The relationship among educational philosophy and discipline policies, procedures, and practices

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THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND
DISCIPLINE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES

by

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A Dissertation
submitted to the Graduate Faculty
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This dissertation submitted by Alan G. Ekblad in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education from the University of North Dakota has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

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Dean of the Graduate School
May 1, 1995
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Title The Relationship Among Educational Philosophy and Discipline Policies, Procedures, and Practices

Department Center for Teaching and Learning

Degree Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

One enduring mission of the educational system has been to promote classroom environments where children learn about responsible citizenship, disruption is minimized, and learning is maximized. This mission has supported the development of discipline policy, procedures, and practices as one component of an overall educational philosophy for school districts.

This study compared written educational philosophies, discipline policies, and procedures with actual practices reported by school personnel. The intent was to determine whether the statements corresponded with one another to promote practices for discipline that reflected a sound educational philosophy. It was questioned whether evidence of discrepancies between the statements correlated with practices that inhibited learning of appropriate behavior.

A qualitative study of three school districts in North Dakota was used to explore the above questions. Data were collected from interviews with school board members, administrators, and teachers from each school district. Written philosophy, policy, and procedural statements were reviewed and compared with practices reported.

The results of this study suggested that school personnel wanted children to become productive citizens. Findings indicated that: (a) all three school districts had written statements identify philosophy, (b) discipline was not specifically addressed in educational philosophy statements, (c) philosophy statements corresponded across school districts, (d) written
discipline policy and procedures varied greatly, and (e) practices were inconsistent within schools and between schools.

Findings of this study identified that no congruency existed among or within any of the three school districts studied with regard to written statements and practices. Therefore, still unanswered is how corresponding written statements and practices lead to a sound educational philosophy. Personnel from all school districts reflected a belief that written statements and practices should correspond. They also indicated a perception that this was true, even though it was not. This leads to additional areas for potential consideration by educators, including: (a) exploration of barriers to the development of corresponding written statements; and, (b) examination of why actual practices do not reflect a sound educational philosophy when a match is perceived by school personnel. Seven implications for further research were also drawn.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Education has been used as a tool for the promotion of society since the early colonization of America. It served the purpose of maintaining the structure of society through a formalized means of imparting the society's social and moral values. For the United States of America, this meant that a strong Puritan ethic influenced the schools. Their strong beliefs focused on education, discipline, and hard work as a means to attain society's values. "From the marriage of Puritan religion and the Puritan state, then, emerged our original public schools" (National Education Association Publication, 1977, p. 28). This belief system, on which public schools were founded, "has grown and flourished" (NEAP, 1977, p. 28).

All three of the above beliefs -- in education, in discipline, and in hard work -- became components of school systems as they developed. Concepts that allowed society to grow and prosper were taught. Discipline served to control and set the tone of the educational setting. Hard work was emphasized as a reflection of society's values, as well as a reflection of religious influences. Although housed within the same system, these components were not often integrated into one comprehensive approach. However, these components did retain their influence on the educational system and were included within current school district educational philosophy statements.

School teachers of the colonial days viewed children as "wild and satanic, needing to have the devil beaten out of them" (Williams, as cited in Cryan, 1987, p. 148). A typical example of belief put into practice was
indicated by this list of consequences for what were considered to be misbehaviors: "for boys and girls playing together, four lashes; for failing to bow at the entrance of strangers, three lashes; for blotting copy book, two lashes; for scuffling, four lashes; for calling each other names, three lashes" (Manning, as cited in Cryan, 1987, p. 149). Another example came from William Channing's description of discipline in his dame-school: enforcement was maintained by a long round stick kept next to the teacher's chair like a "watchful sleepless being of ancient mythology" (Channing, as cited in Cryan, 1987, p. 148). Both examples typified the traditional schooling approach that identified harsh behavioral expectations stemming from a belief in punishment with a religious focus on morality and character development.

Practices relating to educational instruction gradually, over time, underwent an evolution as a result of information gained from theories concerning learning, growth, and development. Theories regarding discipline approaches also underwent changes due to a better understanding of human behavior and motivation. Over the years it had been assumed by the American public that progress within education and discipline had been widespread and consistently accepted within the education community. However, "despite the rhetoric of reform, basic ways of schooling children have been remarkably durable over the last hundred years" (Cuban, 1988, p. 341). This study reviews the attempts to change discipline approaches as applied to three school districts in one state.

Need for This Study

In 1989, the North Dakota Fifty-first Legislative Assembly, in response to a trend by states to ban corporal punishment in schools, enacted a new section, 15-47-47, to chapter 15-47 of the North Dakota Century Code,
banning the use of corporal punishment by school district employees. This section reads as follows:

No school district employee may inflict, cause to be inflicted, or threaten to inflict corporal punishment on a pupil. For purposes of this section, corporal punishment means the willful infliction of, willfully causing the infliction of, or willfully allowing the infliction of physical pain on a pupil. This section does not prohibit the use of force that is necessary for a school district employee to quell a physical disturbance threatening physical injury to a person or damage to property, to quell a verbal disturbance, for the purposes of self-defense, for the preservation of order, or to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects within the control of a pupil. Physical pain or discomfort caused by athletic competition or other recreational activities voluntarily engaged in by a pupil is not corporal punishment. Each school board shall develop policy defining expected student behavior and procedures to follow in the event the standard of expected student behavior is violated. (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1991, p. 263)

As stated in the above section, each school district was required to develop discipline policy. This raised the question of how districts responded to this requirement in relation to previously established written educational philosophy statements.

Purpose of This Study

"The founders and formulators of our democracy and its schools obviously believed that a central purpose of education was to provide training in citizenship and the behaviors related to it" (Benninga, 1988, p. 415). This
has been an enduring aspect of the school's educational mission that allowed for classroom environments where children learned about responsible citizenship and where disruption was minimized and learning was maximized. This mission of education supported the writing of discipline policies and procedures as one component of an overall educational philosophy that strengthened children's abilities and taught skills that enabled them to function independently as citizens in society. Forrest Gathercoal (1990) stated, "Professional educators are most effective in maintaining discipline when they do what they have been prepared to do, find ways to help students learn" (p. 22). Such practices "advocate diligence due less to duty than to total fascination with facts and feelings by the intellectually curious child" (Maurer, 1981, p. 3). Eliot Wigginton, in his introduction to Foxfire I, reflected on what education can do by teaching children "to act responsibly as forces for constructive change" (as cited in Maurer, 1981, p. 9). "This is what we want for all our children" (Maurer, 1981, p. 9).

In this study, three school districts' discipline policies and procedures, as well as teacher practices, were examined to identify and compare these against the written educational philosophy of each district. It was the assumption of this writer that current discipline policies, procedures, and practices may or may not be integrated into one overall educational philosophy and may or may not reflect educational outcomes for children that promote the development of children's intellect, facilitate the modeling of appropriate behavior, encourage positive interpersonal relationships, and foster independent decision-making skills (a sound educational philosophy) (NEAP, 1977). In order to validate the above assumptions, the following questions were addressed:
1. When written statements of educational philosophy and discipline policies and procedures are present, do these statements correspond to one another, thereby promoting discipline practices for children that are congruent with a sound educational philosophy?

2. When corresponding written statements of educational philosophy and discipline policies and procedures are not present, do discipline practices within a school district reflect a sound educational philosophy?

3. Where corresponding discipline and educational statements exist, what kinds of discipline practices, as reported by teachers, are characterized? Are they techniques to build independent decision-making skills or punishment techniques?

4. Where no corresponding discipline and educational statements exist, what kinds of discipline practices, as reported by teachers, are characterized? Are they techniques which build independent decision-making skills or punishment techniques?

5. Do discipline policies and procedures of all school districts studied reflect actual practices as reported by teachers?

Definition of Terms

To clarify terminology used throughout this report, the following definitions have been identified:

1. Educational philosophy is a set of ideas and values formulated by individual school districts to identify learning and moral development outcomes expected for the children. A sound educational philosophy, for purposes of this study, consists of a
set of ideals that is sensitive to the individual rights of children while it promotes the development of children's intellect, facilitates the modeling of appropriate behavior, encourages positive interpersonal relationships, and fosters independent decision-making skills. These attributes work together to empower children to function independently in society.

2. **Discipline policy** is a set of publicly stated principles designed to promote specific patterns of behavior and character development.

3. **Discipline procedure** is a series of steps identified to elicit expected behaviors.

4. **Discipline practice** is the actual performance of techniques to establish specific expected patterns of behavior.

5. **Assertive Discipline** is a set of guidelines for teachers to follow where children are presented with a series of choices and consequences. The responsibility is placed on the child as to which choice he will make and, therefore, whether a positive or negative consequence will occur. It promotes an attitude by the teacher of "I will tolerate no students stopping me from teaching or other students from learning. You are all going to succeed in my classroom because I am not going to let you fail" (Canter, 1988, p. 24). Canter has revised his original Assertive Discipline program (Canter, 1992). However, practices described by school personnel interviewed in this study were consistent with his original approach (1988). Therefore, further references to Assertive Discipline will reflect this original approach.

6. **Punishment** is a penalty for misbehaving. The penalty is initiated by a teacher without the involvement of the children, is typically
artificial to the situation, and basically used for all children (Hyman & Wise, 1979).

7. **Behavior modification techniques** are designed to, (a) reduce or extinguish behaviors considered inappropriate through the use of negative reinforcement techniques that cause the unwanted behaviors to decrease; and (b) promote the increase of behaviors considered acceptable through use of positive reinforcement techniques that increase the occurrence of those behaviors (Kirk & Gallagher, 1986).

8. **Independent decision-making skills** are skills that are learned through a process of interaction among the child, the teacher, and often other children. This process is individualized, promotes inner control by the child, elicits creative solutions to problems, and identifies skills that may be generalized to a variety of settings (Hendrick, 1992).

9. **Congruent** means to correspond in character, to be harmonious.

**Limitations of This Study**

This was a study of educational philosophy, discipline policies, procedures, and teacher-reported practices limited to three school districts in North Dakota. Data gathered, conclusions drawn, and generalizations made were limited to the confines of this study.

**Methodology**

A qualitative study of three school districts within North Dakota was conducted. One of the school districts was from an urban setting, and two were from rural areas. Each of the school districts was chosen for comparable size
of student enrollment, number of teachers employed, and grades housed per school. However, there was variance in child population and the number of teachers employed per school. The school districts were studied through review of written documents and interviews of teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members. This study was limited to a review of policies, procedures, and practices of elementary schools housing classes for grades kindergarten through six. The number of teachers interviewed from each of the schools chosen reflected a sampling of one teacher each for grades K, 2, 4 and 6.

Comparison of written statements of philosophy, policies, and procedures addressed: (a) Where did the statements come from? (b) Who wrote the statements? (c) How often were the statements reviewed? and (d) Who gave input into the statements? Interviews for the on-site visitations addressed (a) questions regarding policies, procedures, and practices, (b) reports of discipline practices from the past two years, and (c) responses to a sample case study situation. Written philosophy, policies, and procedures were compared with interview responses.

Anticipated Outcomes

It was anticipated that this study would identify philosophy statements that would reflect a sound educational philosophy and that the philosophy statements among school districts would be congruent with each other. Based on the experience of the author as an employee in the North Dakota public schools, and on a previous study (Ekblad, 1991), it was further anticipated that statements of discipline policies and procedures would not be separated, but combined as one component. It was also presumed that these statements would not reflect a sound educational philosophy. Review of teacher practices
was expected to indicate a wide range of variance between individual teachers and school districts. These practices were expected to be inconsistent in reflecting a sound educational philosophy. Finally, it was presumed that the teachers would not perceive the need for congruency between educational philosophy and discipline practice.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Discipline practices used by teachers in schools have been as numerous as ideas that can come to mind. These practices have evolved from various philosophical and legal bases and, when used, are individualized by each person, increasing the interpretations of each practice. The advent of such a variety of discipline practices used in schools stems from a need voiced by educators and administrators for assistance in disciplining children. Educators ask the question, "What should I do in this situation?" (Ladd & Walden, 1975, p. 7). No one practice could adequately answer the above question.

