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FOCUS ON LEARNING



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Volume One: Conclusions & Recommendations

*1979 Laws, c. 333, s9 appropriated \$70,700
for Task Force and study/Adm through SPA
Ex Order #79-36 estab Task Force and cited
report due 2/1/81. 10 copies recd 3/2/81.*

**Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy
February, 1981**

*Part 1 of a
2-part rpt.
Due date
part 2 (?)*

FOCUS ON LEARNING, VOLUME I.

February, 1981

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POLICY ACTIONS FOR THE 1980s

Minnesota must reorient its approach to education in the 1980s. To do this will involve a major reshaping of our educational world-view. "Buildings, buses, boundaries, and billions" were priority considerations in responding to the growth years of the 1950s, '60s, and early '70s. The climate and needs of the 1980s, however, require a return to the central issue of educational quality which is what and how well students learn. It is time to concentrate on improving all aspects of instruction. Only a determined focus on the teaching-learning process offers significant promise of improving education in the years ahead.

Meaningful improvement in elementary-secondary education can be achieved by:

- Defining the role of the school more clearly within the context of other educational and human service providers.
- Basing the organization and delivery of instruction on the learning progress of the individual student.
- Focusing greater attention on strategies designed to maximize staff effectiveness.
- Involving parents, community members at large, teachers, administrators, support staff, and students in planning and supporting a school environment which is conducive to learning.
- Maintaining the investment necessary to provide quality programs and services to all students in public schools.
- Giving flexibility to persons directly involved in education at the local level to develop and implement strategies for improvement.

The conclusions and recommendations which follow provide both elaboration and specific action steps.

This report challenges policy-makers, educators, and citizens to create significant changes in their approach to education. It is intended to stimulate critical and dynamic dialogue on all levels. Change is not easy, yet response to emerging needs is critical. The task is clear. The future viability of schools in this state will be determined by our selective preservation of strengths, our willingness to innovate, and our courage to seize available opportunities for advancing educational excellence.

INTRODUCTION

The Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy was established by the 1979 Legislature. It consists of fifteen members appointed by the Governor in October, 1979. Eight members represent the public; seven are members of the education community. The Task Force was directed to review major issues in elementary-secondary education, explore alternative strategies for public policy action, and make recommendations for policy initiatives to the Governor and Legislature in 1981.

The Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy has examined and discussed trends, research, and public opinion relating to elementary and secondary education in Minnesota. The Task Force sponsored nine public forums around the state to solicit the views and concerns of citizens and educators. Subcommittees on Educational Programs and School District Organization, Finance, and Staff developed detailed findings. Individual Task Force members represent a broad spectrum of backgrounds, experiences, and views. These differences were reflected in lengthy deliberations of findings and recommendations.

We unanimously agree, however, that the major issue for public schools in the 1980s is the improvement of instruction. We also agree that increasing the quality of learning for each student ought to be a paramount goal in future considerations.

Governor Quie charged the Task Force in 1979 with "pricking assumptions" and "taking a fresh look at elementary and secondary education." The intent of this two-volume report is to challenge Minnesotans concerned with education. The people of Minnesota are justly proud of a tradition of good schools. The Task Force believes that the hope of doing an even better job will be a powerful incentive in a state known nationally for its leadership in education.

CONCLUSIONS

We are concerned about the future of public education in Minnesota. Elementary and secondary schools in our state have historically yielded a high rate of return on the investment made by the public. However, improvement can and must be achieved to meet the needs of the years ahead. Changes are imperative to enhance the quality Minnesotans have worked to build.

The educational process as it is conducted in schools has not undergone major changes for the majority of students. The organization of instruction, the delivery of educational services, and the training of teachers have remained essentially the same for several decades. The needs of the next generation compel us to examine how education is provided to children and youth. Minnesota's financial commitment to education has been strong. However, funds alone do not guarantee quality. It would be shortsighted to let current financial pressures preclude change. The future viability of the elementary and secondary schools in this state will be determined by our selective preservation of strengths, our willingness to innovate, and our courage to support the good and reject the inadequate.

The Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy believes that the yield and process of public elementary and secondary education can be significantly improved. We believe that alterations in school buildings, boundaries, and transportation systems will not be the major ingredients in preserving quality in the decade ahead. Instead, we assert that instruction and the teaching-learning process must become the key concerns in improvement efforts. The best measure of educational quality is what and how well students learn. Schools must make student learning the watchword for the 1980s.

It is time in Minnesota to focus on instruction and what transpires in learning situations both inside and outside the schoolhouse. We know important new things about the way in which children learn. We are witnessing great progress in electronic communication and computer technology. Schools must capitalize on these developments. At the same time, trends are occurring which cause concern. Increasing numbers of public school teachers and administrators are leaving their profession for other careers. Fewer students are preparing to become educators, while national indicators point to the declining quality of would-be teachers. Many people are deeply concerned about the capacity of the current system for attracting and retaining high quality school staff. They worry about instances of sagging morale, the scarcity of meaningful incentives for excellence, and the perceived mediocre performance of some persons now employed in schools. We must solve these and related problems.

How does the Task Force propose to improve the current educational system and make the changes needed to provide quality? By putting processes in place which challenge the people involved—not only

legislators and state officials, but also teachers, administrators, students, parents and other citizens in local communities—to seek solutions in strategic ways. The Task Force envisions a bottom-up rather than a top-down process for testing promising ideas aimed at improving instruction. We reject the philosophy which states, "If something won't solve the whole problem, it isn't worth doing." Rather, we assert that meaningful change is best achieved when people with a stake in the outcome are willing to try promising ideas and are sincerely desirous of success.

The Task Force proposes five areas for change which are related to improving the learning achievement of students. Our specific recommendations in each area tie innovation to accountability. Increasing the effectiveness of learning experiences for students must be the bottom line of any change strategy. While citizens and educators must be willing to test promising ideas, their success will be determined by evidence that learning was significantly improved.

The five areas for change are: (1) the role of the school; (2) the organization and delivery of instruction; (3) staff effectiveness; (4) school environment; and (5) investment. All reflect the philosophy on which this report is based.

(1) Role of the School

Schools exist within a larger ecology of educational providers. Education is the outcome of learning relationships between students and their environment. Central in formal education is the relationship between students and teachers, and between schools and communities. The expectations placed on schools have increased markedly in the last decade. Schools have been given many responsibilities formerly attended to by parents and other institutions. These additional expectations have, in most cases, been extended without adequate additional resources. The result has been a diffusion of purposes, efforts, and resources. Parents, students, and communities are not passive audiences in the delivery of educational services. Rather, they share responsibility for learning and should act in partnership with schools in the educational process.

The Task Force believes that the goals and expectations of public schools should be clearly defined. In this effort, a clear distinction needs to be made between: (a) the primary areas of learning for which schools are responsible; and (b) the supporting social services which public policy determines that schools should also provide. These goals will give direction to schools and help Minnesotans understand what they are funding. The delineation will also assist citizens and educators to determine the quality of the schooling being provided to students.

(2) Organization and Delivery of Instruction

The learning progress of individual students must become the measure of educational quality in the 1980s. The Task Force believes that a common set of basic educational outcomes should be sought for all children and youth in Minnesota. Research suggests that students vary more in the time it takes them to learn than in their basic ability to learn. The full-class, single-teacher, textbook-centered approach which is characteristic of much schooling is obsolete.

