

Georgia's League of Professional Schools: An Examination of Student Performance on  
Standardized Measures

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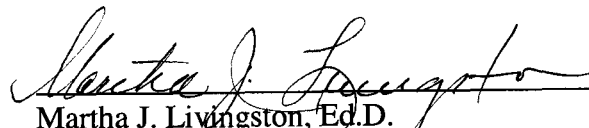
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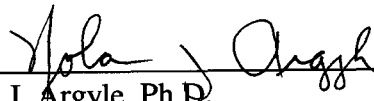
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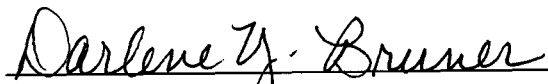
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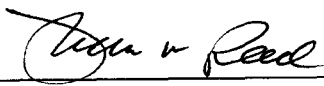
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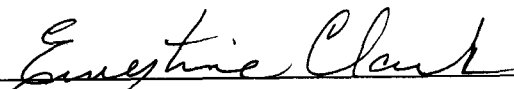
  
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## ABSTRACT

This quantitative research was conducted to determine the effect of membership of the League of Professional Schools on academic achievement among elementary school students, and to determine the effect over time of individual school membership of the League of Professional Schools on academic achievement among the League's elementary schools. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills were used to measure academic achievement. Purposive sampling methods were used to select the 996 Georgia elementary schools investigated.

Causal-comparative and non-equivalent control group research designs were employed to study the effect of League membership on academic achievement and the effect of membership on achievement over time, respectively. A 2 (League status) X 3 (cluster group) analysis of variance (ANOVA) and two sets of repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted to analyze that data. Major findings included the following:

1. No significant difference was found between League and non-League Composite ITBS scores from the 1999-2000 school year in the third and fifth grades.
2. A statistically significant improvement was found in third-grade Reading Comprehension scores from the 1995-1996 to the 1999-2000 school years of League schools.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	10
Research Questions.....	12
Hypotheses.....	13
Definition of Terms.....	13
Procedures.....	14
Significance of the Study.....	16
Delimitations of the Study.....	19
Limitations of the Study.....	19
Organization of the Study.....	22
II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE.....	23
School Reform.....	24
Empirical Examinations of Reforms.....	30
Democracy in Schools.....	38
Teacher Empowerment and Related Issues.....	46
League of Professional Schools.....	65
Summary.....	75
Rationale.....	76

III.	METHODOLOGY.....	78
	Participants.....	78
	Ethical Considerations.....	85
	Instrumentation.....	85
	Procedures.....	91
	Research Design.....	93
	Analysis of Data.....	94
	Summary.....	94
IV.	RESULTS.....	95
	Research Question 1.....	95
	Research Question 2.....	98
	Summary.....	104
V.	OVERVIEW, SUMMARY, COMPARISONS OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSIONS.....	106
	Overview of the Study.....	106
	Summary of Findings.....	112
	Comparisons of Findings with Previous Research.....	114
	Implications of Findings.....	116
	Limitations of the Study.....	116
	Implications for Future Research.....	119
	Implications for Future Practice.....	120
	Conclusions.....	121
	REFERENCES.....	123



## LIST OF TABLES

1. Number of Participants by League Status and Cluster Grouping.....	84
2. Means and Standard Deviations on the Third-Grade ITBS as a Function of League Status and Cluster Level.....	97
3. Means and Standard Deviations on the Fifth-Grade ITBS as a Function of League Status and Cluster Level.....	98
4. Standardized Skewness and Kurtosis Values for Third- and Fifth-Grade Reading Comprehension and Math Total ITBS Scores.....	99
5. Means and Standard Deviations of League Third-Grade Reading Comprehension ITBS Scores and Means of State Third-Grade Reading Comprehension ITBS Scores.....	101
6. Means and Standard Deviations of League Third-Grade Mathematics Total ITBS Scores and Means of State Third-Grade Mathematics Total ITBS Scores.....	102
7. Means and Standard Deviations of League Fifth-Grade Reading Comprehension ITBS Scores and Means of State Fifth-Grade Reading Comprehension ITBS Scores.....	103
8. Means and Standard Deviations of League Fifth-Grade Math Total ITBS Scores and Means of State Fifth-Grade Mathematics Total ITBS Scores.....	104