Concerns about discipline and classroom management have not been restricted to school personnel. For the past 15 years, annual Gallup polls of the general public have consistently cited lack of discipline as one of the most serious problems confronting public school districts. The 24th Annual Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll of the “Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools” indicated that discipline ranked third on the list of Americans’ concerns with public schools (Elam, Gallup, & Wise, 1992). Comparisons between results of the general public and results of teachers indicated that the general public tended to view discipline as more of a problem than teachers. However, the 1989 Second Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll of “Teachers’ Attitudes Toward the Public Schools” showed results indicating that about one half (49%) of teachers viewed discipline as a serious problem (Elam, 1989).
Historically, responses to this need for discipline, voiced by parents, school administrators, and teachers, have been addressed by a diverse background of groups. School districts have addressed discipline through the development of policies and rules intended to control the school environment. The federal and state legal systems have become involved by the setting of standards and regulations that protect the rights of children in the school setting. Personality and learning theorists have studied growth and development of children to identify how children behave and learn. Over the years, each of these groups has built a strong foundation that continues to influence the development of discipline policies and procedures used in school districts today. A brief review of each of these influences adds insight into how current trends in discipline have evolved and what current issues are.

The Puritan Influence

The Puritan influence manifested in our original school districts helped to create four key principles of a system of governance used to direct both development and implementation of policies and procedures. The key principles were:

1. Those in authority get that authority from above, and it is essentially unlimited except by their obligations to higher authority and the laws created in its name.

2. Those in authority are fully responsible for seeing that those below them behave correctly in every respect.

3. Those at the bottom have few rights, largely nominal ones, and are forced to rely mainly on privileges extended to them when they have shown acceptable judgment and behavior.
4. Since those at the bottom cannot be counted on to embrace their role voluntarily, the system must provide for continuous intimidation, occasional coercion, and, as a last resort, removal. (NEAP, 1977, p. 28)

These principles of governance served as the central element in which school districts flourished. The influence of these four principles over the intervening years required no elaboration (NEAP, 1977).

One concept practiced in early school districts that exemplified the principles described above was that of in loco parentis, meaning in place of parents. This concept originated in English law and transferred to teachers the responsibility to act as parents when parents were not around. This transfer of responsibility made sense under the structure of education for the wealthy in place at that time, as teachers were hired as tutors and one teacher was with the children all day. The teacher would have responsibility for the children of one family at a time, approximating a parent-child relationship. Schooling occurred in the home of the children, where it could be watched closely by the parents. Teachers not performing to the standards of the parents were easily fired (Cryan, 1987).

In loco parentis remained in effect as schooling of children moved out of the home into structured school settings combining children from numerous families. However, its use was restricted to control and discipline of children; teachers did not exercise other rights of parents.

The norm for discipline was harsh with those who disobeyed suffering severe consequences. Schoolmasters carried whips, hickory sticks, and canes which were often used to mete out punishments. Rules were clearly defined and extensive, with behavior expectations high. Schoolmasters believed children to be "wild and satanic -- needing to have the devil beaten
out of them" (Williams, as cited in Cryan, 1987, p.4). A typical class day consisted of dull presentation of materials, repetitive drill, and oral recitation. Children functioned under the tradition of punishment by the birch rod and sat for long periods of time in rigid postures. Such restrictive expectations created a struggle between the schoolmaster and the children, as they both dealt with the rigid rules, dull curriculum, and severe punishments believed necessary for moral and character development.

By the 19th century, state courts across the nation had ruled that "the schoolmaster stood in 'loco parentis'' (Jones, 1973, p. 13). The intent of in loco parentis which became common across states was clearly defined with a decision of the Wisconsin Supreme Court:

While the principal . . . in charge of a public school is subordinate to the school board. . . and must enforce rules and regulations adopted by the board for the government of the school. . . he does not derive all his power and authority in the school and over his pupils from the affirmative action of the board. He stands for the time being in loco parentis to his pupils and because of that relation he must necessarily exercise authority over them in many things concerning which the board may have remained silent. (Jones, 1973, pp. 13-14)

The underlying principle for children was the obligation to be subordinate to a higher power, whether it be the principal or school board. The child was obligated to obey the lawful commands of the school. These obligations formed the basis of what was considered the common law of the school. Children were expected to know this law and follow all its mandates, written or unwritten.
Corporal Punishment

The severe punishments coming from Puritan beliefs and sanctioned since the early schools constituted what was termed over the years as corporal punishment. Definitions of corporal punishment varied; however, common to all was "the infliction of pain, loss, or confinement of the human body as a penalty for some offense" (Barnhart, as cited in Hyman & Wise, 1979, p. 4).

"Educationally, corporal punishment was generally defined as: The infliction of pain by a teacher or other educational official upon the body of a student as a penalty for doing something which has been disapproved of by the punisher" (Wineman & James, as cited in Hyman & Wise, 1979, p. 4).

Use of corporal punishment was a way of life. Noah Webster in 1790 wrote about the use of corporal punishment:

The rod is often necessary in school; especially after the children have been accustomed to disobedience and a licentious behavior at home. All government originates in families, and if neglected there, it will hardly exist in society; but the want of it must be applied by the rod in school, the penal laws of the state, and the terrors of divine wrath from the pulpit. The government of both families and schools should be absolute.

(as cited in Paquet, 1982, p. 9)

Throughout the years, any efforts to criticize, change, or moderate the use of corporal punishment were stifled. In 1874, educators gathered in Washington issued a statement that included the following regarding discipline: "In order to compensate for lack of family nurture, the school is obligated to lay more stress upon discipline and . . . in its phase as substitute for the family, uses corrective punishment which . . . is mostly corporal punishment" (Paquet, 1982, p. 10). Again in 1914, evidence indicated that the use of corporal punishment was not being given up easily by the following comment: "Many pupils in the
public school, however, are primitive creatures from primitive homes, and are sensitive to only the stimulus of bodily pain, or the humiliation that attends its infliction" (Paquet, 1982, p. 11).

However, from the early 1900s the climate in schools was gradually changing and becoming more progressive. By the 1920s, many believed corporal punishment was to be used only as a last resort, and then, rarely. Issues relating to corporal punishment disappeared for four decades.

During the 1960s corporal punishment issues resurfaced as human rights became public and parents became aware that corporal punishment was often a first response to misbehavior rather than a last response, and that behaviors triggering its use were minor and nonviolent, such as giggling and whispering.

The assumption was that we have made progress. The truth is that the hickory stick has been replaced by other even more fearsome weapons such as belts, canes and paddles. Paddles are the most formidable and are frequently drilled with welt-raising holes. (Cryan, 1987, p. 150)

Other examples of the use of corporal punishment for minor offenses have included:

[a] In Shelbyville, Tennessee, Cheryl Johnson collected her two-year-old Tony from his first day at nursery school and found 25 welts on his back when she prepared him for bed; [b] An instructor of Health and Physical Education tied 5 boys to his motorcycle and dragged them around the parking lot because they had "wasted his time"; and [c] A child's head was slammed against a concrete wall because, the principal said he spilled some popcorn" (Maurer, 1981, pp. 4-7).

It appeared that custom and tradition were formidable forces. Those promoting the use of corporal punishment claimed that children wanted it. The
indication was that teachers appeared to find corporal punishment easy to use when things got out of hand.

During the early 1970s, numerous studies were conducted that verified the continued belief in and use of corporal punishment.

A nationwide poll of administrators conducted by Nation's Schools (1971) indicated that 74 percent of the respondents applied corporal punishment in their district and 64 percent believed it had proved to be an effective instrument in assuring discipline. Patterson (1974) reported that 55 to 65 percent of school officials see corporal punishment as effective and favor its use. A 'Good Housekeeping' (1972) panel of one thousand consumers in 1972 was asked the question, "Should teachers spank their pupils?" The vote was 66 percent yes, 31 percent no. When the National Education Association polled its membership (NEA Research Bulletin, 1970), two-thirds of the members favored the use of corporal punishment at the elementary level, and one-half favored its use at the secondary level. (Hyman & Wise, 1979, p. 303)

It appeared that the prevailing attitude, ingrained in school personnel and the general public, was that children must be disciplined, and included the belief that hitting, to make them more disciplined, was a right and responsibility. For those raised experiencing physical punishment under an attitude of "you do wrong, you get punished," anything less did not prevent further wrongdoing (Maurer, 1981).

Proponents of corporal punishment urged the continuance of the practice because they felt that abolishment of it would be too fundamental a change; "Yeah, corporal punishment is an unpleasant tool, but it's the only one we have" (NEAP, 1977, p. 39). Any such change would have meant an extensive amount of retraining and staff development. Another justification was
that corporal punishment could not be replaced until appropriate alternatives were provided. Proponents further suggested that teachers needed the right to use corporal punishment as a means to protect themselves.

What was dramatically missing from that attitude was the understanding that as long as corporal punishment was sanctioned, the development of alternatives would be stifled. Also evident was a misunderstanding that as more and more children came to school with a self-assertive demeanor, the traditional Puritan governance system was destined to be counter-productive (NEAP, 1977).

In spite of the wide acceptance for corporal punishment, parents began to object to its use. They complained to the school authorities, state school boards, and finally the courts, filing damage suits through the courts.

Legal Rights of Children

State courts, for more than 60 years, had repeatedly sanctioned corporal punishment. Parents had little recourse under the law. School districts were not required to obtain consent or give notice to parents when punishing a child, and most often, written requests that the children not be hit were ignored. Even though school districts may have stipulated that corporal punishment be "reasonable," courts would not define reasonableness. The result was children who were beaten severely enough to cause welts, bruises, and broken bones (NEAP, 1977).

State courts also ruled that the U.S. Constitution was replaced at the schoolhouse door by in loco parentis. By doing so, the courts gave unlimited power to school authorities to do whatever they wished to maintain discipline in the schools. This was evidenced in Hodgkins v. Rockport, 1870:
When a scholar is guilty of misconduct which injuriously affects the discipline and management of the school, we think the law vests in the [school] committee the power of determining whether the welfare of the school requires his exclusion... If they exercise this power in good faith, their decision is not subject to review by the court. (NEAP, 1977, p. 28)

Another option for school districts fell under the idea of compelling state interest, meaning that the needs and interests of the majority carry greater weight than those of the individual. Because of compelling state interest, courts established that school districts had the right "to establish rules for the purposes of avoiding property loss and damage, serving legitimate educational purposes, fostering health and safety, and avoiding serious disruption of the educational process" (Gathercoal, 1990, p. 21). Proponents of corporal punishment insisted that this ruling allowed them to use corporal punishment in order to protect themselves. However, this argument neglected the fact that use of force to protect oneself is not considered corporal punishment.

Since the mid-sixties there had been a shift at the national level away from the protectiveness of in loco parentis and other state court rulings. "As the U.S. Supreme Court declared in Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District in 1969", the proposition that "students do not shed their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse gate" (Gathercoal, 1990, p. 20) began to take prevalence. "The nation's legal system has shifted dramatically away from protecting the producer in favor of protecting the consumer" (Jones, 1973, p. 22). These shifts signified a change in governance styles, from the Puritan system, epitomized by the state, to a Madisonian system, embodied in our federal government.
Federal courts have upheld the rights of children as protected under the constitution. Interpretations of the constitution kept central the following rights of individuals: (a) the right to the freedom of speech and the press, (b) the right to privacy, and (c) the right to due process of the law (Ladd & Walden, 1975). These rights did not have to be earned, nor could they be taken away. They did assure that when the punishment exceeded the crime, the constitution did protect children. Such rights have been guaranteed in civil, criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory proceedings.