The challenge, therefore, is to implement "systems" for instruction which will be effective for the vast majority of learners. Instruction can be adapted to the actual learning status of individual students. Achievement of this goal requires educators to apply what is known about learning, time on task, the structure of knowledge, multiple approaches to learning, and available technology. Instruction which is tied to individual student learning offers significant promise of maximizing educational outcomes.

(3) Staff Effectiveness

Education is a highly labor-intensive industry. Critical decisions in education are made in close proximity to where learning occurs. Therefore, the people who are responsible for instruction largely determine the quality of educational experiences for students. Most of these people are teachers. The role of the principal as instructional leader is also linked to school effectiveness. Therefore, strategies to maximize staff performance must receive greater attention. Meaningful opportunities to improve instructional effectiveness must be both available to and required of educators. These opportunities should include evaluation, remediation, inservice training, differentiation of responsibility, and incentives for excellence. Accountability is part of a total redesign of the instructional process. It is not a search for victims. While many things are outside the control of the staff members in a school, they can control what students do, how long they do it, and the order in which things get done.

A host of emerging issues relate to the education cadre. They include concern for the quality of newly-prepared entrants, the recruitment and retention of the most effective persons, compensation systems that encourage maximum performance, and the continued professional development of staff in the system. These considerations require priority attention if the public interest in education is to be protected.

(4) School Environment

Effective schools are characterized by an orderly environment which is conducive to learning. In these schools, administrators, instructional and support staff, students, parents, and other community members participate in the determination of standards and rules and honor their respective responsibilities.

All those who have a stake in education should participate in school and classroom decision-making. Ours is a multiple-option, highly par-

ticipatory society. These decentralization tendencies need not result in the dominance of special interest groups nor abdication of responsibility. Rather, parents, citizens, students, educators, and policy-makers must work together to assist schools in making the transition to a higher quality of education in the 1980s.

(5) Investment

School finance is a matter for serious public attention. Elementary-secondary education is one of Minnesota's largest enterprises. Thirty percent of all general fund appropriations by the Legislature for the 1979-81 biennium went to support elementary-secondary education. This \$2.5 billion represents a significant state investment in human resources.

Trends now occurring are affecting the financing of public schools. Continuing inflation, increasing social expectations, maturing staff, and fluctuating enrollments have direct fiscal implications. The quality of instruction may, over time, be eroded by rising costs in non-instructional areas. These emerging issues require careful examination.

The quality of life in Minnesota attests to the excellent rate of return on its investment in education. The yield and process of elementary and secondary education can be significantly improved during the 1980s. This potential can only be realized, however, if the investment in staff and resources is maintained, results and outcomes carefully documented, and priorities established.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Role of the School

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE

1. LEGISLATIVE DEFINITION

The Legislature should make a clear and concise public policy statement of the nature and scope of (1) the instructional programs, and (2) the support services for which schools are responsible.

- The Legislature should establish a one-year legislative commission to develop recommendations by January, 1982 concerning the definition of the role and purpose of public schools. The commission should be empowered to procure requisite documents from all agencies which deliver educational or related support services in Minnesota public schools.
- The primary purpose of schools is instruction. Therefore, a clear distinction must be made between the primary areas of learning for which schools are responsible and the supporting services which public policy determines that schools should also provide.
- The commission should define "general and uniform," and "thorough and efficient."
- Any new charge to public schools should be preceded by an impact statement which expresses its effect on the time, staff, and dollars available for instruction.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Education is a public good from which all Minnesotans benefit and for which all Minnesotans pay. It is also one of the state's largest enterprises.
- The meaning of "appropriate and adequate" educational opportunities should be consistent with a purpose and philosophy of public education in Minnesota as stated by the Legislature.
- A framework needs to be established within which school finance issues may be addressed and the educational expectations of Minnesotans articulated.
- Schools are asked to fulfill multiple goals as defined by a wide variety of constituent groups. It is likely that the number of required missions will increase. These expanded functions may erode resources available for instruction.

- The public school is increasingly being used as a vehicle to deliver social service programs. These programs need to be identified and the most appropriate agencies for their implementation and funding defined.
- It is imperative that the instructional role of schools remain primary. A precise definition of the role and purpose of schools involves areas which are beyond the purview of the Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy (e.g. interagency relationships in the provision of support services). The Task Force believes, therefore, that a blue ribbon legislative commission with specifically-designated staff support is the most effective vehicle to develop recommendations to the Legislature.

SOURCES

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2. STATEWIDE GOALS

The Legislature should direct the State Board of Education to develop goals identifying the major areas of learning to which students should have access in Minnesota schools. This activity should be undertaken subsequent to and be consistent with the legislative definition as outlined in Recommendation #1.

- A list of major goals should be developed which outlines, from a state perspective, what schools should be attempting to teach their students. This statement should provide a framework for local districts to assess their programs in light of clearly defined state goals.

- These goals should distinguish direct educational programs from additional support and social services.
- The goal statements should include academic, vocational, personal, and social goals.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Schools are in danger of becoming overextended. A clear and concise declaration of the goals and expectations for public schools will provide direction to local districts and help Minnesotans understand what they are funding.
- A list of broad state goals should elicit considerable discussion among school board members, parents, teachers, administrators, and students. They will allow each local school district to review and discuss their programs within a broader state framework.

SOURCES

- Goodlad, John. Presentation to the Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. September 4, 1980.
- Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. *Focus on the Learning, Volume II, op. cit.* Findings on Educational Programs/Services and School District Organization: II A, C, F, S.

3. ACCESS TO QUALITY

The Legislature should ensure that all of Minnesota's children and youth have equal access to high quality educational opportunities.

- The Legislature should approach the question of access in terms of adequacy, appropriateness, and quality of program offerings. A level of financing which guarantees equitable access to these offerings for each Minnesota student should then be provided.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- The Minnesota constitution calls for a system of public schools which is (a) general and uniform, and (b) thorough and efficient. It suggests that the degree of a student's access to an appropriate and adequate education should not be determined by geography. Instead, access is seen as a human investment by the Legislature.
- Minnesota's 436 public school districts vary widely in such basic characteristics as wealth, enrollment size, enrollment change, and geographic size.

- Statewide, the 1977 adjusted assessed property valuation per pupil unit averaged \$21,922. However, five percent of local school districts had valuations greater than \$59,000 per pupil unit while another five percent of the districts had valuations less than \$10,000 per pupil unit.

- Enrollment size appears to be a significant factor in determining the nature of a district's programs and services. There are indications that the smaller the enrollment, the more restricted is a district's ability to offer a curriculum with depth and breadth, especially at the secondary level. One-hundred seventy-eight (178) districts had 300 or fewer students in grades 7-12 in 1978-79. This number is expected to increase as the 1980s progress.
- Marked enrollment changes over a relatively short period of time may have a substantial impact on the curricular capabilities of local districts. The number of school districts with total enrollments for all elementary and secondary grades under 300 increased 47 percent (from 38 to 52) between 1973-74 and 1977-78.
- A comparison of Dilworth's 1.75 square miles to St. Louis County's 2,716 square miles illustrates the range of geographic sizes among Minnesota's local school districts, a factor which may affect program breadth.
- Some districts have combinations of characteristics which result in extra costs and also have needs which may be difficult to meet through a general financing formula. For example, a district with small enrollment and large area may have high per pupil transportation costs. The district may also have high instructional costs, due to a low teacher-pupil ratio. These problems may occur in the 25 Minnesota districts which have an area of more than 400 square miles.
- Districts vary widely in the percentages of revenue emanating from federal, state, and local sources. These variations reflect the use of funds by both the state and federal governments to compensate for differences among districts and to address the needs of particular populations.