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## DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to my father, Walter G. Altman III. Dedication to career and family prevented the completion of his dissertation. His guidance insured that nothing would prevent me from completing mine. Therefore, this one is for you, Dad.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The League of Professional Schools, a nationally recognized model of comprehensive school reform, began as a collaboration of a single university professor and two public schools (Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, 1998). Today over 170 member schools in Georgia and in independent Leagues in Florida, Nevada, and Washington are using or have used the League of Professional Schools as a model to implement comprehensive school reform (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1999; Technical Support Consortium, n.d.). To begin an analysis of the effect of this comprehensive model of school reform on academic achievement, one must first understand the historical, political, and educational events that spawned and transformed the League of Professional Schools from a small collaboration to a model of national acceptance.

#### Statement of the Problem

In 1981 the National Commission for Excellence in Education was created by former Secretary of Education T. H. Bell and was given the task of examining the quality of education in the United States of America (Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983). Bell charged the Commission with preparing a report to present to the nation 18 months after its first meeting. A Nation at Risk, the report submitted by the National Commission for Excellence in Education, has driven educational reforms for two

subsequent decades (Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983). Among the findings submitted by the Commission were declining Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, massive illiteracy rates, and poor showings on international comparisons of student achievement.

Three years later, the president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York announced the creation of a multi-million-dollar initiative designed to help guide U.S. education policy (Currence, 1985). This initiative established the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy. A group of educators, policymakers, scientists, and business leaders studied educational issues and their relationship to the U.S. economy and submitted A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century. The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) reported restructuring schools to give teachers autonomy and professionalism was required to relieve problems facing education. Also, the forum condemned the present structure of schools as the cause for inadequate student performance. Furthermore, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) claimed restructuring schools in a manner that gave teachers more autonomy and professionalism should have occurred at the local level and should have been determined by teachers rather than by school officials.

In a study with findings similar to the report of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, Elmore (1987) concluded the traditional structure of schools placed teachers in subordinate positions and limited teacher control over student work habits. Thus, placed in positions subordinate to administrators, teachers believed they had to gain permission from their supervisors to complete everyday duties and responsibilities,

including disciplining their students. Teachers found it easier not to address certain problems, such as off-task behavior, because of a perceived futility of their actions. Further, Elmore noted teacher knowledge and skills had been reduced to standard procedures, such as taking attendance and monitoring students. Therefore, students no longer worried about adult intervention when they disengaged in learning (Elmore, 1987).

Due, in part, to the societal reaction created by the impact of A Nation at Risk and A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century, subsequent U. S. presidents have prepared comprehensive plans to change the state of education in America (Ballantine, 1997). Although the findings of the National Commission for Excellence in Education and similar findings in other reports (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986) did not immediately and conclusively change the educational policy of the Reagan administration, the issue of education reform became an increasingly important political issue of every subsequent presidential campaign (Bush, 1989; DNC Chair Responds to Bush Education Plan, 2000; Goals 2000 Legislation and Related Items, n.d.; The Gore Agenda: Renovating American Education in the 21st Century, 2000).

Shortly after his inauguration, President George H. Bush expressed his interest in education in a visit to a Virginia high school citing computer literacy, math and science, magnet schools, and a system to reward good teachers as part of his reform plan (Bush, 1989). Three years later, Bush (1992a) was using phrases such as, "creating new kinds of schools with new technology and new ways of learning, measuring progress, and holding schools accountable for their performance," to describe his education package (p. 32).

Also, school choice was a major component of the plan George H. Bush entitled "America 2000". By the end of his administration, Bush (1992b) claimed the following concerning his initiative in education: "It's beginning to work, 1,700 to 2,000 communities across this country already sitting down, the teachers, the parents, the school boards, to literally revolutionize education in this country" (p. 22).

A more recent reaction to the state of American education, as defined by reports such as A Nation At Risk and A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, came with the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (H.R. 1804 GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT, 1994). The purpose of this legislation was to provide a national framework for school reform. Improvement in learning and teaching would be accomplished by the promotion of "research, consensus building, and systemic changes needed to ensure equitable educational opportunities and high levels of educational achievement for all students" (p. 1). President Clinton's educational package differed from America 2000 in that it was more specifically directed to school reform, whereas George H. Bush's goal was to reform education in general (Bush, 1989, 1992a, 1992b; H.R. 1804 GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT, 1994). Thus, states and local boards of education were left to decide the specifics of school change (GOALS 2000: A Progress Report - Fall 1996, 1996).

