. The teachers help motivate my child to work to his/her potential.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Teachers regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 16: What items about the support staff of an individual school building will have a reliability index of .75 or higher? Hypothesis 6 read that the reliability of the items about the support staff of an individual school building will be greater than or equal to .75.

The two questions that are depicted in Table 29 state "the support staff treats my child in a manner that is acceptable to me" and "the support staff presents a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors," and show combined mean responses of 3.3, to a great extent.

At Stream Harbor, both questions had mean responses of 3.2, to a great extent. At Cotcar, question 43, "the support staff presents a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors," had a mean response of 3.6, almost always, while question 42, "the support staff treats my child in a manner that is acceptable to me," had a mean response of 3.4, to a great extent.

The Cronbach coefficient alpha for these questions was 0.9. Therefore, the questionnaire achieved the desired level of reliability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Stream Harbor mean</th>
<th>Cotcar mean</th>
<th>Combined mean</th>
<th>Combined standard deviation</th>
<th>Combined cases</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42. The support staff treats my child in a manner that is acceptable to me.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>615</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. The support staff presents a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aResponse scale: 5=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Always; 3=To a great extent; 2=To some extent; 1=Not at all.*
Research Question 17: This question asks, with a confidence level of 95 percent, what margin of error can be specified for each district and for all districts combined?

A sample size must be large enough to attain a certain level of confidence and precision. To attain that level, the project's purpose and, potentially, the budget, must first be considered. When that is completed, the sample size can then be determined by algebraically computing the size or by using tables. The formula to compute sample size is as follows:

\[ \sqrt{n} = \left(\sqrt{p(1-p)}\right) \times \left(\frac{1.96}{a}\right) \]

where:

- \( n \) is the sample size
- \( p \) is the population proportion of interest
- 1.96 is the z score for the confidence level of 95 percent (to compute 99 percent you would use 2.58 or to compute 99 percent you would use 3.0)
- \( a \) is the level of accuracy desired (Folz, 1996, p. 50).

Table 30 shows the confidence levels achieved for each school district and the combined population of both districts. The table shows at the 95 percent level of confidence that both Stream Harbor and Cotcar achieved a ±5 percent level of precision while ±4 percent was achieved for the entire survey when the results of both districts are combined.
Table 30. Ninety-five percent confidence intervals for Stream Harbor, Cotcar, and both districts combined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of families</th>
<th>Questionnaires properly completed</th>
<th>Confidence interval (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stream Harbor</td>
<td>3,456</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>±5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotcar</td>
<td>1,439</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>±5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,895</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>±4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted in the spring of 1998 with the purpose of identifying, refining, and testing a parent feedback questionnaire to be used to gain information from parents about the operation of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings. To accomplish this task, 750 parents from two school districts located in the northeastern United States returned an 85-item questionnaire divided into two parts. The first part was specific questions about the above listed issues. The second part was to rate the importance of the questions in the first part. The questionnaire was developed by a judgment panel of practitioners, researchers, and district stakeholder committees after a thorough review of the literature and the examination of existing parental questionnaires that were pertinent to this study.

Descriptive statistics were calculated on all items on both parts one and two of the questionnaire. The Cronbach coefficient alpha was also computed for each section of part one to determine the internal consistency of the ratings done by the parents.

Because of the sensitive nature of the responses, names of the participating school systems have been changed to protect their identity. For purposes of this paper, they are called Stream Harbor and Cotcar.

Summary

The problem for this study, conducted in the spring of 1998, was to develop and test a pool of items upon which an evaluation instrument could be established to evaluate all groups within a
district's leadership and staff, as well as selected programs and policies. The review of literature uncovered scant evidence of systematic, planned feedback of parents in the evaluation process to the above segments of schools (Hidlebaugh, 1973; Martone, 1981). Because of the difficulty of doing this study, it is obvious why there is little research on this topic.

As a result of a review of the literature and feedback from a judgment panel, a preliminary pool of almost 300 items was developed. A final pool of 85 items was identified for the questionnaire; 43 for part one and 42 for part two. Of those 43 items in part one, three related to the school board, three related to the district administration, one was to indicate the school building being rated, 16 related to the programs, policies, and procedures of the individual school building being rated, eight were about the administration of the building being rated, 10 were about the teaching and professional staff of the building being rated, and two were about the support staff of the building being rated.

Part two of the questionnaire asked the parents to rate how important they felt it was for parents to rate each of the items in part one. Part two had 42 questions since the question about which building was being evaluated was not included in this section.

Finding districts to participate in this investigation was not easy because of the nature of the study. The participants (sample) consisted of an opportunity sample of two school systems located in the northeastern United States. Because of the sensitive nature of the responses, names of the school districts were changed to protect their identity. Those participating (with their names changed) were:

1. Stream Harbor, a K–12 district located near a large metropolitan area, with a socio-economically and racially diverse student body. There was much turmoil in the district associated with the board of education and the superintendent, and it was reported that there was poor support for the school system among families. Stream Harbor has five elementary buildings, a
middle school, and a high school. A total of 3,456 families were identified, 1,950 questionnaires were mailed, and 361 were returned properly completed.

2. Cotcar, a K-8 system located in a rural setting, has a socioeconomically and racially diverse student body, but is a much wealthier district than Stream Harbor. This was a stable school system with little perceived turmoil and much perceived parental support for the school. Cotcar has two elementaries and a middle school. A total of 1,439 families were identified, 639 questionnaires were mailed, and 389 were returned properly completed.

Once the questionnaires were returned, the contents of each survey were examined. Comments were transcribed after being corrected for spelling. All comments were returned to the superintendent and comments for each building were returned to the building principal without the first six questions relating to the superintendent and the board of education, and with all names deleted. Finally, the statistical results of the survey were also returned to each district.

Mass authorship of the document provided social validity, while the Cronbach coefficient alpha procedure, a general form of the Kuder-Richardson formula (KR-20), was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Finally, confidence intervals were computed for each district and for the survey as a whole.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are offered concerning the analysis of the data collected in this investigation.

Conclusions regarding the survey

1. Judging from parent responses, all items from all sections of the survey instrument were appropriate. This was true for each district and when the results were combined for both districts.
2. When the results of both districts were combined and a Cronbach coefficient alpha was computed, it yielded an overall reliability of 0.97 for the entire instrument.

Conclusions regarding Stream Harbor

1. Stream Harbor patrons were generally satisfied with the district, rating the following questions with the highest positive response: Number 8, "a clean and safe environment is provided," number 10, "the parents are informed about the school's policies, programs, and operations," number 12, "the parents feel welcome at school," question 21, "learning is a high priority in the school," question 31, "administrators are accessible to meet with parents," and question 39, "staff will make themselves available for appointments." The mean response for all six was 3.3, to a great extent.

2. In the main, patrons of Stream Harbor were less satisfied than the parents of Cotcar. This was shown by the following lowest rated items: Number 1, "the school board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community," number 2, "the school board studies issues before rendering a decision," number 3, "adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at school board meetings is given," number 4, "the district administration provides effective leadership," number 19, "sexual harassment is not a problem at our school," number 20, "there is not a problem with substance abuse among students," and number 23, "cheating is not a problem in the classroom." The parent mean responses for these questions ranged from 2.3, to some extent, to 2.7, to a great extent.

Conclusions regarding Cotcar

1. Cotcar respondents were generally more positive than parents in Stream Harbor. The Cotcar parents were particularly positive toward the following questions: Question 8, "the school
provides a clean and safe environment," question 9, "the school provides opportunities for parent involvement," question 10, "the parents are informed about the school’s policies, programs, and operations," question 12, "the parents feel welcome at school," question 13, "there are a variety of resources such as technology and library/media centers which can be used to help the children succeed," question 18, "sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness is demonstrated by students and staff," question 21, "learning is a high priority in the school," question 31, "administrators are accessible to meet with parents," question 33, "teachers provide instructional activities that involve students," question 39, "staff will make themselves available for appointments," question 40, "the counselors and nurse give students the help they need," question 42, "the support staff treats children in an acceptable manner," and question 43, "the support staff presents a good image." All had mean responses of 3.4, to a great extent.