SOURCE

- Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. *Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit.* Findings on School Finance: I B, D, E; III G.

4. DEFINITION OF A SCHOOL

The Legislature should: (1) clarify the definition of a school as currently provided in the compulsory attendance statute (M.S. 120.10, Subd. 2); and, (2) direct the State Board of Education to develop a monitoring system to assure that all non-public schools are meeting the requirements thus defined.

- The Legislature should define the term "all common branches" as found in M.S. 120.10, Subd. 2. This definition should list the subject matter areas which must be made available to students attending non-public elementary, junior high, middle, and high schools.
- The Legislature should define "essentially equivalent teacher qualifications," as found in M.S. 120.10, Subd. 2, to include at least a 4-year college degree.
- School building safety standards should be required of structures which house a school.
- Civil Rights standards should be met by any school which is approved for compulsory attendance services.
- In order to encourage superintendents, county attorneys, and judges to fulfill their responsibilities for ensuring compliance, the compulsory attendance statute (M.S. 120.12, Subd. 3) should be decriminalized so that it is a civil offense for parents and/or guardians whose children are not in school.
- The monitoring system should be established by the State Board of Education.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Minimum safety and quality standards are necessary to ensure that both the general welfare and the welfare of individual students are protected in all schools.
- The current statute on compulsory attendance (M.S. 120.10) is vague and therefore open to a considerable amount of interpretation.
- Due to the vagueness of M.S. 120.10, superintendents have a difficult task in determining whether children are in an "appropriate" school.
- Because of the current lack of clarity in M.S. 120.10, it has been difficult to develop a satisfactory system to monitor compliance of public and non-public schools with statutory provisions.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. *Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit.* Findings on Educational Programs/Services and School District Organization: II G; III F.

5. LONG RANGE LOCAL AND AREA PLANNING.

The Legislature should reinstitute and fund the Educational Planning Task Force Legislation (M.S. 122.86-122.88) as a means to: (a) establish a continuing process for long range local and area-wide planning; (b) review existing cooperative programs and services and increase the effectiveness of those activities; and (c) provide incentives to local school districts to encourage efficiencies in the organization, management, and delivery of educational services.

- Each local school district should conduct financial and organizational planning on a regular basis and develop a long range plan every five years.
- An area-wide task force should be established every five years to update a comprehensive plan for its area.
- The state's current PER legislation (M.S. 123.74-123.742) should be incorporated in this expanded planning legislation.
- Funds should be appropriated directly to local districts to offset expenditures required by the planning process. In addition to operating expenses for the area-wide task forces, incentive grants should be made available to local districts to implement organizational and management alternatives.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Due to continued fluctuating enrollment and financial constraints, effective long range planning for schools will become increasingly more critical during the decade of the 1980s.
- The 1977 Educational Planning Task Force Legislation (M.S. 122-86-122.89) demonstrated that citizen task forces for local and area-wide long range planning can work effectively.
- Over 40 school districts have actively studied the Interdistrict Cooperation Legislation (Pairing, M.S. 122.541) during the past three years. In addition, more than 150 districts have implemented alternatives developed during the EPTF process.
- Incentive grants have proved to be effective in assisting local districts to actively study alternative methods of organization and management. A \$50,000 appropriation authorized by the 1979 Legislature has encouraged 23 school districts to examine in depth the Interdistrict Cooperation Legislation (Pairing) as a method for maintaining and developing comprehensive educational programs for their students.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. *Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit.* Findings on Educational Programs/Services and School District Organization: I; II C; D, N, O; III A, B, C, D, E, G, H.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

6. PROGRAMS IN GRADES 9-12

The State Board of Education should undertake a comprehensive study of the current public school programs and services being offered in grades 9-12 and revise, if necessary, the basic instructional program that must be available and accessible to all youth 16 to 18 years of age.

- The subsequent revision of State Board rules should be narrow enough to require experiences which contribute to a general education and which are needed for citizenship in a free society, yet flexible enough to provide preparation for a wide range of occupational and personal goals.
- The State Board should, in this examination, seriously explore alternatives to the traditional "Carnegie Units" as methods of establishing requirements for satisfactory school completion.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Generally, students will have completed grade 10 by the age of 16. While current State Board rules are quite explicit in the required subject matter areas through grade 9, grades 10-12 have historically been the domain of local school boards. There are only limited requirements (for the purposes of state aid) for grades 10, 11, and 12.
- Due to the increasing need for a literate populus and the importance of individual flexibility in choosing and changing occupations, the need for an effective high school education is critical.
- Declining enrollments, accompanied by program cutbacks and staff reductions, have forced districts to reduce the number of secondary courses offered.
- Nearly 72 percent of Minnesota School districts have a six-year secondary school (grades 7-12). This represents 20.6 percent of all secondary school students. However, there is no requirement under current State Board rules for college preparatory courses in a six-year secondary school.

- In 1978-79, 16,245 students dropped out of Minnesota public schools. These students represented 4 percent of all Minnesota students in grades 7-12 in the fall of that year. The number of students who drop out has increased 26 percent since 1975-76 (3400 students).
- A number of recent studies reflect American concern over the quality and relevance of high school offerings.
- All students should have experiences outside of school which contribute to their understanding of one or more occupations. All occupationally-directed programs should focus on transferable skills and knowledge rather than narrow skills training.

SOURCES

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Van Til, William, Ed. *Issues in Secondary Education*. National Society for the Study of Education, 1976.

Organization and Delivery of Instruction

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE

7. COUNCIL TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Legislature should revise and expand its research and development efforts to focus for the next decade on the improvement of teaching and learning in the schools of Minnesota.

- The Council on Quality Education (M.S. 3.924-3.927) should be reconstructed as the Council to Improve Teaching and Learning. This revised Council:

- Should be a "public foundation" which can receive funds from private as well as public sources.
- Should be open to proposals for the improvement of instruction and learning in public schools from local school boards, from individual schools, from teachers, and from parents organized as non-profit entities.
- Should, with the assistance of consultants and staff, develop its own program for the improvement of instruction and learning, soliciting from school boards, from schools, from teachers, and from parent groups proposals for the execution thereof.

- The Legislature, in this revision, should make the continuing programs of the Council on Quality Education fully the responsibility of the State Board of Education.

- The Council, as an extension of the Legislature, should be reconstructed as follows:

- Four persons interested in and knowledgeable about education to be appointed by the Speaker of the House.
- Four persons similarly qualified to be appointed by the President of the Senate.
- Five persons similarly qualified to be appointed by the Governor.

- The reconstructed Council to Improve Teaching and Learning should report biennially to the Governor and Legislature on its progress, and make recommendations for changes in state policy which would serve to introduce into the educational system the improvements suggested by successful projects.

- Responsibilities of the Council to Improve Teaching and Learning should include:

- (a) Funding development projects aimed at improving instruction.

- These projects should address: the organization of personnel for instruction; the content of instruction; instructional methods; diagnosis of student learning needs; referral of students to various instructional situations; evaluation of student progress; the use of technology to improve instruction; and, utilization of outside services.