These rights were applied to school by the U.S. Supreme Court in its most basic statement about public school students: The fourteenth amendment, as now applied to the states, protects the citizen against the state itself and all of its boards of education not excepted. These have, of course, important, delicate, and highly discretionary functions, but none that they may not perform within the limits of the Bill of Rights. That they are educating the young for citizenship is reason for scrupulous protection of constitutional freedoms of the individual.

(NEAP, 1977, p. 29)

Fourteenth amendment rights relating specifically to children included:

1. The right of protection for children who are suspected of or accused of offenses.
2. The right to procedural due process.
3. The right to be protected from undue punishment.
4. The right to be presumed innocent.
5. The right to remain silent. (excerpted from Ladd & Walden, 1975)

These rights needed to be considered when setting up a school governance system (Ladd & Walden, 1975). Richard S. Vacca, professor of education at Virginia Commonwealth, summarized this position as follows:
Educators must recognize the fact that due process, seen by many as an enemy that has literally crippled effective public school operation, is, in reality, only another name for fairness. For years public school teachers have emphasized the concept of fairness in their daily activities. Why, then, do some school board members, administrators and teachers resent it when a student complains that he was denied due process? (as cited in Jones, 1973, p. 22).

School governance systems that allowed children to experience the rights and responsibilities of being American citizens enabled them to govern and think for themselves (Gathercoal, 1990).

Learning Theorists

Theorists concerned with how children learn and grow have studied human behavior for many years. Their work added great insights relating to the education of children. Identified early on was a belief in the purpose of schooling as "nurturing the wit and character of the child . . . [as] . . . a matter of fundamental national priority" (London, 1987, p. 670). This belief, translated for schools, focused on making children competent intellectually (developing the wit) and enabling them to relate interpersonally (developing the character).

Within a stable society the teaching of intellect assumed primary importance over the teaching of character. It was through the acquisition of the standards of the society and reflections of the home and church, that much of character development occurred. This, in turn, was supported by the school. Therefore, the values of the school reflected the standards of the home and community. The role of institutions reflected societal changes, while attempting to keep the equilibrium of the society. Often the school districts became the major agent for maintaining the homeostasis of the society.
Traditional means of perpetuating the culture were weakened as the society became more fluid and heterogeneous. The role of teaching then changed, with the teaching of character development taking on more importance. School districts were asked to take on a greater role in meeting the complete developmental needs of the children. In doing so, they "play a greater role in the emotional and cultural development of our children as well as carry out their function to develop our young people intellectually" (Keeshan, 1989, p. 21).

Since the inception of our democratic society, the values being taught through the teaching of character development centered around the belief that people could be trusted to make sensible decisions concerning their own lives and the lives of others. Learning that the group could be trusted to protect the individual's rights has been essential for one to be willing to abide by its decisions. The key to character development in this society, then, was the development of trust (Hendrick, 1992).

Many theorists and psychologists have studied how trust has developed and have applied their knowledge and understanding to the school setting. What became clear was that "the acceptance [by children] of the results of their own actions teaches far better than a power struggle" (Maurer, 1981, p. 24). Power struggles emulated a "me vs. you" situation that resulted in a "winner and a loser." Wishes of the most powerful were forced on the less powerful. A cyclical pattern of coercion perpetuating coercion was established. Experience has shown that when children are hurt and hit for infractions, they retaliate with defiance and anger.

Allowing children to form their own internal motivators and inhibitors empowered them to trust themselves and their environment. "Children perform,
not as we want, not as we demand, not as we pray, but as we in our hearts expect them to perform" (Maurer, 1981, p. 132).

Children developed individual internal behavioral controls by making judgments about specific behaviors based on information given to them as to the advantages and disadvantages of the specific behavior. If the information received by the child was confusing or conflicting, the child was unable to make accurate judgments and became distrustful. If this continued over a period of time, the child may have become resentful and defiant of the information source, setting up a power struggle (Ladd & Walden, 1975).

Teachers helped to create aggressive, hostile behavior when they tried to control through sarcasm and physical punishment. Repression as a primary form of control does not work in the long run. A disregard for the individual, arbitrary enforcement of rules, assumption of child guilt, and general child prejudice worked together to create what is commonly considered "difficult schools" or "schools in crisis" (Jones, 1973).

Studies of the impact of punishment on children have indicated that punishment resulted in a variety of behaviors by children, including avoidance, minimization of pain, escape, and a range of aggressive behaviors. Hans Ansbacher reported "the punished student will want to avoid school, to look for means of escape, not means of meeting the difficulty" (as cited in Maurer, 1981, p. 24). "Threats and punishments are counterproductive and also tend to lower a child's self-esteem and belief in ability, motivation to work, and to discourage initiative" (Ladd & Walden, 1975, p. 25). Long-term physical punishment resulted in a streak of cruelty, expressed through the enforcing of one's power against others.

During the sixties, experimental psychologists and behaviorists viewed punishment as viable. Clinical experiments indicated that punishment worked.
However, application to the real world proved to be ineffective. The behaviorists conceded that although it could be used effectively in a clinical setting, when generalized to other settings, too often it was used inconsistently and with too much force to create the desired results without unwanted by-products (Maurer, 1981).

The impact of childhood punishment on adulthood behavior has proven to be debilitating. Felix Adler wrote: "Corporal punishment in childhood leads to low courage in adulthood" (as cited in Maurer, 1981, p. 24). Studies of elementary teachers by Johnson and Lubomudrov (as cited in Hitz, 1988, p. 25) identified differences between teachers functioning at high levels of moral development versus those functioning at low levels of moral development. Results indicated that teachers operating at the low end of moral functioning tended to view children as needing to be controlled and punished. Teachers at the upper end of moral functioning saw children less as challenging their authority and, therefore, did not need to find ways to control children but set rules that promoted child learning and understanding. Teachers at the low end of moral functioning forced children to also function at the low end of moral development through the perpetuation of punishment as a primary discipline technique. It was concluded that some assertion of power might have been appropriate at times; however, "rewards and punishments must not be the primary mode of relating to children, for they prolong the child's low level of moral development and dependence on others" (Kamii, as cited in Hitz, 1988, p. 25). Rudolph Dreikurs' (Dreikurs & Grey, 1968) work advocating for use of natural consequences rather than punishment supported this attitude. Albert Bandura (as cited in Maurer, 1981) understood the importance of modeling as a determinant of behavior. He stated, "Modeling is more important than
platitudes in determining behavior. The message is subtly communicated that the (paddling) adult approves of aggressive behavior" (Maurer, 1981, p. 100).

As psychologists and learning theorists began addressing the negative effects of punishment, alternatives to punishment gained prominence. These alternatives were formulated out of basic understandings that came to light through long-term study of the effects of punishment. A first understanding was that punishment was not the automatic solution to behavior problems. The solving of behavior problems began before the problems arose, with prevention steps. A second understanding was that discipline was motivated by internal controls. These controls were individual to the person and caused responses to discipline measures that were unique to that person. A third understanding was that respect for individual rights was understood to be the primary standard from which all discipline measures were formulated. Finally, any system of discipline stemmed from a desire to understand causes and motivations of misbehavior, allowing for an ongoing understanding of that behavior and what motivated changes in that behavior (Maurer, 1981).

Educational Leadership

As with the areas affecting education discussed above, changes in educational leadership have evolved gradually over time. However, many teachers have continued to manage children as they have always managed them. Teachers often viewed methods of discipline that were unique to a child and fit to a particular situation with results that could not be generalized to different situations as being cumbersome with results that didn't justify the means. As more was learned about behavior, it was evident that "across the board one menu for all methods [was] insulting and [was] doomed to eventual failure" (Maurer, 1981, p. 18).
Public school administrators have indicated their increased awareness of the need to actively address discipline as part of the school organization. The changes in awareness have reflected a sensitivity to societal shifts, research trends, and state-of-the-art practices. They also reflected a paradigm shift in how school districts saw their role in the development of children. What had been a secondary role of the school districts, character education, became a responsibility as important as the teaching of academics (London, 1987). A good example of this came from George Triezenberg, a high school principal in Blue Island, Illinois. He stated:

No organization or group of people can function effectively without internal discipline. We all recognize that the end result of lack of discipline would be chaos in the home, chaos on the athletic field and chaos on the road. It should be equally obvious that neither can a school function without discipline. Discipline is the one indispensable means for achieving educational objectives of the organization. (as cited in Jones, 1973, p. 12)

Others have written regarding the role of discipline in the establishment of effective learning environments. A belief that children could learn to behave in ways that minimized disruptions and maximized learning opportunities reinforced the notion that school districts had primary responsibility to promote discipline in the schools. To be effective, discipline policies which provided the structure for learning environments were established and enforced by the teacher, counselor, school board members, and administrator (NEAP, 1977). The Council for Basic Education further described the role of discipline in an issue of the Bulletin, "The assertion of authority is not an adult conspiracy against children. It is part of the moral responsibility one generation owes to another" (as cited in Jones, 1973, p. 10).
If discipline was an intricate part of the school, one questions how "a study in Chicago could reveal that discipline problems were a primary cause of stress and teacher burnout" (Brooks, 1985, p. 25), or how a New York Times survey of five thousand teachers could find 40% of all teachers reported that violence is a daily concern (Brooks, 1985). These results were reinforced by results from Kappa Delta Opinion Polls that have consistently, over the past years, ranked discipline problems as one of the top five problems identified by teachers, parents, and the general public (Elam, 1989).

The roots of discipline problems have been many and varied, however most may have originated from systemic difficulties within the education system. "The discipline policies that prevail in most schools were drafted in the late Sixties and Seventies" (Brooks, 1985, p. 26). Those pushing for the policies drafted at that time became the upper echelon of the profession and have strongly defended those reforms. Joseph Adelson reported in an article in the October 1984 issue of Commentary how the educational community responded to attempts at new reform:

What was troubling and unexpected was the appearance of rhetorical strategies which seemed to aim at denying the very existence of problems in education. In various ways, these problems were said to never have existed, to have been distorted, to have been misunderstood, to be only a small part of the total picture, to be a thing of the past, and so on. To a clinical psychologist like myself, these devices seemed eerily familiar: denial, negation splitting, externalization, and displacement. (as cited in Brooks, 1985, p. 29)

This minimization of problems was mirrored in the area of discipline. Albert Shanker noted the following pattern:
Teachers find that if they report to the principal an assault, the principal feels that his own reputation or the school's reputation is at stake here, and will very frequently turn around and start harassing the teacher. Soon teachers learn to cover up disorder. (as cited in Brooks, 1985, p. 26)

The lack of control within the education system was justified in many ways, by such things as TV violence and lax dress codes. In speaking to this issue, J. Lloyd Trump, associate secretary of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, stated, "Discipline problems will always plague the teacher who expects every student to sit placidly in his seat, quiet, docile and unquestioning, while he lectures them for twenty-five minutes" (as cited in Jones, 1973, p. 5). A task force completed in California identified numerous other causes for discipline problems. Among them were: (a) the quality of administration, (b) uneven discipline practices, (c) rubber stamp student government, and (d) oppressive school rules (Maurer, 1981).

Those researching discipline in the schools found two distinct camps, at opposite poles, each with a distinctly different approach to solving the problem. Some believed in returning to good, old-fashioned law and order in the classroom. Others believed that more freedom on behalf of children was the answer (Jones, 1973).

Reliance on rules was a common response to discipline difficulties. With increased problems came increased enforcement of rules. However, these rules were often ambiguous and meaningless. What developed were games between teacher and child, such as "How Wide Is an Aisle" or "But You've Been to the Bathroom." The games became more involved and eventually took precedence over education (Jones, 1973).
Research has shown that learning took place better in environments that were quiet and orderly. This did not assume that they were oppressive. Requiring orderliness did not necessitate the stifling of a creative environment. However, it did set the stage for creating success in the school setting (NEAP, 1977).