2. In some ways similar to Stream Harbor, the respondents were negative to question 1, "the school board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community," question 2, "the school board studies issues before rendering a decision," question 3, "adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at school board meetings is given," question 4, "the district administration provides effective leadership," question 11, "the concerns of parents are reflected in school decisions," question 14, "school facilities are adequate," question 15, "the school’s programs meet the requirements of students with special needs," question 19, "sexual harassment is not a problem at our school," question 20, "there is not a problem with substance abuse among the students," question 23, "cheating is not a problem in the classroom," and question 30, "administrators support parents appropriately in parent/teacher conflicts." While these were the lowest rated items, the mean responses were fairly high ranging from 2.8, to a great extent, to 3.0, to a great extent.
Conclusions regarding research questions

1. Research questions 1 through 8 dealt with parents' judgment about the appropriateness of items pertaining to district-wide and building level personnel, policies, and programs. Surprisingly, parents judged all the items being tested to be satisfactory.

2. In examining the questions with the highest satisfaction, research question 9, the list was quite similar for both districts. When the results of the surveys were combined, the following questions showed the highest satisfaction: Question 8 that "a clean and safe environment is provided by the faculty and staff," question 10, "the parents are informed about the school's policies, programs, and operations," question 13, which stated they felt "there were a variety of resources such as technology and library/media centers which could be used to help the children succeed," question 21, which noted that "learning is a high priority in the individual school," and question 39, "teachers and staff make themselves available for appointments." All had mean responses of 3.4, to a great extent.

3. When examining the questions with the lowest satisfaction, research question 10, the list was again very similar for both districts. When the results of the surveys were combined, the following questions showed the lowest satisfaction: Question 1, "the school board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community," question 2, "the school board studies issues before rendering a decision," question 3, "adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at school board meetings is given," question 20, "there is not a problem with substance abuse among students," and question 23, "cheating is not a problem in the classroom." It is important to note that while these were the lowest rated items, the mean responses were fairly high ranging from 2.6, to a great extent, to 2.8, to a great extent.
4. Research questions 11 through 16 examined the reliability of the instrument, and a desired level of 0.75 or higher was sought. When the results were combined, the instrument and its subscales were all reliable at that level.

5. The last research question, number 17, examined the confidence level produced by the survey methodology. A 95 percent confidence level was sought. Analysis revealed the confidence level at Stream Harbor and Cotcar was ±5 percent, and ±4 percent was achieved for the entire survey. It can be concluded that the methodology was successful regarding the confidence level.

Limitations

Certain limitations were imposed to the design of this study. They were:

1. Two school systems who agreed to participate in the study were chosen as the study population. No previous studies focusing upon parents’ ratings of the board of education, the district administration, the programs, policies, and procedures of individual school buildings, the school administration of individual school buildings, the teachers and professional staff of individual school buildings, and the support staffs of individual school buildings had been conducted. Consequently, the stakeholders committee had a significant and direct influence upon the questionnaires to be administered and the processes for administering the questionnaires.

2. All respondents to the questionnaire were members of the two school districts. Community members of a school district that would participate in a study of this nature may have unique attributes that were not controlled for in this study.

3. Generalizations of parent satisfaction cannot be made outside the population of this study.
4. Because each school district participating in this investigation did so on a voluntary basis, agreeing to take part could be an indication that the districts emphasize performance evaluation more than a district randomly selected.

5. This study focused on identifying valid and reliable items. No recommendation will be offered to participating schools on the utilization of these results.

6. The performance level of the different groups who were evaluated was not assessed independent of the questionnaire results. That is to say, this investigation focused on the item, not the different groups or their performance.

7. Parent participation in this study was on a voluntary basis. This decision might have influenced the responses made on the questionnaire. Additionally, parents were permitted to retain, or return blank, their questionnaire if the decision was made not to participate.

8. Some of the data collected were eliminated from the study because the questionnaire was not properly completed according to the written instructions. However, any comments made on those questionnaires were transcribed and presented to the appropriate people.

9. All questionnaires were distributed and collected during the spring of 1998, preventing the analysis of findings in a longitudinal study beyond that time.

10. No attempt was made to determine whether the ability and performance level of students affected the parents' ratings. Student demographic data were not collected. This investigation focused on the items and not the student as the unit of study.

11. Many variables not involved in the present study likely affected the parents' ratings.

12. Age, race, gender, or educational level of respondents were not considered regarding parent responses.
13. Raters were not selected on their authority to evaluate. Therefore, they may not have had training or experience in rating the performance of the various groups. This could have influenced the outcomes of this study.

14. The low rate of return at Stream Harbor could have affected the ratings provided by parents.

15. This study was conducted as part of Stream Harbor’s participation in the School Improvement Model (SIM) process from Iowa State University. External and internal pressures might have influenced the results.

16. No data were collected for nonpublic schools or for schools outside the northeastern United States.

Discussion

For the past 20 years, schools have been working to reform and transform themselves into units that better serve the needs of their students. To accomplish this improvement, many things have been tried. Some, such as management by objectives, have come and gone with barely a whimper. Others, such as Madeline Hunter’s lesson design, have become incorporated into the very fabric of the institution so much so that younger teachers may wonder how, without it, students ever learned anything. Still others, such as increased accountability through the reporting of test scores, are just now being started and their future is, as yet, uncertain.

But one "innovation," feedback, has quietly been used by schools for many years. For example, teachers, in the form of grades, have been giving feedback to students for decades. More recently, student feedback to teachers and teacher feedback to administrators has emerged. This paper attempted to extend that progression of feedback by adding parental feedback to schools as a component.
The two schools that participated in the study were quite dissimilar. While both were located in New England, there are few other similarities between them.

For example, rural Cotcar is a much more affluent district than the working class, Long Island school district of Stream Harbor. Cotcar's parents are generally more positive toward education and clearly see the need for their children to have the best possible opportunities. Stream Harbor's parents are generally more negative and often question the importance of education in their children's lives.

Cotcar is a relatively affluent community with good job opportunities for its citizens. Stream Harbor is a lower middle class district with a depressed real estate market.

Cotcar's administration is very well established and stable. Stream Harbor has an unstable board characterized by rapid turnover, attempted recall, and split votes.

Survey issues

Even the distribution of the survey was much easier at Cotcar. They provided a good list of parents with duplicates removed. It was easy to mail and the parents were quick to respond. But Stream Harbor proved to be a much more difficult task. First, their mailing list was grossly inaccurate. This was not made known to the researcher until after a failed initial survey in which 200, or 16 percent, were returned within two weeks either undeliverable or address unknown. But it is important to note that both district administrative offices were quite willing to go the extra mile to correct mailings, to overcome mistakes made by the mailing list, and to notify the public that such surveys were under way. And ultimately the sampling, which centered on the mailing rosters, did work well.
The relatively good returns from Cotcar were in sharp contrast to the findings of Black (1997), McClure (1993), and Hecht, Dwyer, Wills, and Roberts (1993). Rich (1998) had found the highest response rates came from elementary parents. Yet the highest number of responses from any one building at Stream Harbor was from the high school and this was followed by the middle school, though it should be noted that over half the responses came from the five elementaries. Cotcar, which had no high school, had 42 percent of its surveys returned rating the middle school with the remainder from the two elementaries.

From all this, it would be logical to expect the results of a survey which was run in very different districts would yield substantially different results. The reality was the results were much more similar than dissimilar.

**Negatives and positives**

While other contemporary efforts to obtain parent feedback have struggled (Sandham, 1998), both surveys in this investigation had sufficient returns to allow statistically meaningful conclusions. And the districts were pleased by positive responses regarding buildings and their personnel.

In both districts, the lowest rated items tended to focus on the school boards and the three questionnaire items which were poorly written and hard to interpret because they were highly ambiguous. And while these were the lowest rated items, it is important that the reader keeps their mean responses in perspective. Even though the lowest rated items were acknowledged by the districts to be problems, they yielded mean responses in the 2.3, to some extent, to 2.8, to a great extent, range.

The positive responses in each school system were also quite similar. Parents in both districts reported that staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning, that parents are
informed about the school’s policies, that students have access to a variety of resources, that learning is a priority in the school, and that staff make themselves available for appointments. The ratings may be interpreted to reflect honest satisfaction with skillful administration, good programs, and competent teachers and staff.