- The potential of using these projects as inservice training sites for personnel in other locations should be explored.

- Persons involved in these projects should be linked into a network for mutual support and exchange of new ideas.

- The opportunity for 12-month contracts should be extended to professionally licensed personnel in project sites commensurate with differentiated responsibilities (e.g. teachers with instructional leadership responsibilities, support services staff).

- (b) Testing and funding projects to encourage shared decision-making by teachers, students, parents, and principals at the school building level.

- (c) Funding demonstrations to test models aimed at increasing the effectiveness of instructional personnel. (See Recommendation #16)

- (d) Funding demonstration projects to develop and test new types of salary plans. (See Recommendation # 16)

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- In M.S. 3.925, the Legislature expresses concern:

...over the future of elementary and secondary education in this state, its ability to meet the needs of the public school students, the professional growth and satisfaction of school staffs, the effectiveness and efficiency of present schools and their learning processes, [and] continuing pupil cost escalation and the financial crisis which this brings about.

These concerns are still valid.

- The Council on Quality Education (CQE) was established by the Legislature in 1971 to "...encourage, promote, aid, and perform research and development for quality education. . . , to evaluate the results of significant innovative programs, and to disseminate information about these programs throughout the state." (M.S. 3.925)
- The tenth anniversary of the Council on Quality Education is a logical time to review and revise its structure in light of trends and issues for the 1980s. It is appropriate to build on the work done by CQE in its first decade. However, the needs of the next decade for improvement in instruction and learning can be best met by a new type of approach.
- It is appropriate to periodically refocus organizations which aim at innovation. The contribution of research and development is dependent on a continuous flow of new ideas and personnel. It is also appropriate for venture fund bodies to have a particular focus, such as instruction, in order for projects to have maximum impact and continuity.
- The reconstructed Council, with its focus on improving instruction and learning, should also have a ten-year life cycle at most.
- The Council to Improve Teaching and Learning should assume a posture of "aggressive and purposeful philanthropy." This would include defining what is needed, actively promoting its goals, and soliciting proposals for funding.
- Operating programs of CQE, such as those in Early Childhood and Family Education, should be transferred into the Minnesota Department of Education.
- It is appropriate to make the new Council independent from the State Board of Education. CQE was originally created as an extension of the Legislature; M.S. 3.924-.927 is located with other statutes relating to the Legislature. Indeed, the creation of CQE was initiated by the Legislature, not by the State Board of Education.
- The new Council to Improve Teaching and Learning should not have sole and exclusive rights to innovative projects in education. Rather, the Council should work closely with the State Board of Education and the Minnesota Department of Education in proposing changes and improvements in state policy.
- The Council on Quality Education has been an important source of venture capital for innovative projects in local districts. Since FY 73, CQE has spent \$11.2 million on research and development projects (\$5.18 million in Elementary—Secondary grants; \$6.05 million in Early Childhood/Family grants).

SOURCES

- Council on Quality Education.
- Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. *Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit.* Findings on Educational Programs/Services and School District Organization: II H, I.
- Minnesota Statutes 3.924-3.927.

8. SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATION

The Legislature should contract for an independent evaluation of the educational and economic impact of Special Education programs and services.

- Special Education is the largest mandatory curricular categorical aid program in Minnesota. It has not been subject to a major evaluation of its impact on students and school districts since its inception in 1958.
- The evaluation could be authorized and conducted by an independent agency in a manner similar to the evaluation of the Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium (MECC).

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Special Education in Minnesota is mandatory. Minnesota Statutes and State Board Rules define all aspects of Special Education programs and funding.
- All districts must submit yearly, to the Department of Education, a plan outlining how the district will meet state requirements for appropriate programs and services. In addition, each district must submit a budget for its Special Education programs.
- Although Special Education is mandatory, it is not fully funded. Local districts must utilize general fund monies to meet the Special Education requirements.

SOURCES

- Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. *Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit.* Findings on Educational Programs/Services and School District Organization: II E.

9. PRIMARY GRADE INSTRUCTION

The Legislature should recognize the importance of the early years of schooling and enact legislation which encourages instructional improvement in the primary grades.

- The program should be optional for local districts.
- The program should provide for significant parental involvement, emphasis on basic skills, staff development, and educator-pupil ratios appropriate to the needs of individual students.

- In addition, each local school board should be encouraged to develop self-supporting extended day programs in cooperation with parents who desire care for their children before and after the formal school day.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Research indicates that the early elementary years are a crucial time to nurture an impressionable mind and help it acquire the skills to grow.
- A review of research indicates that pupil achievement in reading and math at the primary level can be increased by: lowering class sizes for two or more years; individualizing instruction; and training teachers in instructional techniques to make maximum use of smaller classes.
- After reviewing more than 1,000 research studies, Benjamin Bloom concluded that an individual develops 50% of his or her mature intelligence from conception to age 4, another 30% from age 4 to 8, and the remaining 20% from ages 8-17.
- Statistics on the changing structure of the family and the fact that only 16% of waking hours between kindergarten and grade three are spent in actual school attendance, make it important that a truly effective school learning involvement be maintained for young children.
- Class sizes in Minnesota schools follow a distinct pattern. Generally, larger class sizes tend to occur in larger school districts. Conversely, the smaller the district, the lower the class size.
- It is more cost-effective to fund prevention and early intervention programs rather than those for remediation and treatment.
- It appears as though local school districts could develop a one or two-hour morning block and a one to two-hour afternoon block of time in which children could be involved in creative and meaningful experiences in a familiar environment, under the direction of qualified staff.

SOURCES

- California State Department of Education. *Report on the Special Studies of Selected ECE Schools with Increasing and Decreasing Reading Scores*. Sacramento, 1980.
- Cohen, Leonard and Nikola Filby. "The Class Size/Achievement Issue: New Evidence and a Research Plan." *Phi Delta Kappan*. March 1979.
- Educational Research Service. *Class Size: A Summary of Research*, 1978.

_____. *Class Size Research: A Critique of Recent Meta-Analyses*, 1980.

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. *Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit.* Findings on Educational Programs/Services and School District Organization: II B, H, P, S, U, X.

Minnesota Department of Education, Office of the Commissioner. *A Proposal for A Primary Grade Instruction Improvement Program*. August 4, 1980.

10. EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY EDUCATION.

The Legislature should evaluate the Early Childhood/Family Education Program currently being administered by the Council on Quality Education (CQE), and disseminate information regarding effective programs to public and private agencies.

- The Legislature should direct the State Board of Education to review and evaluate the 36 Early Childhood/Family programs currently being funded, and identify the most effective strategies and processes for use by other agencies.
- The Legislature should assign ongoing responsibility for the Early Childhood/Family programs to the State Board of Education.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Funding for Early Childhood/Family Programs has increased nearly four-fold from \$470,000 in FY 1977 to \$1,760,000 in FY 1981.
- It would appear that an evaluation of current Early Childhood/Family Programs and a dissemination of effective processes would enhance the opportunity of young children to gain a comprehensive education.
- Early Childhood/Family Programs are no longer experimental in nature. Rather they appear to be successful operating programs with strong parental support.
- Profound changes are taking place in the lives of Minnesota children. The institution which is at the center of these changes—the family—shows the most rapid and radical transformation and is the major context in which a child grows up.
- Recent national surveys of parents indicate their interest in participating in programs which will increase their effectiveness as parents.