The role of discipline and the difficulties with discipline within the education system could not be separated from the right of children to be in school and to be educated in an environment that was safe and accessible. To attain this, methods to meet the educational needs of children, which also respected the inherent rights of children, had to have been promoted and also to have encompassed a broad spectrum of opportunities. These opportunities protected all children from danger and violence while it assured appropriate education. School districts, then, in designing discipline policies protected the individual's rights to education in relation to the interests of all children (Ladd & Walden, 1975).

This balance was achieved by striking a middle ground consisting of a carefully and considerately applied system of discipline in the school districts, one that not only kept the troublemakers in line, but also gave children enough latitude to develop into well-rounded individuals. Such a system asserted reasonable authority but, as stated by Kenneth Fish, principal of the Northwestern Community High School in Flint, Michigan, was "something much more complex than lowering the boom" (as cited in Jones, 1973, p. 12).

A sizable number of strategies have been made available to create a system of discipline that positively influenced children's behavior. These strategies and the system they made up were a part of a larger structure of the school environment. Before any system was put into place there needed first to be an understanding of elements within the school environment having the
potential for success in the school. These elements included: "(a) the school climate, (b) the students' self-esteem, (c) the expectations of the students as learners, (d) the values placed on learning, (e) the use of effective teaching strategies, and (f) the relationships students should have while in school" (NEAP, 1977, p. 17). The above elements would have been put in place by the leadership of the school. This leadership would have begun with the school board and continued through to the superintendent, the principal, and the teacher.

The principal directed effective discipline through effective planning. The children needed to know what to expect within the school setting, where to go, what to do, and how it was to be done. Unauthorized changes were kept to a minimum or, if possible, did not occur at all. Effective planning may have resulted in a written document that addressed behavior deemed relevant within the school setting. These behaviors became the rules of the school and may have been spelled out in a student handbook. If it was addressed in the handbook, no child could plead ignorance. Teachers could use this handbook as the basis from which to build their unique methods of discipline (NEAP, 1977).

An effective principal always supported the teacher. In this manner, children came to understand the importance of discipline, learned from it, and felt a part of a support system established for all, from the children to the adults (NEAP, 1977).

An effective discipline program included parents as active participants. Parents were more than informed. They participated in the development of all discipline policies and procedures. This involvement had its roots in the policies set by the school board. The impact of the parent involvement carried over to the general rules of the local school, and ended with the specific
strategies used with the parents' own children. In that manner, parents became engaged in the school and became an integral part of the overall support system for their children.

School systems were created for the citizenry and were accountable to them, including the children being served by the school. The idea of accountability has long been an important component of the school, as it promoted a safe environment for both the teachers and children. This occurred when school faculty established clear goals that provided for child safety as well as allowed education to go forward.

As the individual characteristics of the teachers and children were considered in applying discipline, the school as a system became sensitive to the children's needs and adapted to them, not always expecting them to adapt to the school. Difficulties would arise when the predisposition of the teachers clashed with the developmental level of the children. The teachers' predisposition to a certain style of discipline would drive their ability to predict and plan for potential problems. The skill level of the teachers would also drive the application of discipline strategies. Teachers who were less skilled tended to assert more power, while teachers with strong management skills would use strategies directed more toward problem-solving techniques (Lasley, 1989).

Charles Wolfgang and Carl Glickman developed a rudimentary system to help teachers understand their individual approaches to disciplinary problems (as cited in Lasley, 1989). Through their system three classifications for teachers were identified: (a) the interventionalist who is oriented toward power, (b) the interactionalist who is oriented toward problem-solving; and (c) the noninterventionist who is basically nondirective.

An interventionalist wanted clear punishment procedures that would be directed by the adult. The interactionalist worked with the child to resolve
problems, and the noninterventionist discussed the problem with the child with no further follow-through. Teachers who were single-minded in their approach tended to be limited in the range of children they were effective with. Those who used power assertion (the interventionalists) were less effective with children who were advanced in cognitive and moral levels of reasoning. They tended to be preoccupied with their power and interpreted misbehavior as a threat to their authority. Nondirective teachers (the noninterventionists) tended not to be effective with children who understand only power. They tended to focus on organization of the classroom and the teaching of isolated skills. In contrast, the interactionalists attempted to problem solve with all children, working toward improved behavior. They tended to be concerned with whether and how the children learned (Lasley, 1989).

Teachers were able to develop their skills and build on their predispositions toward discipline through extensive training geared to assist them in understanding the theory-to-practice link. Such teacher training focused on how to motivate children to learn and interact positively in the school setting (Lasley, 1989).

The ability of school districts to be accountable to the child and the community also depended on the division of power within the school structure. A district-wide discipline policy, able to accommodate a range of children's developmental levels and ages, could be built into that power structure. Such a structure set boundaries appropriate to each age grouping. This allowed school officials to turn over to the children significant portions of regulation of their own conduct and to participate in the general decision-making about school affairs (NEAP, 1977).

Cutting back on school-imposed restrictions and rules did not mean that children necessarily became freer. It meant that as they became a part of the
decision-making process that set boundaries of acceptable behavior, they took ownership of the regulations of the school. The restrictions on their freedom were restrictions placed on themselves and were accepted as their own choice. They learned to set their own boundaries of behavior and to be accountable to those boundaries (NEAP, 1977).

School rules have always been important; however, effective rules have been those that offered choices to the children. The choices needed to be clear and be limited to acceptable behavior according to the situation. The responsibility, then, was on the individual to make a choice and follow that choice responsibly. The role of school principals and teachers was one of guidance and clarification of choices for the children. The assistance offered by school personnel was based on their experience and knowledge of what was considered acceptable. Children learned responsibility as they interacted and observed appropriate modeling of behavior from responsible adults.

This modeling of behavior occurred in numerous situations specifically structured for that purpose. Such activities as classroom meetings, homeroom sessions, and school rap sessions offered children the opportunity to actively participate in setting school and class expectations and standards under the direction of, and as modeled by, responsible adults. These methods were a positive answer to teaching responsibility in all areas of school functioning, of which discipline was only a small part (NEAP, 1977).

The previous discussion centered on elements of effective school districts that contributed to eliminating unacceptable child behavior. These school districts promoted the implementation of strategies that enabled children to succeed, modeled appropriate behavior, involved both staff and children in all facets of the school, developed open and honest communication, taught interpersonal relationships, and, most importantly, built trust. "To trust, to
support, to care, to feel, to share is gutsy business. But it just might be the only viable alternative to destruction" (NEAP, 1977, p. 147).
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

In 1989, the North Dakota Curriculum Council recommended that the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, in conjunction with the North Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children (NDAEYC), research the effects of the newly passed ban on the use of corporal punishment in public schools. In response to this request, the Board of Directors of NDAEYC established the Developmentally Appropriate Guidance Committee (NDAEYC, 1991). The primary charge to this committee was to identify the effects, if any, that North Dakota Century Code 15-47-47, the ban on corporal punishment, had on individual school district discipline policy and then to develop nonaversive alternatives to corporal punishment.

The committee, under the writer's leadership, developed a questionnaire that was sent to 257 public school districts. Of the 257 questionnaires distributed, 158 were returned (61%). Responses to the questionnaire indicated the following (Ekblad, 1991):

1. Of those school districts having a discipline policy, the majority had policies consisting of rules for child behavior focusing on "do's and do nots."

2. A small number of school districts maintained that each teacher was responsible for discipline.

3. Over 60% of the school districts indicated that they used some variation of Assertive Discipline techniques. Some districts
indicated that discipline consequences were determined individually according to the deed and the child.

4. Approximately 33% of the districts indicated that policies were being changed to reflect more current practices.

5. A small number of districts strongly indicated that the ban on corporal punishment placed a barrier on school districts that was detrimental.

Results of this survey led to further questions regarding the discipline policies and practices of school districts. These questions served as the basis for the present study and were formulated as follows:

1. When written statements of educational philosophy and discipline policies and procedures are present, do these statements correspond to one another thereby promoting discipline practices for children that are congruent with a sound educational philosophy?

2. When corresponding written statements of educational philosophy and discipline policies and procedures are not present, do discipline practices within a school district reflect a sound educational philosophy?

3. Where corresponding discipline and educational statements exist, what kinds of discipline practices, as reported by teachers, are characterized? Are they techniques to build independent decision-making skills or punishment techniques?

4. Where no corresponding discipline and educational statements exist, what kinds of discipline practices, as reported by teachers, are characterized? Are they techniques to build independent decision-making skills or punishment techniques?
5. Do discipline policies and procedures of all school districts studied reflect actual practices as reported by teachers?

Instrumentation

The methods used in this study to gather research data were based on a qualitative design model. Such a design model best met the intent of this study, (i.e., to determine how policies and procedures are practiced in detail), as it allowed data to be gathered through direct experience. This facilitated the gaining of individual perspectives regarding the questions being considered.

Qualitative researchers have long recognized the importance of understanding fully a particular situation, including the physical setting where the situation occurs (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Policies, procedures, and practices used in particular situations are established within the context of a particular setting. Research was conducted at the actual locations chosen for this study to facilitate accurate information sharing and to gain further understanding within the “natural setting.”

Researchers have used qualitative approaches to gather data directly through such means as interviews and review of written documentation, with the information being described and analyzed by the researcher in order to develop a contextual picture of a particular situation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In this study, an interview script was used to attain descriptive information from each participant. The interview script (see Appendix) originated from the series of questions formulated by the researcher regarding whether written philosophy, policies, procedures, and actual practices used in school districts corresponded with one another. Actual written philosophy statements, policies, and procedures were reviewed for each site to complement the interview information obtained.
Subject and Site Selection

The 1990-1991 North Dakota Educational Directory (1990) was used to review all school districts in the state according to the following criteria: (a) districts with elementary schools, (b) districts with similar numbers of students enrolled, and (c) districts with similar numbers of teachers employed. School district superintendents, from a list of potential school districts, were then called and asked to participate in the study. Two rural school districts and one urban school district were identified. The two rural school districts were similar regarding the grades taught in school. There was slight variance in child population and the number of teachers per school. The subjects selected for this study were public school personnel and school board members from consenting school districts who were willing to participate in the study.

The two rural district schools each housed grades K-8, enrolled between 163 and 213 children, and had between 15 to 18 professionals on staff. The one urban district school housed grades K-6, enrolled 413 children, and had twenty-three professionals on staff. Interviews were completed with one teacher each of grades K, 2, 4, and 6 per school district, three school board members per school district, the principal of each school, and the superintendent of each school district.

Data Collection

Two types of data were collected for the study: (a) each district's written philosophy, policies, and procedural statements and (b) subject interview data. A total of 27 interviews was completed. An interview script (see Appendix), comprised of five sections, was used for the interviews. Further probing questions were used to gather additional information according to the responses of the individual interviewee. Sections 1-3 were used for
superintendent interviews, sections 1-2 were used for school board member
interviews, and sections 1-5 were used for principal and teacher interviews.
The specific sections were chosen for each subject grouping to most
appropriately obtain the perspective of each subject, given the role each
serves within the school system. Each interview lasted approximately 30
minutes to 1 hour in length.

Handwritten field notes were taken by the researcher. A tape recorder
was used to assist in the accurate recording of the information shared. Tape
recorded information was then transcribed into a written narrative. Following
each interview, reflective field notes (Bogdan & Biklin, 1992) were written to
record impressions and ideas that could serve to clarify each interviewee's
experience.

To protect the confidentiality of the school districts and the personnel
who participated in this study, each school district was assigned a number for
identification purposes, to be used throughout the rest of this report. The larger,
more urban school district was identified as SD 1; the two small, rural school
districts were identified as SD 2 and SD 3.