Still, while the results were very similar, there was one overriding difference; the results at Cotcar were generally higher than the results at Stream Harbor.

There are a variety of reasons why this may have been so. And many of those are listed above. But another major issue is Stream Harbor maintained a senior high school which, for the administration, generated many problems typical of those faced by secondary schools across the nation including such things as substance abuse, truancy, weapons possession, fistfights, and clashes across cliques or gang divisions. Further, the high school principal was generally believed to be weak while the vice-principal was believed to be incompetent. After the parents completed the survey for the present investigation, the high school principal was transferred to the middle school and the vice-principal was discharged.

Parent comments

As with McClure (1993), the parents were given an opportunity to write comments and they took full advantage of that. In fact, the combined surveys yielded over 200 pages of comments. Because the comments could be made anonymously (some chose to sign their names but most did not), it would seem the parents felt comfortable in writing anything without fear of retribution. Since there were many negative comments, even on surveys whose ratings were quite positive, this may indicate a "halo effect." In other words, the parents might have felt comfortable writing and might have listed more negative comments because of that.
A problem with the findings of the survey was the agreement to present the ratings and comments separately. That might have resulted in a more negative feeling about the results than was warranted. For example, a questionnaire might have had very positive ratings, but the parent might have chosen to write several negative statements. Taken in context with the survey, the comments might not appear nearly as negative until they are placed with other negative comments. So to future users of the document, the researcher would recommend that the results of the questionnaires and comments be presented together so the users will have the benefit of seeing them together and in context.

And while the comments may have been somewhat negative, it is also reported they accurately depicted some of the problems in the districts. For example, at the time of the survey, one of the districts was quietly dismissing an employee. In the comments, this person was criticized. Additionally, various personnel who were described as being "unfriendly" to the public were cited for the same in the comments.

It is also important to remember that the higher the grade level in school, the more likely the school is to receive negative comments (Samuels, 1990). That was true in this survey, and probably part of the reason Stream Harbor received more negative comments than Cotcar.

Other findings

Recently, Anchorage, Alaska did a parent survey at a cost of almost $70,000 (Sandham, 1998). While the present study incurred no costs in labor, it was still much cheaper to implement, costing roughly $5,000 per district.

All parents in Anchorage were surveyed, whereas this study used a random sample of parents. The Anchorage returns were too low to give the principals a reliable sampling of opinion (Sandham, 1998), which was substantially different from what was experienced in the present study.
Additionally, it is important to note that this survey was experimental and generally parent surveys are considered risky by superintendents. Nevertheless, the superintendents of both districts were willing to take the risk and it is reported they may do it again to create some longitudinal data for their respective districts.

Final recommendation

It is very evident from this study that parental feedback to schools, in the form of a questionnaire, is a valuable tool for school districts to consider using. Further, this should be combined with other forms of feedback from other sources to form a 360° feedback system. This system would provide feedback from anyone who has contact with the staff member including teachers, principals, other teachers, parents, and students (Manatt & Kemis, 1997). As Prince (1987) and Durick (1998) have noted, if all these efforts were combined, they would allow evaluations to have a higher level of effectiveness and integrity.

Recommendations for Practice

As a result of this investigation, several recommendations appear warranted.

1. This questionnaire worked so well that it seems desirable that more school organizations use parent questionnaires to demonstrate to the public that there is accountability built into the public education system.

2. Appendix E lists 43 valid and reliable items recommended for inclusion in an evaluation instrument for the groups studied. Use of all the items on the questionnaire is recommended but, prior to use, districts should carefully consider the policies, procedures, and philosophies of the district to insure the questions are related to the district’s beliefs and desire to ascertain what parents want. For example, as part of the district’s long-range planning, the district might want to
add some of their goals to the survey. This would allow a vehicle for parental reaction and input before the goals are implemented. Additionally, it would be desirable to convert any questionnaire into a scanform (bubble sheet) for ease of parent use.

3. The procedures and standards for administering the questionnaire should be followed including the random selection of a sample of parents to receive the surveys. The number mailed should be large enough that the total returns will allow the results to have a 95 percent confidence level with a ±5 percent margin of error (approximately 286 properly completed questionnaires for a district containing 1,000 families). After sufficient questionnaires have been returned for analysis, additional ones should be placed in each attendance center for those not randomly selected to have an opportunity for input.

4. Some administrator should be put in charge of the annual survey. This person should check annual results, and the summative data from the previous year should be revisited. Through periodic review, the evaluated groups are more apt to address areas in need of improvement. Further, the results of the questionnaire can provide reasonable job performance targets for staff and goals for the district.

5. The data overwhelmingly point to the benefit of a multi-source data system for feedback to school systems. A crucial part of this is the inclusion of parent feedback since parents, who in total quality language are considered the customers, are entitled to a voice in the quality of the school system (Belluck, 1997; DeValois, 1998; Manatt, 1997; Rich, 1998; Scullen & Mitchell, 1997; Walsh, 1996). This study, as well as others before it, demonstrates that parents are capable of rating the various groups identified in this study. So any appraisal system should include information from parents as an integral part of the total evaluation system.
Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study suggest further research.

1. In Appendix E is a sample questionnaire with changes made based on the results of this study. An additional study, using the recommended changes, should be completed to check for reliability.

2. Additional parent demographic data should be collected and used to determine whether the mean ratings are affected by the parents’ age, socioeconomic status, sex, academic achievement, gender, or marital status.

3. A longitudinal study should be conducted to determine whether a district makes changes as a result of the parent recommendations and, if so, if the various groups are able to improve their performance in areas that were rated lower. The use of parents as a valuable source of such information would be further enhanced if such a study were undertaken.

4. This study was limited to two districts located in the northeastern United States. Therefore, this study should be replicated in other districts of various sizes across the United States to further examine the validity and reliability of the items.

5. Further research is needed to ascertain if the items identified as valid and reliable in this study would also possess discriminating power.

6. The relationship between the effectiveness of the various groups rated, and the ratings of the items, should be explored. Further, it would be highly desirable to explore the correlations among the ratings of the various groups. By examining such correlations, it would be possible to describe whether the Cronbach coefficient alpha results are best attributed to the effect of specific extraneous variables or specific levels of performance of the various groups.
7. Additional research to establish norms for the various groups rated on this instrument would provide more meaningful information to districts who are using the instrument to assess potential areas for improvement.

8. Case studies of schools whose students consistently demonstrate superior achievement should be developed to investigate and document the practices, techniques, and overall performance demonstrated by the groups identified in this study. Such high performing districts have much to offer others in the quest for educational excellence.

9. This study began as a study to provide feedback to individual teachers after Stream Harbor expressed interest in this type of research. However, because of input from and a change in direction by the stakeholders committee, a more broad-based survey was developed. While that provided useful feedback to many parties, it had less usefulness to individuals. Therefore, subsequent investigations should look at developing instruments to be used to examine individual staff members.
APPENDIX A. STREAM HARBOR QUESTIONNAIRE
Dear Parent or Guardian:

For two years, the Stream Harbor School District has been involved in a project to improve the performance evaluation of the district's employees. As a part of this evaluation, we would like to survey parents and guardians of the children who attend school in Stream Harbor. We are doing this because we are interested in your opinions and recommendations to improve the quality of the schools.

Your responses will help the administration, faculty, and staff of the designated building to improve the quality of the education that we deliver. If you are not sure about an item, or believe it does not apply, you should mark that question "5" for Do Not Know/Not applicable.

Please complete the survey and mail it back to the School Improvement Stakeholders' Committee office in the attached envelope within 10 days. If you choose not to participate, please return the unmarked questionnaire in the same manner. No one in the school district will see your individual responses because your responses, along with those of others, will be combined. There are no marks to identify who filled out the survey. Any written comments or examples placed at the end of each section will be 1) printed word for word without identifying you or your children and 2) included with other responses to the same questions.

Comments relating to individuals will be seen only by the individual and the supervisor. General survey questions regarding building, administration, teachers and staff will be combined and presented to the building personnel.