SOURCES

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings
on Educational Programs/Services and
School District Organization: II A, B, H, X.

_____. *Summary of Public Forums, op. cit.*

11. TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

The Legislature should require and provide funds to each school district for a systematic assessment program to periodically assess individual student progress toward the achievement of basic skills and knowledge, as defined by the district.

- This requirement should be incorporated into the current Planning, Evaluating, and Reporting Legislation (PER), M.S. 123.74-123.742.
- Assessment programs should be developed by each local board of education within the guidelines established by the Legislature.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Assessment programs which are used to guide instruction and programming for individual students can make a major contribution to increase achievement levels and improve educational quality.
- More than 200 Minnesota districts are currently using the state Piggy-Back Assessment Program as a means of ongoing program improvement.

SOURCES

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings
on Educational Programs/Services and
School District Organization: II L, M, O.

_____. *Summary of Public Forums, op. cit.*

12. EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

The Legislature should increase and proportionately fund the number of student attendance days to 180.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- The amount of time spent by a student on each instructional task has been demonstrated to be of critical importance to increased learning.
- The students, teachers, principals, and parents who are the primary persons to increasing learning need time to plan and organize the improvements in instruction which are deemed essential for enhanced quality.

- Minnesota ranks 33rd among the fifty states in the number of days students are required to be in attendance.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings
on Educational Programs/Services and
School District Organization: II T, W, X.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

13. INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

Each local school board is encouraged to direct its administrative and professional staff to develop a process for designing and providing instructional programs that fit the educational needs of individual students.

- This process should allow each student to study a common core curriculum. Modifications should be made in the delivery of instruction within this curriculum core to meet the individual learning style and needs of each student.
- Parent participation should be incorporated into the process of planning for individual student needs.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Each student has the right to expect that the school will make every reasonable effort to design instructional methods which will provide him or her with the most conducive means for learning.
- Each parent has the right to expect a clear and concise documentation from the school regarding the types of programs and courses in which his/her child will be involved, at what level, and under what conditions.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings
on Educational Programs/Services and
School District Organization: II R, S, U.

14. SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Each local school board is encouraged to incorporate a wide variety of adults in helping roles into the education of children and youth.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Volunteers are an important but sometimes overlooked resource for schools. They provide a valuable diversity of role models for students as well as a source of expertise.
- Many people can provide valuable service to education without making it their life's work. In so doing, they will come to better understand their school and its role in the educational process.
- Volunteer programs make additional human resources available to teachers while at the same time opening schools up to their surrounding community.
- Numerous programs in Minnesota and around the country provide inspiration for program development. They include CETA-education linkages, adopt-a-school programs, retired volunteer models, loaned executive programs, and adult tutoring.
- Children and youth need a variety of role models to enable them to learn behaviors which will help them adapt to a complex and changing society. The predominance of the youth culture and its value system can be moderated by incorporating a variety of adults in meaningful ways into the life of a school.
- Instruction increasingly relates closely to the larger community to which the school belongs. This is an important development which should be continued. However, school staff too often tend to be kept out of the mainstream of the adult work world outside the school.

SOURCES

Goodlad, John. Presentation to the Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. September 4, 1980.

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. *Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit.* Findings on School Staff: II C, D.

Staff Effectiveness

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE

15. LICENSURE AND PRESERVICE TRAINING

The Governor should appoint a special task force to examine the adequacy of the current system for teacher preparation and licensure and make recommendations for action by state policy-makers and teacher preparation institutions.

- The task force should represent citizens, legislators, school board members, educators (teachers, principals, superintendents), and those who prepare and license teachers.
- The task force should consider:
 - The respective responsibilities of the Legislature, teacher preparation institutions, the Board of Teaching, and the State Board of Education.
 - The testing of candidates prior to admission to professional preparation programs.
 - The structure and content of teacher preparation programs.
 - The institution and funding of internship requirements for students in teacher preparation programs.
 - The examination of new graduates in their subject areas prior to provisional licensure.
 - The concept of a special designation for "Career Teachers" which recognizes and rewards outstanding teaching performance, improves salaries based on responsibility and achievement, provides career-enhancing experiences, and offers the opportunity for instructional leadership.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- There is growing concern that teacher training programs do not provide the kinds of experiences that teachers will need for the decades of the 1980s and 1990s.
- Market forces, including starting salaries which are below those for other entry-level professional jobs, are resulting in declining enrollments in teacher preparation programs.

- Although Minnesota Statutes designate a probationary period for new teachers (M.S. 125.12, Subd. 3), the content of and performance indicators for that period are left to local boards of education.
- Formalized transition programs are not always available to staff newly employed in a district. Instead, they must often make the transition on their own.
- Concern about the competency of newly-prepared teachers is leading to state-level interest in mandatory examinations prior to initial licensure. Fourteen states currently require a passing score on either a test developed at the state level or the National Teacher Examination.
- Efforts to restructure the total system for teacher preparation and licensure are underway in some states. The comprehensive model developed by Georgia based on competency-based certification appears particularly promising.
- Outstanding experienced teachers need to be recognized, supported, and offered opportunities for advancement and leadership in their profession.
- Teaching lacks a career ladder at present. Advancement tends to mean exit from classroom teaching. There has been an increase in the number of experienced persons who leave teaching for other careers.
- Ties between teacher education programs and public school systems need to be strengthened and extended through shared responsibility and funding for pre-service and in-service training.

SOURCES

- Georgia Department of Education.
Performance-Based Certification in Georgia. 1979.
- Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings on School Staff: II I, J, K; III D, H; IV A; V A, B, C, D, F, H.
- Vlaanderen, Russ. *Trends in Competency-Based Certification*. Education Commission of the States. March, 1980.

16. DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

The Legislature should assign responsibility to the Council to Improve Teaching and Learning (see Recommendation #7) to include efforts addressed at staff productivity and satisfaction.

- The Council should fund demonstration projects to develop and test models aimed at increasing the effectiveness of school personnel.
 - These demonstration projects should have improvement of instructional effectiveness as a primary goal.
 - The projects should address evaluation skills, development of criteria for evaluation, problem diagnosis, remediation, measurement of improvement, and incentives for excellence.
 - Projects should include the strengthening of outplacement activities and career alternatives for persons more suited to non-teaching positions.
- The Council should fund demonstration projects which aim at developing and testing new types of salary plans.
 - These projects should involve the collaboration of teachers, administrators, board members, and parents and should be consistent with PELRA provisions.
 - These new salary plans should go beyond experience and training as determinants for remuneration by developing performance indicators.
 - Model salary systems could include efforts, for example, to both approve starting pay and narrow current pay brackets. Under such a scale, teachers could reach their maximum guaranteed base salary after 5 years (consistent with the principle of equal pay for equal work).
 - These projects should also address the feasibility of classifying the salaries of instructional staff according to responsibilities and length of contract.

SOURCES

- Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings on School Staff: III E, H, J; V G, H.
- _____. *Summary of Public Forums, op. cit.*

17. EVALUATION

The Legislature should require each school board to develop a plan for the regular evaluation of all instructional and administrative personnel. Each local board should file its plan with the State Board of Education.