Data Analysis

Data obtained through a qualitative approach are typically analyzed by
grouping together pieces of information that appear interconnected as the
research is being conducted. The interconnected pieces of information are
then coded into categories that represent patterns and topics. Through this
organization, the interconnections of the categories are brought to light and
used to develop a picture of what actually occurred. This has been identified
as a grounded theory approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).
"It is suggested that it is not the rules, regulations, norms or whatever that are crucial in understanding behavior, but how these are defined and used in specific situations" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 37). Research data obtained from this study were analyzed not only to identify whether written philosophy, policies, procedures, and practices corresponded, but also to look at implications of the policies, procedures, and practices regarding outcomes for children.

Interviewee responses, field notes, and written documentation samples were coded into the following categories: (a) origin of written statements, (b) correspondence of the statements, (c) impact of discipline policies and procedures, (d) practices used by teachers, and (e) responses to a sample scenario. The information received within each category identified commonalties and differences in responses within and across school districts. The commonalties and differences for the categories were further coded for categories (b) and (c) as to whether the statements promoted independent decision-making skills or promoted punishment. Categories (d) and (e) were coded as to whether they did or did not promote a sound educational philosophy for children.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

To gather the information necessary to answer the questions asked at the beginning of this study, interviews of school personnel and a review of written materials were conducted. Through this method of inquiry, the investigator was able to address the issue of congruency of educational philosophies, discipline policies, discipline procedures, and teacher practices in promoting sound educational outcomes for children. This approach also allowed further study of whether actual discipline practices had the potential for promoting independent decision-making skills or simply reflected the application of punishment techniques.

For purposes of this study, philosophy and policy statements were depicted as a set of principles formulated to convey specific outcomes in the areas of learning and behavior expected for children. Procedural statements were depicted as courses of action that enabled children to attain the specific outcomes identified by schools. Teacher practices were depicted as actual techniques used by teachers to establish expected behavior patterns in children.

Information gathered from the above sources was sorted as it related to each research question. Philosophy and policy statements were analyzed according to whether they did or did not reflect an intent for the development of educational growth, responsibility, self-sufficiency, and citizenship, themes which emerged from the interviews and from the educational philosophy statements themselves. Procedural statements were analyzed as to whether
they did or did not use positive terminology when stating courses of action that depicted expected behaviors of children (Cutright, 1990). Teacher practices were analyzed as to whether the techniques described did or did not reflect an approach that was individualized, included active child participation, and involved joint problem-solving strategies (Lickona, 1988). The results of this analysis are presented in the following sections of this chapter.

Analysis of Written Statements

Questions one and two, posed as the basis for this study, both included a component relating to whether or not the written statements corresponded. Question one was: When written statements of educational philosophy and discipline policies and procedures are present, do these statements correspond to one another, thereby promoting discipline practices for children that are congruent with a sound educational philosophy? Question two was: When written statements of educational philosophy and discipline policies and procedures are not present, do discipline practices within a school district reflect a sound educational philosophy? The corresponding nature of the statements was studied first across the three school districts and then individually within each school district.

Results of this study indicated some common features across school districts. The written philosophy of education statements for all three school districts identified as the highest priority the provision of a well-rounded education that directed children toward becoming self-sufficient adults, possessing skills that would enable them to be responsible citizens and to function successfully in society. The statements supported the development of a school atmosphere conducive to learning, encouragement of a broader curricular approach to address the individual needs of children, and promotion
of development of cognitive, affective, social, and physical skills. This is evidenced in the following examples: (a) "a quality education for all children is possible . . . , each child has the right and responsibility to acquire academic and applied life skills, and . . . a problem-solving attitude creates effective schools" (SD 1); (b) "All school objectives are to be pointed toward the graduation of young citizens who have sufficiently integrated personalities to take their place in an adult society" (SD 2); and (c) "students must obtain numerous skills to function in society" (SD 3).

Discipline was not addressed specifically within any of the educational philosophy statements; however, all statements alluded to moral, affective, social, and personality development as a function of schools. Development of such areas occurs when children are given choices, practice problem-solving skills, and are allowed to be responsible for their actions. This results in the development of self discipline and is guided by the use of appropriate discipline practices and modeling provided by parents and teachers (Maurer, 1981, pp. 3-4).

Each school district developed child handbooks that identified discipline policies. However, variances in approach were apparent among the school districts. Policy statements and procedural statements were clearly separate for SD 1 and SD 3. Policy and procedure statements were interspersed for SD 2. Statements from SD 1 included "promoting a positive sense of self-worth, dignity, and cooperation and self-discipline for everyone," which indicated a positive approach. Statements from SD 2 included "children are expected to respect the rights and property of individuals and the school district" and "child behavior must meet the commonly accepted standards of conduct, respecting the rights and sensibilities of others in the school society." Because policy and procedure statements are written by adults, such statements
indicated an authoritative and adult-directed approach. The terms “must” and “are expected to” set a tone of outside authority rather than mutual cooperation.

In contrast, SD 3 developed four major goals as a part of its discipline policy. Each goal identified a particular behavior or set of behaviors considered appropriate for the school setting, such as, “Always try to do your best,” “cooperate with other people,” and “respect the rights and property of others.” The goals were stated in positive terms. The intent appeared to be one of establishing a positive perception regarding discipline that would create a positive atmosphere by the children.

In SD 3, goal statements were written under each goal area that expanded the intent of each particular goal. Appropriate behaviors that would successfully impact the school setting were indicated within these statements, such as “the best way to learn something is to practice until you can do it” and “you are in charge of yourself and you can do what is right.”

Discipline procedure statements for all three school districts were included within child handbooks. All handbooks addressed a range of specific school activities (e.g., lunch, bus, recess, restrooms, hallways, field trips, detention, school suspension, and expulsion). SD 1’s procedures addressed the most limited range of procedures (i.e., suspension and expulsion, field trips, and use of phones). For all three school districts, the descriptions for each of these activities included statements that were factual in nature. For SD 2 and SD 3, some descriptions appeared to be authoritarian and directive in nature, identifying specific “do’s” and “don’ts.” Examples of statements identified as factual in nature include “cooperate with the teacher . . . or other children when asked to complete assignments and other duties;” “In order to avoid accidents, always walk rather than running [sic] and shoving [sic];” and “Children will be suspended and/or expelled for the following misconduct: . . . .” Examples of
statements identified as authoritarian in nature include "Profanity . . . will NOT be tolerated in the classroom;" "Children engaged in fighting on school property will be assessed detention and possible suspension from school." All three school districts addressed the areas of detention, suspension, and expulsion, describing specific plans of action and identifying specific steps that would occur as a result of unacceptable school behaviors.

All handbooks addressed the desire for parent participation and cooperation in the enforcement of the policies and procedures. Parents were viewed as a primary support to both the child and the school. The handbooks stressed the importance of working together on behalf of the children to assure their success at school. Examples from the handbooks are, "We hope it will help us all work together with a greater degree of mutual cooperation and understanding, thereby achieving the highest ideals of American public education," and "The policies of our school's [sic] are for the betterment of the physical, moral, mental, and educational development of our children."

SD 1 and SD 3 had written statements of educational philosophy and discipline policies that were congruent with a sound educational philosophy. They were stated positively, identifying acceptable behaviors to be achieved by the children. Typical statements that indicated congruency between the two statements for each school district follow: SD 1's statement of philosophy included, "The philosophy of the . . . schools is that quality education for all children is possible [and] . . . that mutual trust, respect and communication are crucial . . . a safe and healthy environment must be present." Statements of policy included "to provide a productive learning/living environment, while at the same time promoting a positive sense of self-worth, dignity, cooperation and self-discipline for everyone." SD 3's statement of philosophy included "child education should be the first priority," "children need to obtain
numerous skills to function in society [and] become independent adults who can respond creatively to a changing society.” Statements of policy included “the policies of your schools are for the betterment of the physical, moral, mental, and educational development of our children.”

SD 2's statements of philosophy and policy were not congruent with each other. The statement of educational philosophy was similar to the other two school districts; it was directed toward the provision of educational leadership aimed at promoting the best for each child. The discipline policy statements, however, appeared to be generated from guiding principles aimed at establishing an attitude of control by the adult over the child. Examples of policy statements were: “Children are expected to respect the rights and property of individuals and the school district;” and “Child behavior must meet the commonly accepted standards of conduct.”

Written procedures relating to discipline were incongruent with the educational philosophies and discipline policies in SD 1 and SD 3. In each case, the procedures identified a course of action in response to specific behaviors that were dictated and considered inappropriate (e.g., “sit in desks, not on desks;” “vulgar, profane, and loud talk is prohibited”). Discipline policies and procedures for SD 2 were congruent with each other, but did not correspond with the district's educational philosophy statements.

Correspondence of written school district statements is summarized in Table 1.

Reported Teacher Practices: Reflection of a Sound Educational Philosophy

Question two added a new dimension to the process of determining congruency of the written statements for school districts. Question two was: When corresponding written statements of educational philosophy and discipline policies and procedures are not present, do discipline practices
Table 1

Correspondence of School District Written Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Educational Philosophy</th>
<th>Discipline Procedure</th>
<th>Discipline Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD 1</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 3</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D = promoting independent decision-making skills; P = promoting punishment techniques.

within a school district reflect a sound educational philosophy? In this question, discipline practices are considered in light of intended outcomes for children when school districts have discipline policies and procedures that are incongruent with their educational philosophies.

School practices for each of the three school districts were studied in response to this question, as each of the districts evidenced incongruencies among their three statements. Interviews were used to identify teachers' practices in reference to reflecting a sound educational philosophy for children.

SD 1

There were inconsistencies in approaches between teachers of various grades in SD 1. The sixth grade teacher and the fourth grade teacher were similar in their approaches. Both indicated that they dealt with the children on a one-to-one basis to help the children solve their problems. The sixth grade
teacher also included a reinforcement system for the class whereby the
teacher rewarded appropriate behavior. This was implemented approximately
two times a week whereby the class was rewarded by getting additional free­
time in the gym for about twenty minutes. The fourth grade teacher met with
parents at the beginning of the year to determine what the parents felt would
work for their child. Communication with the parents was maintained
throughout the year. It was stressed that discipline practices varied according
to the child, the situation, and input from the parents.

The second grade and kindergarten teachers were also similar to each
other in their approaches. Both identified the rules and expectations for the
class at the beginning of the year. Consequences of inappropriate behavior
were clearly established for the children. The second grade teacher met with
the parents to inform them of the class expectations for the year. The teacher
would meet with children on a one-to-one basis, when they needed assistance
in identifying an appropriate solution. Determination of an appropriate solution
was guided by the teacher. The kindergarten teacher wrote children's names
on the board and followed this with checks behind the names when the
children exhibited inappropriate behavior. This approach, used by the
kindergarten teacher, has been identified as a component of Assertive
Discipline (Canter, 1988). The teacher indicated that individual talking with a
child who misbehaves might occur if necessary, but not immediately, so as not
to draw attention to the child.

Practices for SD 1, as reported by the teachers, were thus inconsistent
across grades. Although all the teachers reported meeting with children
individually, the role that the child played in the discipline process varied. The
amount of active participation by the child ranged from being actively involved
in solving problems to being a passive recipient of consequences predetermined by the teacher.

All four teachers reported that they believed their discipline practices were congruent with the district's overall philosophy of education. However, the teachers felt that the district's philosophy was broad and somewhat vague, leaving room for interpretation within individual school buildings. They felt that generally it was the principal who determined what discipline procedures were to be used within each building. However, each teacher felt he or she was given latitude in developing discipline techniques.