Your voluntary participation is greatly appreciated as it will assist us in making improvements in the quality of education in Stream Harbor.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

The Stakeholders' Committee
STREAM HARBOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Part 1

Parent/Guardian Feedback

The administration, faculty and staff of the building described in the attached letter are participating in a 360 degree performance evaluation. To accomplish this type of evaluation, parent feedback is required. Your responses to this survey will help the administration, faculty and staff in the designated building improve school quality. We realize you may have students in more than one building, but PLEASE ANSWER FOR THE BUILDING DESIGNATED IN THE COVER LETTER.

Please read each statement carefully. Refer to the Response Scale below and circle the number that best describes your response to the statement. The "5" means that the statement is not applicable or that you do not have an opinion. If you have specific comments (positive or negative), please write them in the space provided at the end of each section.

**************************************************

Response Scale:
5=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Always; 3=To a great extent; 2=To some extent; 1=Not at all
**************************************************

STREAM HARBOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education
1. The Board of Education is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community. 5 4 3 2 1
2. The Board of Education studies all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision. 5 4 3 2 1
3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the meetings of the Board of Education or Community Councils is given. 5 4 3 2 1

District Administration
4. The district administration (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Special Education, Athletic Director, etc.) provides effective leadership. 5 4 3 2 1
5. The district administration consistently enforces school rules. 5 4 3 2 1
6. The district administration encourages parents, students, teachers, and community members to cooperate in planning and achieving the goals of the schools. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

7. School Building: Please Darken the Circle by in the Name of the School you are Evaluating
   Elementary School #1
   Elementary School #2
   Elementary School #3
   Elementary School #4
   Elementary School #5
   Stream Harbor Middle School
   Stream Harbor High School

8. The school administration, faculty and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning. 5 4 3 2 1
9. The school provides sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement. 5 4 3 2 1
Response Scale:
5=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Always; 3=To a great extent; 2=To some extent; 1=Not at all

10. I am informed about the school's policies, programs and operations. 5 4 3 2 1
11. The concerns of parents/guardians are reflected in decisions affecting the school. 5 4 3 2 1
12. I feel welcome in the school. 5 4 3 2 1
13. My child has access to a variety of resources (technology, media centers, libraries, etc.) to help him/her succeed in learning. 5 4 3 2 1
14. The school facilities (workspaces, furnishings, etc.) are adequate to support the instructional program. 5 4 3 2 1
15. The school's programs meet the requirements of students with special needs (learning disabled, physically challenged, gifted and talented, etc.). 5 4 3 2 1
16. The transportation services to and from school meet the needs of students. 5 4 3 2 1
17. The school's grading policies and practices are administered fairly. 5 4 3 2 1
18. Sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness is demonstrated by students, teachers, and administrators at our school. 5 4 3 2 1
19. Sexual harassment is not a problem at our school. 5 4 3 2 1
20. There is not a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school. 5 4 3 2 1
21. Learning is a high priority in this school. 5 4 3 2 1
22. The school is preparing my child to enter the 21st Century. 5 4 3 2 1
23. Cheating is not a problem in the classroom. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

School Administration (Principal and Assistant Principals)

24. School administrators listen to parents' comments and suggestions. 5 4 3 2 1
25. School administrators respond to parents' communications in a timely manner. 5 4 3 2 1
26. School administrators administer discipline and educational programs fairly and consistently. 5 4 3 2 1
27. School administrators communicate openly and honestly with parents. 5 4 3 2 1
28. School administrators administer rules and policies with compassion. 5 4 3 2 1
29. School administrators support teachers appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict. 5 4 3 2 1
Response Scale:
5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all

30. School administrators support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict. 5 4 3 2 1
31. School administrators are accessible to meet with me about my child. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

**Teachers and Professional Staff**

32. Teachers regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students. 5 4 3 2 1
33. Teachers provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning. 5 4 3 2 1
34. My child is given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed. 5 4 3 2 1
35. Teachers and counselors are concerned about my child as an individual. 5 4 3 2 1
36. Teachers hold high expectations for student learning. 5 4 3 2 1
37. The teachers are available to give students the assistance they need with assignments. 5 4 3 2 1
38. The teachers help motivate my child to work to his/her potential. 5 4 3 2 1
39. When requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments. 5 4 3 2 1
40. The school's counselors, advisors and nurse give students the help they need. 5 4 3 2 1
41. The teachers are preparing my child to master the Stream Harbor curriculum. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

**Support Staff (Office Staff, Custodians, Aides, Food Service)**

42. The support staff treats my child in a manner that is acceptable to me. 5 4 3 2 1
43. The support staff presents a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

**STOP**

You have been critiquing how the district has been doing. The rest of the survey will tell us how important you
STREAM HARBOR CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Importance of School and District Conditions

Part 2

The first scale you have just completed should represent how things actually are here at Stream Harbor School District. The following scale is to tell us the relative importance of these conditions in service to parents at Stream Harbor. We want to be sure that future survey instruments are short, to the point, and contain only the key issues for you.

Please read each statement carefully. Refer to the Response Scale below and circle the number that best describes your response to the statement. The "5" means that the statement is not applicable or that you do not have an opinion. If you have specific comments regarding the importance of these items or you would like to suggest new ones, please write them in the space provided at the end of each section.

Response Scale:
S=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Very Important; 3=Important; 2=Somewhat Important; 1=Not Important

STREAM HARBOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education
1. The Board of Education should be an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community. 5 4 3 2 1
2. The Board of Education should study all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision. 5 4 3 2 1
3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the meetings of the Board of Education or Community Councils should be given. 5 4 3 2 1

District Administration
4. The district administration (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Special Education, Athletic Director, etc.) should provide effective leadership. 5 4 3 2 1
5. The district administration should consistently enforce school rules. 5 4 3 2 1
6. The district administration should encourage parents, students, teachers, and community members to cooperate in planning and achieving the goals of the schools. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

School Building
7. The school administration, faculty and staff should provide a clean, safe environment for learning. 5 4 3 2 1
8. The school should provide sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement. 5 4 3 2 1
9. I should be informed about the school's policies, programs and operations. 5 4 3 2 1
Response Scale:
5=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Very Important; 3=Important; 2=Somewhat Important; 1=Not Important

10. The concerns of parents/guardians should be reflected in decisions affecting the school. 5 4 3 2 1
11. I should feel welcome in the school. 5 4 3 2 1
12. My child should have access to a variety of resources (technology, media centers, libraries, etc.) to help him/her succeed in learning. 5 4 3 2 1
13. The school facilities (workspaces, furnishings, etc.) should be adequate to support the instructional program. 5 4 3 2 1
14. The school’s programs should meet the requirements of students with special needs (learning disabled, physically challenged, gifted and talented, etc.). 5 4 3 2 1
15. The transportation services to and from school should meet the needs of students. 5 4 3 2 1
16. The school’s grading policies and practices should be administered fairly. 5 4 3 2 1
17. Sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness should be demonstrated by students, teachers, and administrators at our school. 5 4 3 2 1
18. Sexual harassment should not be a problem at our school. 5 4 3 2 1
19. There should not be a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school. 5 4 3 2 1
20. Learning should be a high priority in this school. 5 4 3 2 1
21. The school should be preparing my child to enter the 21st Century. 5 4 3 2 1
22. Cheating should not be a problem in the classroom. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

School Administration (Principal and Assistant Principals)

23. School administrators should listen to parents' comments and suggestions. 5 4 3 2 1
24. School administrators should respond to parents' communications in a timely manner. 5 4 3 2 1
25. School administrators should administer discipline and educational programs fairly and consistently. 5 4 3 2 1
26. School administrators should communicate openly and honestly with parents. 5 4 3 2 1
27. School administrators should administer rules and policies with compassion. 5 4 3 2 1
28. School administrators should support teachers appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict. 5 4 3 2 1
29. School administrators should support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict. 5 4 3 2 1
### Response Scale:

5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Very Important; 3 = Important; 2 = Somewhat Important; 1 = Not Important

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30. School administrators should be accessible to meet with me about my child.  
**COMMENTS:**

**Teachers and Professional Staff**

31. Teachers should regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students.  
32. Teachers should provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning.  
33. My child should be given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed.  
34. Teachers and counselors should be concerned about my child as an individual.  
35. Teachers should hold high expectations for student learning.  
36. The teachers should be available to give students the assistance they need with assignments.  
37. The teachers should help motivate my child to work to his/her potential.  
38. When requested, teachers and professional staff should readily make themselves available for appointments.  
39. The school's counselors, advisors and nurse should give students the help they need.  
40. The teachers should be preparing my child to master the Stream Harbor curriculum.  
**COMMENTS:**

**Support Staff (Office Staff, Custodians, Aides, Food Service)**

41. The support staff should treat my child in a manner that is acceptable to me.  
42. The support staff should present a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors.  
**COMMENTS:**
APPENDIX B. COTCAR QUESTIONNAIRE
360 Degree Performance Feedback

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Cotcar School District has been involved in a project to improve the performance evaluation of the district's employees. As a part of this evaluation, we would like to survey parents and guardians of the children who attend school in Cotcar. We are doing this because we are interested in your opinions and recommendations to improve the quality of the schools.