- Each local board should be encouraged to form a committee of teachers, other instructional staff, and administrators to develop recommendations for a personnel evaluation system for consideration by the board.
- All employees should be evaluated, including administrators, teachers, and other instructional and support staff.
- Technical assistance should be available, upon request, from each Educational Cooperative Service Unit, the Minnesota Department of Education, and from private agencies.
- Evaluation systems should focus on improving performance in instructional activities and/or job responsibilities as described in position description statements.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Improved teacher quality ranks high among the best ways to improve schools.
- Public opinion reflects concern in keeping good teachers.
- In an era of decline, the retention of effective staff is critical. Fair and effective methods for reviewing and evaluating staff performance helps accomplish this objective.
- Citizens support improved accountability of teachers for student learning.
- The expectations placed on schools and school staff have increased substantially. Efforts to delineate the responsibilities of staff in a particular school building must be made before individuals can be held accountable. This definition of the roles of teachers, administrators, support personnel, and all others who work in the school should be clearly defined in terms of position responsibility.
- The current statutory system for school staff accountability tends to focus on the removal of grossly inefficient teachers. Options for local school boards for progressive discipline procedures should be included in existing state statutes. Local districts must also develop methods to systematically observe and evaluate staff in order to improve their performance. In addition, staff who do not meet performance standards should be assisted in improving or in finding other work.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus On Learning, Volume II, op. cit.
Findings on School Staff: II H; V A, H.

18. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND INSERVICE TRAINING

The Legislature should provide funding to enable local school boards to develop a comprehensive plan for staff development and inservice training aimed at improving instruction and professional effectiveness.

- Each local school board is encouraged to develop a plan for staff development aimed at improving instruction which is consistent with district goals and objectives.
- Each local board is encouraged to create a committee composed of teachers, parents, and administrators in each building to develop school site objectives and a budget for staff development consistent with district goals.
- A process should be developed wherein each school employee writes an educational accountability plan which is consistent with building goals and has clearly stated outcome objectives. This accountability plan should supplement the position responsibility description in forming the basis for employee evaluation.
- Earmarked funds to carry out staff development activities consistent with identified goals should be made available to each district. In addition, activities of Educational Cooperative Service Units should be sensitive to the stated goals of its constituent districts.
- Assistance to local districts in developing and implementing plans should be provided by the Educational Cooperative Service Units, Teacher Centers, and the Council to Improve Teaching and Learning (Recommendation #7).

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Since the most legitimate concern of educators is the quality of student learning, the primary focus of staff development programs should be on the improvement of instruction.
- Despite the increasing pressures on school staff, few human resource development programs exist due, in part, to scarce funds.

- The educator labor force is becoming a more stable group and is increasingly distant from early training. Given the increase in the production and dissemination of knowledge about learning and the changing work environment, educators will need ongoing activities to increase their professional effectiveness.
- Teachers are managers of the learning process, responsible for seeing that the learning needs of each individual student are met. In this process, teachers need to select appropriate learning materials and instructional methods at each phase of the learning progress of each student. This is a demanding role which calls for a background of broad training and management experience. As the instructional process is reorganized, teachers will need direction, ongoing training, and support.
- The program content of inservice training activities should be tailored to the needs of local districts as articulated in specific plans for staff development.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings on School Staff: III A, B, H; IV D.

19. TEACHER MOBILITY PROGRAMS

The Legislature should evaluate current state teacher mobility programs (M.S. 125.60, 125.61; 354A.22) to determine their effects on: (1) the education cadre; and (2) the distribution of educators across school districts in Minnesota.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Decisions by educators to relocate or change careers reflect complex interactions between personal and policy variables.
- Mismatches relating to the supply of and demand for educators are leading to staff shortages in certain locations and assignment areas.
- Information on both career and geographic mobility indicate that efforts to redirect the flow of educators have tended to exacerbate supply and demand problems. The career mobility leave program, enacted through statute, appears to be stimulating the exit of staff who are difficult to replace due to their subject area and may not result in significant salary savings, over time, to participating districts.
- Given impending staff shortages in certain districts, stimulating geographic mobility within education may be more important than encouraging exit from the profession.
- Expanding early retirement programs may offer a better alternative for staff mobility than broadening career change incentives.
- The concept of job-sharing should be explored as it relates to the part-time teaching program (M.S. 354A.22). Job-sharing alternatives have been successfully developed in the private sector to offer employees more flexibility in their work situations. A pilot job-sharing program for public employees is being developed at the state level in Minnesota.
- Job-sharing might provide flexibility for educators, open up the teaching ranks to younger persons, and provide alternatives for educators not yet ready for full-time retirement.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus On Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings on School Staff: II B, I, K; III C, F; IV A; V B, F.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

20. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS REGARDING EDUCATION PERSONNEL

The State Board of Education should establish a system for monitoring and reporting trends in the Minnesota education cadre and should conduct a periodic census (e.g. every 3 years) of the education labor force. A report to the Legislature which summarizes the trends should be prepared annually; in addition, an in-depth biennial report should be prepared.

- A data base for monitoring and reporting trends could build on information contained in the Minnesota Department of Education and the Higher Education Coordinating Board.
- A census of education staff employed in Minnesota schools should be performed on a regular basis (e.g. every three years). A statistically representative census could probe the characteristics of the education cadre in greater depth than is now possible with existing data sources.
- In conjunction with this effort, special studies should be conducted. A case in point would be a profile on non-instructional personnel employed in Minnesota public schools in order both to determine salient trends and identify future data collection needs.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- The educational delivery system depends on a high quality and sufficient quantity of education staff.
- The general nature of problems emerging in the education cadre and the impact of decisions made in one organizational unit on manpower conditions in other units calls for leadership at the state level.
- A statewide perspective in human resources planning is needed to help balance state policy issues with local fiscal concerns.
- Concern about impending teacher shortages in some areas and surpluses in others points to the need for current and reliable information on the supply and demand for educators.
- Historically, the state's role in personnel management has focused on licensure, e.g. formulating standards, granting licenses, checking for compliance. Emerging trends, especially supply and demand concerns, argue for efforts aimed at policy analysis and planning.
- Information relating to education manpower is housed in several different agencies; efforts to compile and analyze these data could assist policy-makers in their deliberations.
- The Education Staff Studies undertaken by the Minnesota State Planning Agency at the request of the Governor offer a useful prototype.

SOURCES

Minnesota State Planning Agency. *A Proposal to Conduct an Annual Survey to Determine the Availability of Licensed Personnel to Meet the Staffing Needs of Minnesota's Public Schools and to Take a Triennial Census of the Public Education Cadre*. April 21, 1980.

_____. *A Proposal to Establish, Implement, and Maintain a System to Monitor the Supply and Demand for Professional Education Personnel In Minnesota's Public Schools*. July 14, 1980.

_____. *Public School Educators in Minnesota*. May, 1980.

21. STAFF RETRAINING

The State Board of Education, in collaboration with postsecondary education institutions, should give consideration to developing intensive summer programs which retrain staff, within generic fields, from areas of surplus to areas of greater demand.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Shortages of qualified staff are occurring in Mathematics, Science, Agriculture, and in some Special Education areas. This particularly affects smaller districts in rural areas.
- Staff assignments within the same generic field would present the greatest likelihood of ready transfer of knowledge.
- The awarding of scholarships and grants should be considered to encourage teachers to participate in retraining efforts.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. *Focus on Learning: Volume II, op. cit.* Findings on School Staff: II I, J, K; V F.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

22. ROLE OF THE BUILDING PRINCIPAL

Each local school board is encouraged to design the role and job description of the building principal to focus on instructional leadership and provide additional administrative staff at the building level, if necessary, to enable this function to be performed.