Perceptions of the school district's superintendent and the school principal, as reported by them, indicated that they felt educational philosophy, policies, discipline procedures, and teacher practices corresponded. The superintendent indicated the importance he placed on such congruency in the following response, "Yes, we would want them to enhance the manner in which we work with kids." He also reported that these perceptions were reinforced as he visited school buildings in the district and as he talked with building principals about building policies and practices. The principal qualified his statement by explaining that he felt the educational philosophy was so vague that a wide range of discipline policies, procedures, and practices could be considered as congruent with the educational philosophy.

When asked, the school board members also perceived the educational philosophy and discipline policies, procedures, and practices to be congruent for the district. They all indicated the importance they placed on congruency, as indicated by the following examples: "We need a good atmosphere in the classroom in order to promote good learning" and "if a classroom is not maintained, learning is not maximized."
Teacher practices for SD 2 were similar in nature in grades six and four. These two teachers indicated use of various adaptations of the Assertive Discipline (Canter, 1988) approach, along with a positive reinforcement approach for appropriate behavior. Reports from the sixth grade teacher indicated how both practices were combined when he stated, “This is what I do: Catch them being good, and all the positive-type things, but you know that the consequences are there and that’s really where the Assertive Discipline kicks in.” The fourth grade teacher indicated her feelings of success with, “They think about their behavior before they think about monkeying around.”

The second grade teacher thoroughly reviewed the child handbook with the children each fall. Then, on an individual basis, the rules to be followed were re-identified, and children were removed when any were broken. Children were spoken to on a one-to-one basis, so they would understand why what they were doing was inappropriate. She shared her thoughts with, “I can just look at somebody, and they will know exactly if they are talking or whatever.”

Similarities among the approaches for teachers of grades two, four, and six included a focus on teacher-directed expectations and consequences. The children played a passive role in rule formulation and application of consequences. Consequences occurred as responses to specific behaviors. The kindergarten teacher, in contrast, appeared very individualized in the discipline approach used. A range of alternative options was available and used differently according to the situation and the child.

The kindergarten teacher used a variety of discipline techniques to channel behavior, intervene with inappropriate behavior, reinforce appropriate behavior, and assist the child in solving individual problems. Specific
techniques identified included: (a) ignoring behavior, (b) removing children from a situation, (c) redirecting children to a different activity, (d) talking privately with a child, and (e) reinforcing appropriate behavior. The teacher felt it "builds good self-esteem, positive self-image."

All teachers of SD 2 also reported that they felt that their approaches to discipline were congruent with the overall intended educational outcomes for the district. They felt that the philosophy must be evident in the discipline practices and that both must present an attitude and atmosphere that promotes the best for children.

The superintendent, principal, and school board members all echoed the teachers' perceptions. They all indicated that educational philosophy and discipline policies, procedures, and practices must be intertwined to create an atmosphere that promotes good citizenship in the children. The superintendent reflected that "the philosophy of the school shows itself through the discipline of the children." The principal indicated that he feels "it [discipline policy] leads toward a better atmosphere for learning for the child." Statements from the school board members reflected that the educational philosophy, discipline policies, procedures, and practices "have to work hand-in-hand," and "I think we are more or less pushing the same thing as far as teaching systems."

SD 3

The discipline practices used by teachers in grades two, four, and six of SD 3 were very similar. The teachers in grades two, four, and six all reported use of preventative measures by showing the children respect, making accommodations for children, noting when children were showing appropriate behavior, and giving children space and time as long as it did not bother the other children. These teachers reported that they were clear in their
expectations and that consequences were used for inappropriate behaviors. Typical statements from these teachers included: “Stopping the problem before it occurs,” “setting a good example,” and “having the kids so they aren’t scared of making a mistake . . . so they are not afraid to try different things.”

The kindergarten teacher wrote the class rules on the board at the beginning of the year and regularly reviewed them with the children so they were all familiar with the rules. When misbehaviors occurred, she put check marks on the board behind the child’s name. If the whole class became too restless, she would have all the children put their heads on the desk to rest for a minute. The teacher felt that these approaches were very effective, as indicated by the following: “Before long they know what the rules are and . . . a little reminder is all it takes and they can follow them.”

Here again, the teachers felt that their approaches closely followed the intended educational outcomes for children. The teachers in grades two, four, and six felt that their approaches taught the children self-control and to be responsible for their actions. The similarities in approach were reportedly due in part to a schoolwide project by all teachers and children to establish a system that promoted the development of individual self-control and self­responsibility. The discrepancy between the kindergarten teacher's approach and the schoolwide project's approach may be due, in part, to the fact that this teacher had many years of experience using the same approach and was experiencing difficulty in accepting and using a new approach.

The school superintendent reported that educational philosophy, discipline policies, procedures, and practices were intertwined and that congruency was promoted by hiring staff who worked for the good of the children. He felt this “preventative medicine approach creates a positive atmosphere.” The principal reinforced this, stressing open communication as
the means to ensure congruency among staff, believing "we are in this
together." The school board members indicated that congruency was needed
to ensure a positive atmosphere for learning as evidenced by the statement,
"We have a good atmosphere in the school and enforcing the policies play [sic]
a big role in maintaining that attitude."

In summary, all three school districts had similar statements of
educational philosophy. Discipline policies and educational philosophies
corresponded for two of three school districts, and procedures for all three
school districts varied in their approach and did not correspond well to the
educational philosophies to promote a sound educational philosophy. Actual
practices reported by the teachers indicated a wide range of practices used
that identified inconsistent outcomes for children.

Reported Teacher Practices: Decision-making Skills vs. Punishment

Questions three and four were used as the basis for study of teacher
practices as to whether they promoted independent decision-making skills in
children or were punishing in nature. Question three was: Where
corresponding discipline and educational statements exist, what kinds of
discipline practices, as reported by teachers, are characterized? Are they
techniques to build independent decision-making skills or punishment
techniques? Question four was: Where no corresponding discipline and
educational statements exist, what kinds of discipline practices, as reported by
teachers, are characterized? Are they techniques to build independent
decision-making skills or punishment techniques?

Because no definite evidence of congruency among practice,
procedures, policies, and philosophy for any of the schools was found, the
question regarding the identification of characteristic teacher practices when
there exist corresponding statements of educational philosophy, discipline policies and procedures could not be answered. It is, however, possible to address question four.

Characteristic teacher practices were coded as practices that either (a) built independent decision-making skills or (b) punished. To clarify what is meant by (a) and (b), the following definitions have been formulated by the author of this study. **Building independent decision-making skills** involves activities that are interactive in nature among the child, the teacher, and often, other children. Through these interactions, the teacher enlists the child’s cooperation in looking at alternative behavior, cooperatively solving the problem, and agreeing on acceptable choices of action for the child. This process is individualized to the child, promotes inner control by the child, and uses creative thinking when identifying solutions. The skills used and learned in this process may be generalized to a variety of situations. Due to the interactive nature of this approach, the child becomes aware of the impact of his or her behavior on others, which in turn, may generate empathy toward others and increase the child’s ability to interact within a social group (Benninga, 1988). Behavioral interventions that are considered punishment, for the purposes of this study, include techniques that result in teacher-directed control of behaviors and are basically used for all children. These techniques place the child in a passive role. They are authoritarian in nature and are often enforced rigidly. They are meant to stop a child’s behavior, are situation-specific, and are instigated after an undesirable behavior has occurred (Hyman & Wise, 1979). The techniques use consequences that are typically artificial to the situation, not related to the misbehavior or not appropriate to the particular situation. Such techniques do not enlist the child’s cooperation in identifying alternatives, nor do they promote inner control by the child.
During teacher interviews, numerous questions were asked that identified individual teacher practices, and the responses were used to code the practices as those that promote decision-making or those that are punishing in nature.

**Practices That Promote Decision-making Skills**

The discipline practices reported by the sixth and fourth grade teachers of SD 1 reflected approaches that promoted decision-making skills. The teachers addressed issues of treating children fairly, finding discipline techniques that work for the child, being flexible, and helping the child to find alternatives to problems. This was reflected by the sixth grade teacher when he said, “You deal with the problem on a one-to-one basis . . . and try to help them solve the problem or get them to solve the problem” and by the fourth grade teacher who said, “discipline is a very complex thing.”

The kindergarten teacher from SD 2 used a variety of discipline techniques including ignoring of inappropriate behavior, talking to a child privately, removing a child from a difficult situation, and channeling the child to a different activity. The teacher felt one needed to “get them involved in another activity.” These techniques are developmentally appropriate for kindergartners (Bredekamp, 1987), are individualized to the child, and promote inner control by the child. By talking to the child individually, the teacher is able to elicit possible solutions from the child. Such techniques were labeled as promoting decision-making skills.

In SD 3, the sixth and second grade teachers used techniques labeled as promoting decision-making skills. They reported using preventative approaches that showed the children respect, adapted activities to meet individual child needs, and taught self control and responsibility. The sixth
grade teacher further reported a focus on "stopping the [inappropriate] behavior before it occurs" and "clarifying my expectations."

**Practices That Are Punishing in Nature**

Practices used by the second grade and kindergarten teachers from SD 1 reflected approaches that constituted punishment interventions. The practices reported included use of components of Assertive Discipline (Canter, 1988), setting of rules by the teacher, following through consistently and firmly by the teacher, and placing children's names on the board for misbehaviors. The second grade teacher felt she was firm and consistent and stated, "I tell children and parents what I expect from the children during the school year."

Responses to inappropriate behavior by the sixth, fourth and second grade teachers from SD 2 were similar to one another. Typical responses made by these teachers included techniques used in Assertive Discipline (Canter, 1988), meeting individually with a child to discuss how the behavior is inappropriate, and then, removing privileges when rules are broken. Typical statements from the teachers included, "You are doing this right, you are rewarded. You are not doing this right, you are not rewarded," and "any time there is something that comes up, I can refer to that handbook." Such responses were labeled as punitive as they occurred after the deed and were directed at stopping a behavior rather than teaching an appropriate behavior.

The fourth grade and kindergarten teachers in SD 3 reported using check marks on the board, enforcing consequences after misbehaviors, and having children place their heads on their desks to calm them down. One of the teachers reflected, "In the room I expect certain behaviors . . . and they know I expect it, and they know there is a consequence." Such techniques
were teacher-directed, controlled, and instituted after a misbehavior occurred, and therefore, they were considered punitive.

As part of the interview process, teachers were asked about their perceptions regarding what they thought the end result of their discipline practices were for the children. All of the teachers indicated that their approaches created classroom environments that were good for learning and where children were happy. This gives rise to further questions regarding how a teacher’s commitment to a particular approach affects how he or she views the success of that approach.

Reported Teacher Practices: Sample Scenario

A sample scenario was included as part of the interview process, in section five of the interview script. The scenario went as follows: Keith, a nine year old, would not do his homework. He never had his materials ready during class, nor would he do anything constructive during work times. He would talk and disrupt others as much as possible, making comments such as “what do we need to do this junk for?” This scenario was read to the interview participants, and the following statements were asked: “Describe how you would handle this,” and “what interventions would you use if this behavior persisted?” The intent of this scenario was to further identify practices used by the teachers. Responses to the scenarios were labeled the same as the previous practices reported by the teachers.

Responses to the scenario by the sixth grade, fourth grade and kindergarten teachers from SD 1 were labeled as promoting decision-making skills. These teachers indicated that they would talk with the child, try to identify the child’s interests, and try to get the child to move in a more positive direction. The fourth grade teacher reflected, “I think we need to pick Keith’s
brain a little and find what is the root of the matter." The teacher then indicated that if this failed, the parents and/or counselor would be called in to assist in finding some different alternatives for the child. The sixth grade teacher indicated that the first step would be to "sit down and visit with him." The kindergarten teacher would first meet and talk with the child to determine what the child thinks could be done. If this was not enough, the teacher would meet with the child's parents and arrange a mutually agreed upon plan to either send work home with the child or have the child stay after school to complete work.