Your responses will help the administration and staff of the designated building to improve the quality of the education. If you are not sure about an item, or believe it does not apply, you should mark that question "5" for Do Not Know/Not applicable.

Please complete the survey and mail it back to the Superintendent's Office in the attached envelope within 10 days. If you choose not to participate, please return the unmarked questionnaire in the same manner. No one in the school district will see your individual responses because your responses, along with those of others, will be combined. There are no marks to identify who filled out the survey. Any written comments or examples placed at the end of each section will be 1) printed word for word without identifying you or your children and 2) included with other responses to the same questions.

Comments relating to individuals will be seen only by the individual and the supervisor. General survey questions regarding building, administration, teachers and staff will be combined and presented to the building personnel.

Your voluntary participation is greatly appreciated as it will assist us in making improvements in the quality of education in Cotcar.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

FICTITIOUS NAME
Superintendent
COTCAR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Part 1  Parent/Guardian Feedback

The administration, faculty and staff of the building described in the attached letter are participating in a 360 degree performance evaluation. To accomplish this type of evaluation, parent feedback is required. Your responses to this survey will help the administration, faculty and staff in the designated building improve school quality. We realize you may have students in more than one building, but PLEASE ANSWER FOR THE BUILDING YOU DESIGNATE IN QUESTION #7.

Please read each statement carefully. Refer to the Response Scale below and circle the number that best describes your response to the statement. The "5" means that the statement is not applicable or that you do not have an opinion. If you have specific comments (positive or negative), please write them in the space provided at the end of each section.

Response Scale:
5=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Always; 3=To a great extent; 2=To some extent; 1=Not at all

COTCAR SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Board
1. The School Board is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community. 5 4 3 2 1
2. The School Board studies all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision. 5 4 3 2 1
3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the School Board meetings is given. 5 4 3 2 1

District Administration
4. The district administration (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Business Administrator, etc.) provides effective leadership. 5 4 3 2 1
5. The district administration consistently enforces school rules. 5 4 3 2 1
6. The district administration encourages parents, students, teachers, and community members to cooperate in planning and achieving the goals of the schools. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

7. School Building: Please Darken the Circle by in the Name of the School you are Evaluating
   Elementary School #1
   Elementary School #2

   Name Middle School

8. The school administration, faculty and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning. 5 4 3 2 1
9. The school provides sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement. 5 4 3 2 1
Response Scale:

5 = Do not know/Not applicable; 4 = Always; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = Not at all

10. I am informed about the school's policies, programs and operations. 5 4 3 2 1
11. The concerns of parents/guardians are reflected in decisions affecting the school. 5 4 3 2 1
12. I feel welcome in the school. 5 4 3 2 1
13. My child has access to a variety of resources (technology, library/media centers, etc.) to help him/her succeed in learning. 5 4 3 2 1
14. The school facilities (workspaces, furnishings, etc.) are adequate to support the instructional program. 5 4 3 2 1
15. The school's programs meet the requirements of students with special needs (learning disabled, physically challenged, gifted and talented, etc.). 5 4 3 2 1
16. The transportation services to and from school meet the needs of students. 5 4 3 2 1
17. The school's grading policies and practices are administered fairly. 5 4 3 2 1
18. Sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness is demonstrated by students, teachers, and administrators at our school. 5 4 3 2 1
19. Sexual harassment is not a problem at our school. 5 4 3 2 1
20. There is not a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school. 5 4 3 2 1
21. Learning is a high priority in this school. 5 4 3 2 1
22. The school is preparing my child to enter the 21st Century. 5 4 3 2 1
23. Cheating is not a problem in the classroom. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

School Administration (Principal and Assistant Principals)

24. School administrators listen to parents' comments and suggestions. 5 4 3 2 1
25. School administrators respond to parents' communications in a timely manner. 5 4 3 2 1
26. School administrators administer discipline and educational programs fairly and consistently. 5 4 3 2 1
27. School administrators communicate openly and honestly with parents. 5 4 3 2 1
28. School administrators administer rules and policies with compassion. 5 4 3 2 1
29. School administrators support teachers appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict. 5 4 3 2 1
Response Scale:
S=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Always; 3=To a great extent; 2=To some extent; 1=Not at all

30. School administrators support parents appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict. 5 4 3 2 1
31. School administrators are accessible to meet with me about my child. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

Teachers and Professional Staff
32. Teachers regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students. 5 4 3 2 1
33. Teachers provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning. 5 4 3 2 1
34. My child is given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed. 5 4 3 2 1
35. Teachers and counselors are concerned about my child as an individual. 5 4 3 2 1
36. Teachers hold high expectations for student learning. 5 4 3 2 1
37. The teachers are available to give students the assistance they need with assignments. 5 4 3 2 1
38. The teachers help motivate my child to work to his/her potential. 5 4 3 2 1
39. When requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments. 5 4 3 2 1
40. The school's counselors and nurse give students the help they need. 5 4 3 2 1
41. The teachers are preparing my child to master the Core curriculum. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

Support Staff (Office Staff, Custodians, Aides, Food Service)
42. The support staff treats my child in a manner that is acceptable to me. 5 4 3 2 1
43. The support staff presents a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

STOP
You have been critiquing how the district has been doing. The rest of the survey will tell us how important you
COTCAR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Importance of School and District Conditions

Part 2

The first scale you have just completed should represent how things actually are here at COTCAR School District. The following scale is to tell us the relative importance of these conditions in service to parents at COTCAR. We want to be sure that future survey instruments are short, to the point, and contain only the key issues for you.

Please read each statement carefully. Refer to the Response Scale below and circle the number that best describes your response to the statement. The "5" means that the statement is not applicable or that you do not have an opinion. If you have specific comments regarding the importance of these items or you would like to suggest new ones, please write them in the space provided at the end of each section.

******************************************************************************

Response Scale:
5=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Very Important; 3=Important; 2=Somewhat Important; 1=Not Important
******************************************************************************

COTCAR SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Board
1. The School Board should be an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community. 5 4 3 2 1
2. The School Board should study all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision. 5 4 3 2 1
3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the meetings of the Board of Education or Community Councils should be given. 5 4 3 2 1

District Administration
4. The district administration (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Business Administrator, etc.) should provide effective leadership. 5 4 3 2 1
5. The district administration should consistently enforce school rules. 5 4 3 2 1
6. The district administration should encourage parents, students, teachers, and community members to cooperate in planning and achieving the goals of the schools. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

School Building
7. The school administration, faculty and staff should provide a clean, safe environment for learning. 5 4 3 2 1
8. The school should provide sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement. 5 4 3 2 1
9. I should be informed about the school's policies, programs and operations. 5 4 3 2 1
Response Scale:
5=Do not know/Not applicable; 4=Very Important; 3=Important; 2=Somewhat Important; 1=Not Important