- In addition, the Legislature should explore the advisability of providing categorical funding for building level administrative staff to ensure that adequate resources for instructional leadership by the principal are available.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Recent studies indicate that the principal is a key figure in the school, particularly if s/he sets clear instructional goals, participates in classroom teaching, supervises instruction, and establishes high expectations for staff and students.
- Although the job description and responsibilities of most principals include instructional leadership and supervision, these functions must be performed in addition to other administrative tasks.

- In recent years, school boards have been encouraged to reduce administrative staffing. However, additional support is needed for the building principal to provide instructional leadership.
- The presence of instructional leadership in a school should not be solely dependent on the personal interests of an individual administrator.
- Teachers in several Minnesota studies cited lack of administrative direction and support as a major problem.
- As limited measures, several Minnesota school districts are involved in projects aimed at developing the instructional leadership and supervision skills of their building principals. For example, some local districts now require that principals spend time in the classroom. Another district has included a stipulation that principals serve as substitute teachers three days per month.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings on School Staff: III E, F; IV D.

23. CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Each local continuing education committee is encouraged to redefine the criteria for awarding credits (points) toward the continuing licensure of employees in terms of district goals for staff development. In addition, the school board and teacher representatives in each local district are encouraged to include provisions in their negotiated agreements which tie salary increments to courses which increase instructional competence.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Present systems for relicensure credits and salary increments may not specify the areas of competence consistent with district goals and objectives.
- Selection of ongoing training experiences has long been viewed as the responsibility of the individual teacher. Although local districts sponsor some inservice training experiences, most programs are offered independently by postsecondary institutions and teacher organizations.
- Staff should be given stronger incentives to pursue continuing education activities which increase their professional effectiveness.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings on School Staff: IV D.

24. FLEXIBLE SABBATICAL LEAVES

The school board and teacher representatives in each local district are encouraged to make their criteria for sabbatical leave/professional leave of absence sufficiently flexible to encourage staff to work in government, business and industry, to travel, and to undertake activities which will enhance their careers as professional educators.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- School staff tend to be isolated from the broader world of work.
- Mature teachers report morale problems due to fatigue and stress. A period for professional rejuvenation would address symptoms related to malaise.
- Business and industry are increasingly demonstrating willingness to work with schools in making internship experiences available to staff.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning Volume II, op. cit. Findings on School Staff: III C, F, K; IV A.

School Environment

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE

25. PARENTAL PARTICIPATION, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Legislature should clarify the rights and responsibilities of parents in the education of their children by developing and enacting legislation which clearly outlines a general policy of parental participation and involvement.

- Parental involvement should be viewed as a legitimate activity of schools and as an internal part of the delivery of instructional services, not as an add-on. Reaching families should be viewed to be as important as reaching children.
- Parental involvement programs should provide for methods of participation in addition to existing advisory committee and volunteer programs.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- With the exception of Special Education, neither the Minnesota Statutes nor the Rules of the State Board of Education address parent participation, rights or responsibilities in the education of their children.
- Locally-elected school board members increasingly deal with non-instructional decisions. Parental advisory committees and task forces are an indication of the willingness of parents to become involved and reflect the need for more meaningful parent participation.
- Several states including Florida, California and South Carolina, have developed and implemented successful parent participation programs.
- The *Twelfth Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward Public Schools* revealed overwhelming approval of methods for parental involvement by all population groups queried.

SOURCES

California Department of Education. *Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education Program*.

Florida Department of Education. *Florida Primary Education Program*.

"The Twelfth Annual Public Opinion Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward Public Schools." *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1980.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

26. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICIES

The State Board of Education should conduct a systematic assessment of Minnesota school district policies and practices regarding student discipline and should develop a planning assistance manual which could be used by local boards as they formulate discipline policies and procedures.

- The assessment should include a determination of how many Minnesota districts have written policies relating to student discipline and attendance, what these policies include, and what disciplinary procedures operate within districts and schools.
- Successful programs should be identified and disseminated as models for districts seeking alternatives.
- The assessment should be conducted in collaboration with citizen and educator groups including: the Minnesota Association of Elementary School Principals; Minnesota Association of School Administrators; Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals; Minnesota Education Association; Minnesota Federation of Teachers; Minnesota Parent, Teacher, and Student Association; and the Minnesota School Boards Association.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- A systematic assessment of current policies and procedures is a responsible first step in analyzing the scope and nature of student discipline problems as they exist in Minnesota.
- Districts in the process of reformulating discipline policies could benefit from the experiences of others.
- The discipline policies of local school boards vary. Some school boards consider student discipline a condition for employment and include it in negotiations. Others consider student discipline a matter of educational policy to be handled on a meet and confer basis. Still others assume and expect it to be a matter of professional competence of staff members.
- Some school boards have formal discipline policies; others do not. Nearly all districts, however, have student handbooks in which rules and regulations are presented.
- The participation of teachers, parents, and students in the formulation of discipline policies and procedures is linked to successful programs.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Education Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings
on Student Discipline: I D; V A.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

27. REVIEW OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Each local school board is encouraged to review its policies and procedures relating to student discipline, examine alternatives, and revise its policies as necessary. Further, each local school board is encouraged to establish a committee (or enlarge the responsibilities of an existing advisory committee) at each school building to examine discipline problems, develop building disciplinary procedures, and advise the board in the development and monitoring of new codes and policies.

- Discipline policies and procedures should be published in a student handbook distributed to all students and their parents.
- School building committees should be composed of parents, students, teachers, administrators, other school personnel, representatives of social service agencies, and community members.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Student discipline emerges as the greatest area of concern in surveys of public attitudes toward education.
- Remedies for school discipline problems cannot be prescribed from a state or national level. To be successful, efforts must be generated from a local level.
- Serious student discipline problems are not specific to urban or certain regional areas. They are found in cities, suburbs, and towns irrespective of geographic location or per capita income.
- No single group can be held responsible for student discipline problems. Instead, the causes are varied and complex.
- Research indicates a relationship between the degree of serious disciplinary problems in a school and the extent to which students feel in control of their environment. Schools that include students in the decision-making structure and expect them to share responsibility for maintaining order tend to have fewer serious problems.

- In schools with effective discipline, rules are openly developed, clearly announced, and enforced fairly and consistently.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings
on Student Discipline: I A, D; II A, B, C; V A, B, C.