The second grade teacher from SD 1 indicated use of behavior modification techniques as indicated by "First of all, I would try some behavior modification techniques." If these did not work, the child would be kept after school, held in at recess, or required to report to school early. In this case, the responses were directed by the teacher to the child after a misbehavior occurred, placing the child in a passive mode, and were attempts to stop the child's misbehavior without offering an alternative, acceptable behavior; and they therefore, more closely matched a punitive approach.

The sixth, fourth and kindergarten teachers in SD 2 identified approaches determined to be punitive in nature, as the consequences determined were established by the teacher without input from the child, were carried out after a misbehavior occurred, and did not offer alternatives to the child. The teachers indicated concern for how the child's behavior would affect the other children. They indicated that they would send the child's work home or keep the child after school to complete the work. Isolating the child was mentioned, but not felt to be very effective. Example teacher responses included "If it gets to where he is disrupting other children, he will be removed to another table or possibly to a time out" and "I would somehow isolate him from the other children so he is not bothering the others."
The second grade teacher from SD 2 talked about offering the child alternative methods to complete the work in an attempt to get him involved in what the class was doing. She stated, "I would first look for some things that Keith is interested in doing that would apply to the topic area that we were studying." Additionally, the teacher would conference with the child about the disruptive behaviors, discussing how he feels about them and how the other children feel about them, and identifying solutions to the problem. This indicated use of approaches that would promote decision-making skills.

All four of the teachers from SD 3 reported that they would give the child warnings and then consequences, as evidenced by the statements "He would have to quit that immediately... I would warn him" and "I would have approached him on a one-to-one basis and outlined my expectations." They would try to talk the child into completing his work and offer rewards for completion of work. Here again, the techniques described were established by the teachers without input from the child, were consequences instituted after the fact, and were intended to stop behaviors without identifying alternative acceptable behaviors. Such approaches were labeled as punitive.

Results of the practices identified as being used by the respondents indicated that they were predominantly approaches that were punitive in nature. Inconsistencies were evident for teachers within school districts and across school districts. Teachers of the same grade levels also reported practices that were inconsistent. In fact, 4 of the 12 teachers, within the individual descriptions of their own practices and hypothetical responses to the sample scenario, gave inconsistent responses. Practices reported by teachers are summarized in Table 2.
### Table 2.

**Summary of Teacher Practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD 1.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
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<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 3.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>K</td>
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<td>P</td>
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</table>

*Note.* D = promoting decision-making skills; P = promoting punishment techniques

**Reported Teacher Perceptions: Correspondence of Practices with Discipline Policy**

To determine the teachers' perceptions regarding the match between actual practices and discipline policies and procedures of the school districts, the following question was asked: "How do the practices you use reflect the discipline policy of the school?" The responses by the teachers did not
distinguish between policies and procedures as the author has done throughout this study.

The teachers in all three school districts, with one exception, reported that they felt the practices they used were definitely reflective of the discipline policy of their school district. The teacher who did not identify a match indicated no awareness of a written discipline policy and, therefore, could not address the question. Responses by many of the other teachers indicated that they felt their practices led to broader goals of fairness for all, keeping in tune with the children's best interests and creating harmony between the children and the teacher. Examples of this were, "I think somewhere along the way they merge;" "They support each other;" and "I tried to keep the children's interests at heart at all times, and I believe that the policies of this school system do that."

To further identify how teachers perceived their practices to meet the philosophy, policies, and procedures of the individual school districts, they were asked what they felt was the end result of their practices for children. Generally, all teachers responded that their practices resulted in positive outcomes for the children, the teacher, and the classroom. Teachers described seeing long-term changes in child behavior, children taking on more responsibility, and children increasing their feelings of self-esteem. They also indicated that a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning was established. One teacher reported that both the children and their parents were happy. Other teachers reported, "There is a more permanent change in some people's behaviors," and "Those children who can handle themselves tolerate those who can't."

Because teachers consistently reflected that they felt individual practices and school policy corresponded, two additional questions were asked in an attempt to determine the extent to which practices were established
as a result of administrative directives. Teachers were asked what had influenced them to use the discipline practices they had chosen. Teacher responses fell into one of four general categories: (a) influence by others, such as teachers, principals and parents; (b) training from classes; (c) workshops; and (d) trial and error. One teacher reflected that the practices currently used came from a realization that children are human beings and need contact with the teacher.

Another question asked whether administrators set standards for the development of discipline practices. Responses from the teachers indicated that 5 of 12 felt that no requirements were established by administrators. Those who reported being influenced by administrators saw administrators as having definite standards that were to be implemented. One teacher felt that the standards identified by administrators directly related to what was in the district's student handbook.

It is evident that teachers perceived their practices as closely matching school district philosophy, policies, and procedures. Because during interviews teachers did not distinguish between policies and procedures, separate comparisons of practice with policies and with procedures were not made.

Review of written materials, interviews with school personnel, and comparisons between the two reflected discrepancies among the intent of educational philosophy, discipline policies, procedures, and actual teacher practices. Awareness of those discrepancies by school personnel appeared to be minimal, as all perceived practices to correspond with written statements of educational philosophy, discipline policies, and procedures. Teacher perceptions from SD 1 that the district's philosophy and policies were broad, leaving room for individual interpretation by the teacher and at the
school building level, appeared to be consistent with the fact that the district had limited written procedures.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study three school districts’ discipline policies and procedures, as well as teacher practices, were examined and compared with the written educational philosophy of each district. It was the assumption of this writer that current discipline policies, procedures, and practices may or may not be integrated into one overall educational philosophy and may or may not reflect educational outcomes for children that promote the development of children's intellect, facilitate the modeling of appropriate behavior, encourage positive interpersonal relationships, and foster independent decision-making skills (a sound educational philosophy) (NEAP, 1977). In order to validate the above assumptions, the following questions were addressed:

1. When written statements of educational philosophy and discipline policies and procedures are present, do these statements correspond to one another thereby promoting practices for children that are congruent with a sound educational philosophy?

2. When corresponding written statements of educational philosophy and discipline policies and procedures are not present, do discipline practices within a school district reflect a sound educational philosophy?

3. Where corresponding discipline and educational statements exist, what kinds of discipline practices, as reported by teachers, are
characterized? Are they techniques to build independent decision-making skills or punishment techniques?

4. Where no corresponding discipline and educational statements exist, what kinds of discipline practices, as reported by teachers, are characterized? Are they techniques to build independent decision-making skills or punishment techniques?

5. Do discipline policies and procedures of all schools studied reflect actual practices as reported by teachers?

Summary

The results of this study suggested that school personnel wanted children to become productive citizens. Findings indicated that:

1. All three school districts had written statements of philosophy identifying a sound educational philosophy.

2. Philosophy statements corresponded across school districts.

3. Discipline was not specifically addressed in educational philosophy statements.

4. Written statements of philosophy and statements of discipline policies corresponded to promote a sound educational philosophy for two of three school districts.

5. Written discipline policies and procedures varied greatly.

6. Procedures varied within each school district.

7. Each school district handbook stated a desire for parent participation in carrying out the policies and procedures.

8. Teacher practices did not consistently reflect school district educational philosophy, discipline policies and procedures.
9. Practices used by teachers were inconsistent within schools and between schools.

10. Individual teacher practices were inconsistently described within their reports of practice and responses to a hypothetical sample scenario.

11. Teachers perceived their practices to be consistent with school district educational philosophy, discipline policies and procedures.

Findings of this study thus identified that no congruency existed among or within any of the three school districts studied with regard to written statements and practices.

Conclusions

The incongruencies reflected in this study provide information regarding the intent of schools to reflect congruency between statements of philosophy, discipline policies, and procedures and actual practices implemented by school personnel. Interviews with school personnel from all three school districts consistently identified the purpose of schools to be the provision of education for all children in a manner that meets their needs, prepares them to be productive citizens in the world, provides for their mental and social well-being, and enables them to be independent learners and decision-makers. They further identified that discipline policies, procedures and practices needed to be congruent with this educational purpose in order to provide a sound educational philosophy. Yet, the written statements of educational philosophy, discipline policies, and procedures within all three school districts did not correspond with one another to accurately reflect this belief.
School personnel not only indicated a belief in the importance of congruency between practice and written statements of intent, but consistently gave assurances that this was occurring. Study of reported practices, however, revealed that this was not occurring, implying limited awareness by school personnel of those discrepancies. These results give rise to two areas for further consideration. One has implications for the removal of barriers to the development of corresponding written statements of educational philosophy, discipline policies, and procedures when the intent is for the statements to correspond to an overall sound educational philosophy. Another area for discussion is why teacher practices do not more consistently reflect the written intent for a sound educational philosophy, and has implications for finding a better match in practice.

Implications: Barriers to the Development of Corresponding Written Statements

Various factors have been identified that may have implications for the identification of barriers to the development of corresponding written statements. One factor is the influence of state and federal laws that have regulated the educational system. States first supported schools by setting policy in the areas of compelling state interest, in loco parentis, and corporal punishment. Each of the above policies was based on the belief that children needed strict discipline to develop moral character and that this could occur only through control of children by a top-down approach of adult to child, teacher to student. Federally, on the other hand, the Constitution has been used to ensure the individual and due process rights of children. Support of these rights is based on the belief that constitutional rights override state rule.
Local school districts, then, find themselves under two masters that establish boundaries for setting policy and dictating procedures. This has an impact on philosophies and discipline policies established by the school districts, since, as one school superintendent reported, “that [state and federal rule] pretty much provided the framework for American education.”

The implication for schools, then, is “how do we structure our schools in a way that integrates state and federal mandates and yet does what is best for children, educationally?” This addresses the role of the education system as both a governing structure designed to protect the rights of all children and an avenue for children to learn, grow, and build lifelong coping skills. Responses from interviews with school board members from SD 2 summarized this idea most effectively as they discussed the basis of discipline policies and procedures formulated for their school district. Their responses indicated that they consider the civil rights of students, state board requirements, and community desires in determining school rules and regulations. It is within this broad context that they strive to meet the needs of a rural school. The impact of policy regulation is evidenced in these responses: “[policy] is state, federally mandated to some extent;” “some [policies] are mandated from the state;” and “kids are policied to death.”

Another factor to be considered is the new awareness regarding human growth and development in children. As children grow and develop higher level cognitive and behavioral skills, the ability to control behavior becomes internalized. The development of internal control is proportionate to the opportunities allowed children to make their own judgments and experience the consequences of those judgments. Children with high levels of moral functioning typically have had adequate opportunities to interact with and experiment on their environment. Consequences of those interactions have
been logical, allowing for honest decision-making by the child, and so have promoted learning and growth (Hitz, 1988).

Children who rely on external sources of control take little responsibility for their actions, with consequences for those actions having little lasting effect on the child’s learning or behavior. Rules and resulting punishments are viewed as outside forces that hold no deference for the individual child or situation. If external use of control is perpetuated, the child remains at a low moral functioning level in which intrinsic control of behavior is not developed (Hitz, 1988).

To be effective and have long-term benefits, a greater level of understanding must be internalized as a result of the discipline. This understanding can then become a point of reference for further behavior. Self-discipline evolves in such a way that behavior becomes child-directed. This discipline is generated by the inner controls of the child developed as a result of prior learning and experience. Learning through the consequences of actions is more effective than receiving punishment for actions.

The challenge for schools is to develop discipline policies and procedures which reflect discipline as a learning/teaching experience and, therefore, as an extension of the educational philosophy of the district. This concept is best described by the superintendent of SD 1, who indicated that the “philosophy of schools shows itself through the discipline of the student.” Under such a structure children are encouraged to direct their own discipline and are reinforced for exhibiting self-disciplined behaviors. The melding of educational philosophy, discipline policies, and procedures provides a moral and educational foundation within a holistic philosophy that shapes individual character, one of the key tenets of schools (London, 1987). One school board member from SD 2 summarized this nicely by stating that when discipline and
education work together they "create a good moral upbringing which makes a good citizen, someone who will give to the community."