10. The concerns of parents/guardians should be reflected in decisions affecting the school. 5 4 3 2 1
11. I should feel welcome in the school. 5 4 3 2 1
12. My child should have access to a variety of resources (technology, library/media center, etc.) to help him/her succeed in learning. 5 4 3 2 1
13. The school facilities (workspaces, furnishings, etc.) should be adequate to support the instructional program. 5 4 3 2 1
14. The school’s programs should meet the requirements of students with special needs (learning disabled, physically challenged, gifted and talented, etc.). 5 4 3 2 1
15. The transportation services to and from school should meet the needs of students. 5 4 3 2 1
16. The school’s grading policies and practices should be administered fairly. 5 4 3 2 1
17. Sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness should be demonstrated by students, teachers, and administrators at our school. 5 4 3 2 1
18. Sexual harassment should not be a problem at our school. 5 4 3 2 1
19. There should not be a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drug and/or alcohol problems) among the students in the school. 5 4 3 2 1
20. Learning should be a high priority in this school. 5 4 3 2 1
21. The school should be preparing my child to enter the 21st Century. 5 4 3 2 1
22. Cheating should not be a problem in the classroom. 5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

School Administration (Principal and Assistant Principals)

23. School administrators should listen to parents’ comments and suggestions. 5 4 3 2 1
24. School administrators should respond to parents’ communications in a timely manner. 5 4 3 2 1
25. School administrators should administer discipline and educational programs fairly and consistently. 5 4 3 2 1
26. School administrators should communicate openly and honestly with parents. 5 4 3 2 1
27. School administrators should administer rules and policies with compassion. 5 4 3 2 1
28. School administrators should support teachers appropriately in a parent/teacher conflict. 5 4 3 2 1
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30. School administrators should be accessible to meet with me about my child.

COMMENTS:

**Teachers and Professional Staff**

31. Teachers should regularly communicate with the parent/guardian of their students.

32. Teachers should provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning.

33. My child should be given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed.

34. Teachers and counselors should be concerned about my child as an individual.

35. Teachers should hold high expectations for student learning.

36. The teachers should be available to give students the assistance they need with assignments.

37. The teachers should help motivate my child to work to his/her potential.

38. When requested, teachers and professional staff should readily make themselves available for appointments.

39. The school's counselors and nurse should give students the help they need.

40. The teachers should be preparing my child to master the Core curriculum.

COMMENTS:

**Support Staff (Office Staff, Custodians, Aides, Food Service)**

41. The support staff should treat my child in a manner that is acceptable to me.

42. The support staff should present a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors.

COMMENTS:
APPENDIX C. A RANDOM SELECTION OF FIVE PERCENT OF STREAM HARBOR COMMENTS
PART I

Board of Education and District Administration:

- I would like to see more parent involvement in policy-making decisions.
- One word (name).
- The school is afraid of black parents and bows down to them.
- Our new principal is working to encourage parents in the school.

School Building Continued:

- The physical plant of the school, space for new technology is very poor. I have a great deal of concern about safety of cafeteria in basement, use as a supplemental room too frequently.
- It would be nice if (elementary school) had an art room instead of the art teacher going class to class with a cart.
- Teachers are Unqualified to teach they should be tested for their capability to teach. Instead of wasting time in talking she should explain procedure and methodology of each subject. Then I talk at principal and school district they are biased against Gifted student.
- #20—My children told me you can get drugs at school if you want them.
  #21—Pushing the kids through seems to be a higher priority (what is considered an honor’s course was a regular course when I went to school) Standards are way too low. The English/Language Arts is pitiful. My daughter is in honors English and is learning to punctuate with my help (9th grade). Too much dead wood (NO TENURE).
  #22—Finally starting to see some emphasis on Computer’s and Technology but not enough TRAINED personnel. Computer programming—one example—check the drop out rate this
year!! Keyboarding should be mandatory in Middle School. In summary—get back to the basics—get rid of inventive spelling—expect the teachers to expect results!! RAISE THE BAR!!

- I feel that the children should be working more in interdisciplinary academics—they go from 45 to 95. They should have more block timed.

- With the influx of so many students—there will have to be new classrooms and teachers.

- Ques. No. 14—There is much room for improvement regarding the outdated and decomposing of the bldg. I feel the (building) Staff does their best with what they are forced to work with.

School Administration (Principal and Assistant Principal):

- The Administration is always willing to listen to parents suggestions and if feasible, to act on them.

- Would be nice to hear from a teacher that child is doing good or not good before it is too late. A courtesy call would be appreciated from a teacher. Support system should be put in place to do this. It takes a whole village to raise a child. It would be the whole middle school initiative to do this. A positive feedback especially to Average children.

Teachers and Professional Staff:

- A homework club was opened by 2nd grade teachers to help students.

- Homework is good but after a whole day at school everyday a child and a parent need some time for themselves. Homework should last to long.

- Hopefully there will be a math program with K–6 continuity soon. Also, need science built into curriculum.

- The teaching staff at (Stream Harbor) H.S. are doing an outstanding job.

- There are a few teachers we should replace. We could use more guidance counselors.
• There's too much noise in the classrooms and some kids harassing others. Teacher is limited!

• Sometimes the amount of homework can be a little much.

• I feel my son is getting attention and care considering the size of the class.

Support Staff (Office Staff, Custodians, Aides, Food Service):

• Office usually seems too busy to greet you timely.

• Very negative.

Additional Comments:

• The administrators need to get a backbone and stop letting the black families run the school.

• The whites are suffering in this district. That's why so many white families are moving away.

• The pressure from the black students is very bad.

• I really don't feel the counselors are looking out for my child's best interest. I get the impression that they arrange any schedule just to have one to make paperwork look correct.

• Maybe there needs to be some fresh staff brought in to replace others that appear burnt out.

• (Building) is one of the most friendly and helpful schools in (Stream Harbor). It is clean, kept and beautifully landscaped. The kids feel good.

Part II

Board of Education and District Administration:

• The Board of Education has handled problems such as the 1997 football coach hiring VERY poorly.

• Administrators should also teach a class each year and or have study hall, lunchroom duty.

• The late bus drops my son quite a ways from home and on a major highway.
School Building Continued:

- #14—While this is extremely important, only (school name) is accessible to the handicapped! That means special busing, etc.

- Sensitivity to issues of racial fairness needs a lot of improving.

- As far as questions 18, 19, and 22 are concerned. Where there are teens growing up there will be these problems. If this school is REALLY SERIOUS about these things then morality should be reinforced. But I'm sure political correctness will prevail.

School Administration (Principal and Assistant Principal):

- Support by administrators for students is very important. I feel rules and regulations are needed and with children if you set boundaries and follow through consistently that the results would show more improvement but it requires total staff cooperation.

Teachers and Professional Staff:

- Item 31 and 34. Need much more emphasis.

- Teachers should only be responsible and give "extra attention" to the child that respects and gives thanks for the opportunity of learning.

Support Staff (Office Staff, Custodians, Aides, Food Service):

- Some people should not work with children. Perhaps some of these people work in the lunchroom.

- 41—question is confusing. Each parent has their own idea of what is acceptable. As the saying goes "you can't please all of the people all of the time." Perhaps support staff should treat my child courteously and professionally.
• My son tells me that the support staff treats him like dirt. He’s a straight A+ student!!

Additional Comments:

• We need to take a step back and evaluate what happen to our children. They come first. They have come to the "I don’t have to if I don’t want to" notion and we are allowing them to succeed in that aspect. What will happen in the year 2000. Ok, so some parents are not model parent, but are doing one hell of a job.

• When we all come together for one purpose and cause the children are our future. They are the future stakeholders. African, European, Asian, etc. They will make future decision and our fate to survive will be at their mercy.

• We need to start now and fight for them. Molding and nurturing their every step. Holding their hands and letting them know that they "will" succeed. Understanding what’s going on deep inside of them and try to bring it out. If one can’t help, see if another can, and another can, until someone is allowed to go in. We need our children more than they need us. Lets remember how we felt at their age and who inspired us to be successful. Lets go back to the old fashion ways. Lets remember the reprimands, and the hugs that follow. Lets speak now or forever hold our peace. But lets act now and fast.

• I’m incredibly pleased with (elementary school). My child is in kindergarten so some issues (i.e., sexual harassment/drugs) are not yet a problem. But the programs offered for preventive measures are good.

• (Name)—10th Grade Honors Math is NOT preparing the students to pass the regents exam. He is not consistent in his teaching and often gives conflicting lessons day to day. No one involved in the school has come up with an adequate solution to this problem that has affected the entire class and it is now the 21st of March.
As my child is part of the Honors Program, I do not feel that her individual problems are handled from teachers, guidance, and principal.