28. INSERVICE AND PARENT EDUCATION IN BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Each local school board is encouraged to incorporate topics relating to behavior management and child/adolescent development into its inservice training program for all school employees and volunteers. Each local board, in collaboration with building advisory councils (see Recommendation #27) is encouraged to assess the need for similar programs for parents to be provided through community education or other outreach efforts. These programs should, whenever possible, be incorporated into others with similar goals.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Students feel that inconsistent application of disciplinary procedures from teacher to teacher results in increased disciplinary problems. Teachers should be trained and expected to deal effectively with routine behavior problems.
- Surveys of parents indicate their interest in participating in educational programs designed to increase their effectiveness as parents.
- The role of the principal is critical in establishing and maintaining an environment in which students believe order will be maintained, teachers expect their efforts to be supported, and there is mutual coordination and support among administrators, teachers, and students. Adequate administrative staffing at the building level is essential to maintain an orderly school environment.
- Many districts are currently offering inservice education programs to members of the school staff and the community in conjunction with chemical dependency prevention efforts.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings
on Student Discipline: I D; III C, D; IV B; V B, C.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MINNESOTA
BOARD OF TEACHING

29. **PRESERVICE TRAINING IN BEHAVIOR
MANAGEMENT**

The Minnesota Board of Teaching and the State Board of Education, in collaboration with postsecondary education institutions, should develop training for prospective teachers and administrators in child/adolescent development, behavior management, and classroom management. Such training should be required for initial licensure of educators in Minnesota.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Students feel that inconsistent application of disciplinary procedures from teacher to teacher is directly related to discipline problems.
- The role of the principal is critical in establishing and maintaining an environment conducive to an orderly and effective school.
- Discipline is a multi-faceted problem which must be addressed by all school staff. Experience need not be the sole determinant of teacher effectiveness in maintaining an orderly classroom.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings
on Student Discipline: I D; V B, C.

Investment

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR AND
LEGISLATURE

30. **LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON SCHOOL
FINANCE**

The Legislature should establish a Legislative Commission on School Finance charged with the ongoing examination of issues in the financing of public elementary and secondary education in Minnesota.

- In its deliberations and subsequent actions, the Legislature should ensure that dollars for instruction are not eroded by rising costs in other expenditure areas.

- The Commission should determine whether the minimum level of per pupil expenditures, as provided through foundation aid for the delivery of programs and services, is sufficient to provide educational opportunities which are equally accessible to students in each of Minnesota's school districts.
- The Commission should develop and recommend to the Legislature funding strategies to address circumstances and conditions which diminish equal access to quality programs. In its analysis, the Commission should address the variations in costs among: (a) districts and regions; (b) grade levels of students; (c) curricular and co-curricular programs and services; (d) student needs as they relate to abilities and disabilities, handicaps and talents; and (e) support services assigned to school districts by public policy.
- The Commission should examine the Senate study on program-based funding to be reported during January, 1981. This examination should determine the benefits of adjusting foundation aid disbursement on the basis of programs rather than primarily on the basis of weighted pupil units in those instances where weighted-pupil-unit funding does not yield program equity.
- The Commission should study current compensation systems for public school personnel. The study should include considerations of increased entry level salaries and the feasibility of differentiated salary systems.
- The Commission should review the rapidly expanding field of educational technology, specifically addressing the question of the capital investments and maintenance costs associated with utilization of technology in Minnesota schools. The study should also examine the feasibility and cost effectiveness of using educational technology to better meet the needs of students who have special needs, and alternative delivery systems for students whose current access to programs is limited.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- Elementary and secondary education is one of Minnesota's largest single enterprises. Appropriations for elementary and secondary education reflect a substantial state commitment. According to figures compiled by the Minnesota Department of Education, the Legislature appropriated more than \$2.5 billion for elementary and secondary education for the 1979-81 biennium. This figure represented 30 percent of the state's general fund appropriations.

- School finance is a continuing matter of public concern. It requires a level of attention and examination difficult for the Legislature to give during the course of its regular sessions.
- Activities of the Legislature in the support of public schools affect a large segment of the population and determine the degree to which access to quality educational opportunities is provided to Minnesota children and youth.
- Under the Minnesota constitution, the Legislature has the responsibility to establish a system of public schools and to provide the requisite funding. The Legislature is directed to establish and secure by taxation a system of public schools which is, (a) general and uniform and, (b) thorough and efficient. However, operational definitions of these standards have not been developed to judge the performance of the system in either fiscal or programmatic terms.
- Programs and services outside the realm of public education are competing for the state's limited resources. Between the 1971-73 and 1979-81 biennia, the public school portion of state appropriations dropped by 12 percentage points (from 42 percent in 1971-73 to 30 percent in 1979-81).
- The financing of public education in Minnesota has experienced a shift from the Foundation Aid Program to various categorical aid programs over the course of the 1970s. Between 1973-74 and 1979-80, state revenues going to local districts in the form of foundation aid went from 52 percent to 41 percent.
- During the 1970s, inflation became a major issue in the financing of public education. Increases in expenditures by local districts for fuel and transportation grew at a higher rate than did those for instructional salaries. Substantial outlays of fiscal resources will be required in the 1980s to fund existing programs and services at current levels. At the same time, expectations for the expansion of services and capital investment for technology will create demands for new funding.
- Staff salaries are a school finance issue. The salaries of instructional staff accounted for 54 percent of Minnesota school districts' total current expenditures in 1978-79. In many districts, this proportion was higher. Outlays for insurance and other fringe benefits typically add 10-20 percent to this cost.
- Entry level teacher salaries do not appear to be competitive to those outside of education. Beginning salaries for teachers with a Bachelor's degree are lower than those for other occupations requiring a college education. At the same time, a 50 percent decline

occurred in the number of newly-trained teachers graduating from Minnesota colleges and universities between 1971-72 and 1976-77. This drop reflects the impact of market forces.

- Increasing numbers of educators migrate from one Minnesota school district to another. Most of these moves indicate upward career mobility, of which salary is an important component. The pattern of migration indicates movement from smaller to larger districts; smaller rural districts report difficulty in attracting and retaining teachers. There are, however, few policy vehicles for attracting and retaining staff in smaller districts.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. *Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit.* Findings on School Finance: I F; II D; III A, B, C, E, F, G; V A, B, C. Findings on Educational Programs/Services and School District Organization: II C. Findings on School Staff: I; II F, I, J, K; III J; V B, F, G.

31. SOURCES OF FUNDS

The Legislature should continue to use a combination of state and locally-collected revenues to finance and support Minnesota's public elementary and secondary schools.

- The Legislature should maintain a high level of direct state funding to local school districts to provide for the delivery of appropriate and adequate educational programs and services.
- The Legislature should continue to allow local school districts to use referendum and discretionary levy programs to supplement state aids.
- The Legislature should continue to review and refine measures which promote a progressive and equitable system of taxation for the support of high quality elementary and secondary education in Minnesota.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- During the early 1970s, the Legislature took steps to shift reliance from locally-collected property taxes to state-collected income and sales taxes to finance Minnesota's elementary and secondary schools. The Legislature also moved to restrict the authority of locally-elected school boards to increase their own revenues. Prior to these adjustments, state revenues met approximately 40 percent of the total statewide average operating costs of public schools.

- In 1979-80, the state's direct contribution to the financing of public schools was approximately 77 percent. This level of direct state support has been accompanied by an overall increase in the total amount of money available to operate schools.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus On Learning, Volume II, op. cit.
Findings on School Finance: II A, B, C, D, E, F;
V A, B, C.

32. CATEGORICAL AID PROGRAMS

The Legislature should continue to use categorical aid programs to address the needs of students with special conditions and circumstances not intended to be supported by foundation aid.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

- The categorical funding of programs, especially those which are mandated, serves to ensure that the special needs of specific segments of the school population are addressed at a level which foundation aids may not permit.
- The categorical funding of both mandated and permissive programs in the public schools is a means whereby the Legislature promotes the implementation of state social and economic policies applicable to the education of Minnesota children and youth.
- Categorical aids should not be instituted at the expense of monies from the general fund for instruction.

SOURCE

Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy.
Focus on Learning, Volume II, op. cit. Findings
on School Finance: VA.

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