Embedding a holistic philosophy into the school structure means putting philosophy into practice, another factor for consideration. This occurs through a planning process that addresses all areas of school functioning, including classroom activities, curricular approaches, non-academic activities, and extra-curricular functions of the school. Through planning within all components of the school, philosophy is identified and implementation procedures developed for each area. This allows approaches to become unified (consolidated) under one philosophy, no matter what the setting or who is involved. Individual differences are respected and accounted for by not requiring uniformity (identical responses) by either the school personnel or students. Uniformity of response becomes unnecessary as the unity (being in agreement) of philosophy drives the process and promotes the outcomes desired by the school district.

Planning was identified by interviewees as a necessary component to promote effective practice. As one school board member from SD 1 reflected, "Most policy is changed as a reaction rather than thoughtful planning." Superintendents and school board members from all school districts emphasized the importance of reviewing policies on a regular basis, most indicating yearly, to ensure that written documents and school personnel reflect the most recent changes in policy and philosophy and that all are congruent. As one superintendent indicated, "If written statements aren't congruent with practice, then you have a break between intent and practice, and that might cause a problem".

An important component of effective planning by the school district administration is the incorporation of the vision and mission of the school for all
aspects of student development and behavior. This planning results in written policies and procedures that become the rules of the school. One result of such planning is the power structure of the school being balanced by all individuals associated with the school. This balance is maintained by clearly defined relationships among all parties that address rights and responsibilities, creating a sense of ownership.

The community-at-large, a factor to consider, holds a vested interest in local schools. It is the community's children who attend the schools. It is the community that supports and provides the resources for schools through local tax dollars. Community members serve on school boards and school committees. Each community has definite ideas as to the role education plays in that community and a vision of what the school district will provide for its children. A school board member from SD 3 alluded to this by indicating that schools must take into account the moral standards of the community. This is reinforced by the following statement from a school superintendent: "The school board is a reflection of the society, . . . and the people that live in the society . . . ultimately have the say." A SD 2 school board member also reflected on the impact of community on schools with the statement that students must "learn to monitor their own behavior to fit the rules of the workplace and the country."

Interviews with personnel from both SD 2 and SD 3 indicated that the school improvement process was an avenue they saw as effective in addressing the challenge of planning. Through the school improvement process goals for improvement are set for the school. Personnel saw this process as effective in establishing policy and procedure, setting standards, and involving all key players of the school district.
Committees are established as a function of the school improvement process and used to identify school district needs, plan long-range goals to address those needs, and present those plans to the school board for implementation. Wide representation of the community assures that local desires are addressed, the community is informed of the broader issues, and local commitment and ownership are promoted. Committee membership will dictate the effectiveness of the committees. By including representatives from the community-at-large, parents, teachers, students, and school support personnel, all components of the local educational system are represented and have a voice in setting policy and procedure that respects the rights and concerns of all who are involved in the education process. Teachers serve a vital role in this process, as they bring valuable insight to the process as a result of their first-hand experience in turning policy and philosophy into practice.

Use of community-based committees for the development of school policy and procedures may be new to many school districts. For other districts, use of committees may need to be expanded to allow a broader representation of the community to be more proactive and involved in a wider range of issues and decision-making processes. Appropriate areas to be addressed by committees no longer are restricted to areas such as curriculum, school projects, and fund-raising. Committees can be effective in addressing staff issues such as training, hiring, and retention. Various superintendents emphasized the need for these committees to be ongoing in order to keep the school district current regarding issues that need changing.

Roles for parents within the school system are currently limited. Enhanced parent involvement, another factor for consideration, will encourage cooperative efforts between home and school and create a singularity of
purpose for the student. Schools need assistance in how to better involve
parents in the school system. This includes strategies for communicating with
parents, working with parents as equal partners, and supporting parents
exhibiting a wide range of needs and goals.

A final factor identified by this study that warrants consideration is that
school districts need assistance in developing written documents that truly
reflect their beliefs and intent. How to state policies and procedures in a
manner that reflects philosophy must be addressed to ensure congruency
across each district. Assistance is needed in identifying what constitutes
positive statements of policy and procedure that promote a sound educational
philosophy. Written documents have been used by all school districts as a
means of communicating district intent. Inconsistency of intent within these
documents provides an unclear understanding of what is expected.

Implication: Why Teacher Practices Do Not Reflect
a Sound Educational Philosophy

When studying why teacher practices do not reflect written intent for a
sound educational philosophy, one factor identified by superintendents from all
three school districts was that communication was vital to implementing a
cohesive approach within the school system. Communication transcends all
avenues as a tool for promoting the philosophy of the school. Communication,
to be effective, must occur on a variety of levels within the school structure,
from the broader community, to the school board representatives, to the school
administration, to the school personnel, and to the students. Opportunities for
communication are numerous and include staff meetings, classroom meetings,
parent groups, lyceums, committee activities, interest groups, and student
groups. Ongoing communication provides for an open, honest, nonjudgmental approach throughout all aspects of school functioning.

One avenue school districts use to promote ongoing congruency within the system is through the provision of training and technical assistance to school personnel. This would be an important factor to consider. Goals may be established for training and technical assistance targeted toward areas of improvement and geared toward a sound philosophical approach. Assistance in this manner serves to guide personnel and give them the tools to develop discipline strategies that serve to enhance the educational process. It allows teachers and other personnel the opportunity to enhance the quality of their teaching and other interactions within the school setting. It also provides information regarding current educational trends.

Training may be expanded beyond school personnel to families and the broader community. Through training, the school can present itself to the community as a vital part of the community. It can educate families and the community regarding the focus of the school, the needs of the school, and the vision of the school. Training also provides an opportunity for dialogue between all interested parties, which enhances a sense of community ownership.

Interviews of school administrators and school board members have indicated that staff is key in promoting the educational philosophy and policies of the school. They have stated that schools need to find staff that "fits into the school district" and that it might take some experimenting with staff to get the right ones. Staff hiring and retention become a vital part of assuring that the philosophy is maintained throughout all aspects of the school. Schools need to assure that staff are qualified and meet state standards. Yet, this becomes a minimum measure of quality. Training, experience, and skills affect the
educational philosophy brought to the school setting. These factors must combine to form a match with the district’s intent for the schools. Policies and procedures for staff hiring, supervision, and staff firing must reflect and actively promote all factors that influence the educational philosophy and school policies to assure that individual staff philosophies and practices are congruent with the philosophy of the school district.

Another issue related to discipline practice is that schools are created for the citizenry, including students. Because of this, schools are responsible to provide for child and faculty safety, and furthermore, are accountable to children, families, and the community. Nationwide, teachers do not feel secure in their profession, fearing for their lives and job security, feeling untrained to meet the needs of the wide range of students in their classrooms, and feeling disrespect from the students and the community-at-large (Brooks, 1985). The rights of teachers become an issue that can not be ignored. They need to have a safe and healthy environment in which to work. Protection of staff must be integrated into local school district policies and procedures that meet the intent of the district’s educational philosophy.

These broader concerns of teachers did not come to light through the interviews of this case study. Locally, school personnel feel support for what they do, as evidenced by this response “[if] I couldn’t handle it, then they [school administration] would step in.” Yet the underlying fear factor remains an issue that must be considered by administrators and school board members as they develop local school district philosophy, policies, and procedures.

Implications for Further Research

This study opens the door for further research, identifying possible directions for inquiry. Continued inquiry can provide valuable information to
school districts that will enhance quality and assure that a sound educational philosophy becomes actual practice.

Because no congruency was seen among or within any of the schools studied with regard to written statements and practices, the impact of true congruency could not be identified. This gives rise to the need for further exploration into what are possible critical characteristics of school districts that provide written statements of educational philosophy, discipline policies, and procedures, and teacher practices that are congruent with a sound educational philosophy. Identification of these critical characteristics would allow further comparison among school districts. Results of this further study, on a district-by-district basis, could identify characteristics that may be added or revised to allow districts to reflect a truly sound educational philosophy.

Studies that compare schools which engage the entire staff in meaningful planning activities, and schools which involve staff in only limited ways in planning, might also lead to the identification of critical elements which support congruency of philosophy and discipline policies, procedures, and practices.

Although the incongruencies among and within the school districts studied were evident for the three school districts in this study, conducting similar studies which compare the four largest school districts, the small, rural school districts, and the four reservation schools in the state could provide additional information concerning the apparent incongruencies identified in this study.

Considering that this study included only a small sampling of the different school district configurations within North Dakota, replication of this study in a multi-cultural environment might indicate whether and how teacher practices
reflect a sound educational philosophy in settings with children from a wider range of diverse backgrounds.

The inconsistencies within teachers' own personal discipline philosophies suggest the possibility of a qualitative study which would look closely at individual teachers' thinking about discipline and the connections between their thought and actual (not reported) practices.

School district administrators indicated through their interviews that having training and technical assistance available to school district personnel would enhance the promotion of a sound educational philosophy. Further research into the impact of training and technical assistance to school districts in promoting a cohesive approach to discipline practices would provide valuable information to the districts.

The current study makes an assumption that the written educational philosophies of the three school districts reflect sound educational principles and that discipline practices should be congruent with them. However, an outcome study might show if this assumption, in fact, is true. A satisfaction study of children in classrooms with teachers who subscribe to and consistently practice particular systems of discipline would help educators identify discipline practices which are most beneficial to children's emotional and psychological well-being.

Possibly the key result of this study is that more questions than answers have been identified regarding implications for schools concerning the provision of a sound educational philosophy as a result of written statements of philosophy, policies, and procedures. Continued inquiry will provide valuable information to school districts that may enhance quality and assure that a sound educational philosophy becomes actual practice.
APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS REGARDING LOCAL SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND DISCIPLINE POLICY, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

1. Origin of Statements:
   What is the educational philosophy of your school?

   Is it written?

   How is it promoted throughout the school district?

   Did it originate from any particular theoretical basis?

   Who drew up this statement?

   How often is it reviewed and/or revised?

   Who is responsible for assuring that its intent is being followed?
What overall school atmosphere do you think it promotes?

What is the impact of this statement on individual students?

What is the discipline policy of your school?

Is it written?

How is it promoted throughout the school?

Did it originate from any particular theoretical basis?

Who drew up this statement?

How often is it reviewed and/or revised?

Who is responsible for assuring that its intent is being followed?

What overall school atmosphere do you think it promotes?
What is the impact of this statement on individual students?

2. Congruency of the Two Statements:
Do you feel the educational philosophy and discipline policy are congruent?

How are they congruent?

Do they need to be congruent? Why or why not?

Was the educational philosophy considered as the discipline policy was developed? Or vice-versa? How?

Are they based on the same theoretical framework? In what ways?

How do they both provide for a congruent outcome for students?

3. Impact of Discipline Policy and Procedures:
Who is responsible for monitoring specific discipline practices within the school?
How does he/she do it?

How could this be changed?

How effective are the discipline policy and procedures in:
  developing independent decision making skills in students?

  creating a harmonizing environment for students?

  promoting the educational philosophy of the school?

4. Practices Used Over the Past Two Years:
  What discipline practices have you used over the past two years?
  (Describe them)

  How satisfactorily have they worked for you?

  What was the end result of these practices?
What influenced you to use these practices?

How have you revised these practices within the past 2 years?

Did the school administration approve these practices? (teachers only)

How do the practices you use reflect the discipline policies of the school?

Have you had any training regarding discipline practices?
   Sponsored by?

   School-initiated?

   Personally initiated?

5. Sample Situation:
Keith, a nine year old, would not do his homework. He never had his materials ready during class, nor would he do anything constructive
during work times. He would talk and disrupt others as much as possible, making comments such as “What do we need to do this junk for?”
Describe how you would handle this.

What interventions would you use if this behavior persisted?
REFERENCES