Too much time given to behavior problems and slow learners and Honor's students are being given a great amount of work in the form of research papers and not enough individual attention. English is a nightmare in all buildings in the district and the student is unprepared for a strict and forceful High school curriculum. Parental involvement has been very high in regards to the way English has been taught in the district throughout the years and now students are punished for not being as proficient as they should be at this level of their education.

(Name)'s teaching ability must be investigated. I suggest videotaping each classroom session in Honor's math for a 2-week period.

- The school district has gotten too big, a child is lost with so many people. The current programs are good. Many children however do not take full advantage of them. Sports, there are not enough places for all children to play as too many kids. I would like to see more physical activity for all children not just the ones good at the sport. Kids need more physical activities to stay out of trouble.

- Middle school has improved 100% under (Name). The children are being treated like 10–11–12 and 13–year olds.

The teacher must start to do the same—Parents want to know what they are doing.

Teacher should not speak down to the parent.

I do feel that with time (Name) will change this thus make Middle school a very good school with parental involvement.
APPENDIX D. A RANDOM SELECTION OF FIVE PERCENT OF COTCAR COMMENTS
Part I

Board of Education and District Administration:

• When we first moved in, the school nurse questioned our children on issues that should have been handled by the administration.

• Parents/school board have little influence once students go to high school.

School Building Continued:

• (School name) is only a middle school, consequently questions #17, 19, 20, 22 must be evaluated at this level. (School name) attempts to establish a good, strong foundation upon which its students can prepare and develop for a positive learning career.

• Bus Transportation needs to be more flexible in allowing for changes. We do not live in a community that is convenient for students to socialize after school. We need to foster positive friendships and relationships amongst students as well as encourage opportunities to work on school projects after school. Not all parents have the luxury of not working to be available to transport.

• #14—The limited space is of concern.

#15 & #22—We have been concerned with the lack of programs for the children who are accelerated (5th grade). The 5th grade adv. writers group has not offered instruction or structure to our child who was very excited at first. Program caters well to those who need the extra help but not those who can handle challenges.

• Not enough computer learning—would like to see a computer lab that the children could go to once a week for training.
• My child is in Kindergarten this year so many of these questions fell outside the scope of our experience. However I do know that I have full confidence in the staff and administrators at the school.

• 15. There is not enough staff to properly support the # of special needs students. The current staff are stretched beyond any reasonable limits. They do a phenomenal job under the circumstances.

• #16 Bus no. 9 should come into our neighborhood. Fifteen children in our neighborhood have to walk ½ mile to wait on a dangerous hill where there are no homes & we cannot see the children. Therefore, I have to take my baby & preschooler to the bus stop every day.

School Administration (Principal and Assistant Principal):

• (School name) talks a good game in regards to "self esteem" but has many teachers on it's staff who don't talk the talk—I heard the principal on a microphone while monitoring the lunch room scream at the kids to "Shut up." "Sit Down" in an angry demeaning voice.

• The (school) administration has not adequately responded to the lack of access to the looping program. Given the large number of students who were turned away from the program this year, I was disappointed that the administration did not make some simple modifications to meet the identified need established through the looping sign up process.

• Responses marked 5 simply indicate we have not yet had occasion to discover this for ourselves.

Teachers and Professional Staff:

• Even though our son had poor grades, the only contact from his teachers was on progress reports. When I wrote comments on those reports and never had a reply by any teacher!
• What is the Cotcar curriculum? Have requested copy of it in the past—but have been told there isn’t really one—work in progress.

• Very pleased with the teachers we’ve experienced overall.

• My children’s teachers are caring, dedicated professionals. They are doing a wonderful job despite the growing complexities and responsibilities of being a teacher in today’s society.

• We have been disappointed in the area of communication this school year. Our child’s teacher does not communicate on a weekly/biweekly basis with us. Luckily, our child retains quite a bit and is able to recall the events of the day. We feel that a letter twice a month, going over what the focus will be on, is not too much to ask for.

• I’ve loved all the teachers I’ve come in contact with.

Support Staff (Office Staff, Custodians, Aides, Food Service):

• My child is active and has a large appetite and there are many times he has not been able to get a second helping at lunch. I’d like to see the caf. provide additional food to those who want it. It should always be available, of course, I would expect to pay for it. A child should not leave lunch still hungry.

• Support staff takes great pride in the school—They care about the kids. Continuing kudos to (name)!

Additional Comments:

• Office staff is rude.

• We believe the aide in the class may know more about our child and our child’s personality. If the aide corrects all the homework she’s the one who recognizes improvements and the teacher is not as informed or aware of the child’s individuality.
Part II

Board of Education and District Administration:

- The school picketing (name) problem and the (name) situation was very poorly handled by the superintendent. The new school on the other hand was a good effort.
- Did you expect anything less than 4's on these?!

School Building Continued:

- Library needs longer hours. You have failed to mention just plain harassment of students by others. This is a problem at (school). There are some real spoiled brats at this school. Fairness should not be just racial or ethnic. It also has to be taught in respect for all differences. Two of my children have been harassed in very vicious ways.
- #8—I would like to see more opportunities w/in the school for volunteer work.
- #20,#21 The school and country should not be so ungodly—removing God-our creator from all realms of education.
  
  To truly be prepared for the 21st century everyone needs to be well grounded in their faith in Christ Jesus. He came to save not to condemn. Read the Bible—God loves you.

School Administration (Principal and Assistant Principal):

- My only grievance with (name) School is that when conflict or problems arise between a parent and a teacher the schools position is heavily biased towards the teacher and parents views are not "heard" for they take a defensive stand.

Teachers and Professional Staff:

- Class size must be kept down in order to insure all students receive the help they need.
• Some homework projects are too difficult for the child & then the parents end up doing the project. Who's benefiting?

• Everyday I walk into that school someone says hello. I'm there frequently with a child in K and a child in BEEP.

Support Staff (Office Staff, Custodians, Aides, Food Service):

• Question 41 could be a problem if every parent expected the staff to treat their own child in a particular way that was other than common courtesy & respect. Who could keep track? Why should "special" treatment be accorded?

Additional Comments:

• Why does (school name) have so many coded kids? Why isn't more staff put on to help the students that are coded?

• Like I said, (school name) is a Great school. I cannot speak highly enough about the staff, but if I were to write about (school name) School, that would be completely different!

• I want to commend the courageous staff who had to deal with the opponents to (name)'s visits. Continue to teach the truth and don't allow an ignorant minority or anyone else to deprive the students of the right to know what goes on in our world and the duty of educators to develop the student's ability to form his or her own opinion and to develop his or her maturity to take responsibility for her or his own choices. This is about freedom. I hope (name) comes back.

• Principal and Superintendent—It has come to my attention that the food service policy is to peel the top layers of the lettuce and not wash it. Could you please have this changed because the children could become sick from the insects sometime found in lettuce or the pesticides found in lettuce. Thank you for your prompt concern.
- Comparison should not be done only between cities and states within U.S. but with high standards of education in other parts of the world (Europe, Japan, China, etc.).

- I think the school system is good, but more attention/programs are focused on the students who need extra assistance than to those who do not. I realize that this is difficult not to do but feel all students should work at full potential. Would like to see school notices be sent home on a designated day, weekly. Would like to have seen a biweekly or monthly newsletter from teacher stating what was being taught in class so there could have been reinforcement or compliment at home.
APPENDIX E. REVISED QUESTIONNAIRE
Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Sample School District is involved in a project to improve the performance evaluation of the district's board of education and employees. As a part of this evaluation, we would like to survey parents and guardians of the children who attend school in Sample. We are doing this because we are interested in your opinions and recommendations to improve the quality of the schools.

Your responses will help the board, administration, faculty, and staff improve the quality of the education that we deliver. If you are not sure about an item, or believe it does not apply, you should mark that question "5" for Do Not Know/Not applicable.

Please complete the survey and mail it back to the Superintendent's office in the attached envelope within 10 days. If you choose not to participate, please return the unmarked questionnaire in the same manner. There are no marks to identify who filled out the survey. Any written comments or examples placed at the end of each section will be 1) printed word for word without identifying you or your children and 2) included with other responses to the same questions.

Comments relating to individuals will be seen only by the individual and the supervisor. General survey questions regarding the board, building, administration, teachers and staff will be combined and presented to the building personnel.

Your voluntary participation is greatly appreciated as it will assist us in making improvements in the quality of education in Sample.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

The Person Responsible for the Survey
SAMPLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Parent/Guardian Feedback

The board, administration, faculty and staff of the Sample School District are participating in a 360 degree performance evaluation. To accomplish this type of evaluation, parent feedback is required. Your responses to this survey will help the board, administration, faculty and staff improve school quality. We realize you may have students in more than one building, but PLEASE ANSWER ONLY FOR THE BUILDING YOU DESIGNATE IN QUESTION NUMBER 7.

Please read each statement carefully. Refer to the Response Scale below and circle the number that best describes your response to the statement. The "5" means that the statement is not applicable or that you do not have an opinion. If you have specific comments (positive or negative), please write them in the space provided at the end of each section.

******************************************************************************

Response Scale:
1=Not at all; 2=To some extent; 3=To a great extent; 4=Always; 5=Do not know/Not applicable
******************************************************************************

SAMPLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education
1. The Board of Education is an effective advocate for the educational needs of the students and the welfare of the community. 1 2 3 4 5

2. The Board of Education studies all aspects of an issue before rendering a decision. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Adequate advance notice of topics to be discussed at the meetings of the Board of Education or Committees is given. 1 2 3 4 5

District Administration
4. The district administration (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Special Education, Athletic Director, etc.) provides effective leadership. 1 2 3 4 5

5. The district administration consistently enforces school rules. 1 2 3 4 5

6. The district administration encourages parents, students, teachers, and community members to cooperate in planning and achieving the goals of the schools. 1 2 3 4 5

COMMENTS:

7. School Building: Please darken the circle by the name of the school you are evaluating
   Elementary School #1 Sample Middle School
   Elementary School #2 Sample High School

8. The school administration, faculty and staff provide a clean, safe environment for learning. 1 2 3 4 5

9. The school provides sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement. 1 2 3 4 5
**Response Scale:**
1=Not at all; 2=To some extent; 3=To a great extent; 4=Always; 5=Do not know/Not applicable

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**COMMENTS:**

**School Administration (Principal and Assistant Principals)**

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<td>33. Teachers provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. My child is given an appropriate amount of homework to help him/her succeed.</td>
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<td>35. Teachers and counselors are concerned about my child as an individual.</td>
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<td>36. Teachers hold high expectations for student learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. The teachers are available to give students the assistance they need with assignments.</td>
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<td>38. The teachers help motivate my child to work to his/her potential.</td>
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<td>39. When requested, teachers and professional staff readily make themselves available for appointments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. The school's counselors, advisors and nurse give students the help they need.</td>
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<tr>
<td>41. The teachers are preparing my child to master the Sample curriculum.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COMMENTS:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support Staff (Office Staff, Custodians, Aides, Food Service)</strong></td>
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<td>42. The support staff treats my child in a manner that is acceptable to me.</td>
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<td>43. The support staff presents a positive, helpful image to parents and school visitors.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COMMENTS:</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F. HUMAN SUBJECTS RELEASE
Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. ☒ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) the purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #'s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research
   d) if applicable, the location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) that participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. ☐ Signed consent form (if applicable)

14. ☒ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. ☒ Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First contact</th>
<th>Last contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1, 1998</td>
<td>May 1, 1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

   N/A

   Month/Day/Year

18. Signature of Departamental Executive Officer

   [Signature]

   Date: 3/23/98

   Department or Administrative Unit: Professional Studies

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

   ☒ Project approved
   ☐ Project not approved
   ☐ No action required

   Patricia M. Keith

   Name of Committee Chairperson: 3/20/98

   Signature of Committee Chairperson
Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly: (see attached explanation)
   a) purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #s), how they will be used, and when they will be
      removed (see Item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
   d) if applicable, location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. ☐ Consent form (if applicable)

14. ☐ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. ☐ Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
   First Contact                          Last Contact
   December 1, 1997                      July 31, 1998
   Month / Day / Year                    Month / Day / Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual
tapes will be erased:

   N/A
   Month / Day / Year

18. Signature of Departmental/Executive Officer                  Date  Department or Administrative Unit
   ________________________________  1 / 14 / 97  Professional Studies in Education

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:
   x Project Approved  __ Project Not Approved  __ No Action Required

   Patricia M. Keith                      12 / 97
   Name of Committee Chairperson          Signature of Committee Chairperson


DeValois, D. (1998, March 10). Urbandale schools to conduct survey on district’s needs. *The Des Moines Register,* p. 3M.


Omotani, L. M. (1992). Refining valid, reliable and discriminating student feedback items for use as one component of a total teacher performance evaluation system. Doctoral dissertation, Iowa State University, Ames, IA.


Sandham, J. L. (1998, December 2). In Anchorage, district sets out to involve parents in evaluation. Education Week, pp. 1, 11.


Zipperer, D. J. (1978). *Parents' knowledge and attitudes toward ESEA, Title I programs and their ability to assess child achievement.* Doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Perhaps the hardest part of this entire process is trying to remember everyone to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for helping me start, continue, and complete this journey called graduate degrees.

Let me begin by saying thanks:

• to my parents, Vernon and Vivian Scott, who instilled in me a desire to learn and, perhaps more importantly, a desire to see a project through to completion.

• to my in-laws, Bob and Joyce Brown, who have helped whenever requested and been there throughout.

• to my siblings, Craig, Loren, and Linda, and my siblings "in-law," Charm, Chele, and Shawn. All have followed this journey with interest and support.

• to Superintendent Rod Wilbeck, who encouraged me to become a superintendent and to further my education.

• to those who have mentored me in my administration career and who have encouraged me to finish this degree including Dr. Craig Scott, Randy Moffit, Dr. Robert Steele, and Dr. Steve Williams.

• to the members of the boards of education of the South Page, Lenox, and East Marshall schools, who have allowed me the necessary time to work on the degrees.

• to Ralph Woodward, Dave Wilkerson, Frances Kayona, Mari Kemis, and Dave Putz for their advice and assistance.

• to all the graduate students who have been in my classes and who have exchanged ideas with me, including how to and how not to write a dissertation.
• to Judy Weiland, who always has a smile on her face and even a smile in her voice when you talk to her on the phone. She never made me feel as though I was asking her for a favor.

• to the superintendents of the "Stream Harbor" and "Cotcar" schools who agreed to participate in the study; and to all the parents who completed the questionnaire.

• to the members of my doctoral committee: Dr. Shirley Stow, Dr. Gary Downs, Dr. Riad Mahayni, and Dr. Bill Poston.

• and to Bonnie Trede for her willingness to work with me and her exceptional efforts in the final preparation of this dissertation.

For their financial and moral support, I would like to extend a special thanks to the Scottish Rite Foundation and especially committee chair Dr. William C. Jacobson. Their kindness and understanding were greatly appreciated. What they do, quietly, for education is beyond belief.

To Dr. Richard P. Manatt, chairman of my doctoral committee, the person who is largely responsible for my attending Iowa State University, and to whom I owe a special debt of gratitude, a heartfelt and sincere thanks. He wanted it done correctly, he made me work to do it that way, and was always there to help me. "The store is always open!" Further, he gave me opportunities I never would have dreamed of, and has caused me to dream of even greater ones. I might have been able to do it without him, but not as well.

I would also like to acknowledge my gratitude to God and his son, Jesus Christ. My faith has helped me through the good, and difficult, times. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)

To my daughters, Cara, Lisa, Amanda, Laura, and Megan, I could never have done this without you. Your love and understanding have made my dreams possible. I only hope my example will help you achieve yours.
And finally, to my wife, Starr, words cannot express what I should say. You encouraged me, helped me, gave tirelessly, adjusted schedules, listened, put up with things, and did what I couldn’t, or wouldn’t, do. This is as much your degree as it is mine. Thanks.

This journey began years ago. It was an opportunity too good to pass up. And I am thankful I did not. As I always told my students, "Education and knowledge, unlike possessions, can never be taken away. Once you have it, you have it forever."