Goals 2000 was an outgrowth of the state-led education reform agenda of the 1980's (H.R. 1804 GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT, 1994). Such agendas involved numerous states instituting statewide testing programs, increasing high school graduation requirements, promoting the use of technology in the classroom, offering more Advanced

Placement (AP) courses, and instituting new teacher evaluation programs (GOALS 2000: A Progress Report - Fall 1996, 1996). A report presented to Congress, GOALS 2000: A Progress Report - Fall 1996, acknowledged the following educational improvements resulting from state initiatives: academic performance increased and the performance gap between White and minority students decreased. As recommended in A Nation at Risk, the percentage of high school students taking challenging academic courses increased from 14% to 52% from 1982 to 1984. Also, AP course enrollment increased significantly, and the number of students passing AP exams nearly tripled between 1982 and 1995. Student performance in mathematics and science improved substantially on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) between 1978 and 1992. Additionally, the gap in performance between White and minority students narrowed, especially in mathematics (GOALS 2000: A Progress Report - Fall 1996, 1996).

Congress and President Clinton followed Goals 2000 with the Obey-Porter Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Act (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 1998). This law created the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRSD) program (Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, 1998). The goal of CSRSD was to raise student achievement by providing financial assistance to public schools for the implementation of comprehensive school reforms based on reliable research and effective practices. Congress appropriated \$145,000,000 to the states to fund and implement models of comprehensive school reform. Georgia was allocated \$3,838,436 (FY 1998 Allocations- Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, 1998). Further, this money was provided to individual schools on a competitive

basis through an application process. To receive up to \$50,000 per school year for three renewable years, schools had to demonstrate (a) a reform model that addressed all students, core subjects, and grade levels in the school; (b) improved professional development for all teachers in the school; and (c) benchmarks and a plan for evaluation. Other components required in the CSRD grant included support within the school, community, and among parents. External support and assistance and coordination of resources were final requirements of any CSRD model (Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, 1998). The National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform (n. d.) listed 33 different models accepted by the CSRD. Among these models were Foxfire Fund, Core Knowledge, High Schools That Work, Modern Red Schoolhouse, and the Program for School Improvement's (PSI) League of Professional Schools (The National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, n.d.).

The origin of the Program for School Improvement (PSI) can be traced to Athens, Georgia, in 1984 (Glickman & Allen, 1992). During that year Carl Glickman, a faculty member of the University of Georgia's College of Education, began helping staff members of a nearby rural high school fundamentally change the way their school made decisions about instructional and curricular issues by implementing a three-part framework of reform. Three years later, a large, urban elementary school was added to the collaboration. These schools flourished under the changes and earned recognition throughout Georgia and the nation for their accomplishments. The interest generated by the collaborative effort between these two public schools and the University of Georgia, coupled with Glickman's innovative efforts and ideas, prompted the College of Education

to form the Program for School Improvement (PSI). With the dedicated work of a professional staff, the number of PSI Demonstration Schools quickly expanded (Glickman & Allen, 1992).

As the PSI gained recognition, more of Georgia's schools began expressing interest in the collaboration's unique approach to school improvement (Glickman & Allen, 1992). Efforts were made to make the work of the PSI available to more schools. Thus, Glickman and PSI witnessed the fruition of their vision and efforts with the PSI's creation of the League of Professional Schools (Glickman & Allen, 1992).

The League of Professional Schools (League) was organized in 1990 when 24 elementary, middle, and high schools decided to join with the PSI and comprehensively reform their schools (Allen et al., 1999). After an initial commitment to fundamental change was made, these schools embarked on a journey toward transformation and faced dilemmas with the sequence, emphasis, and pace of educational reform. Other dilemmas encountered by these schools were time, levels of teacher input on decisions, external regulations, coordination with other schools, dependence on external authorities, and dysfunctional behavior among staff (Glickman, 1993).

The next step for schools initially joining with the League of Professional Schools was to begin the complex task of integrating a three-part plan of reform: the League's three premises. This framework for individual school reform, the three premises of the League of Professional Schools, is listed as follows: a covenant of teaching and learning, shared governance, and action research (Allen et al., 1999). These premises began as Glickman's

unique vision of making schools democratic institutions, and were sharpened by years of practical development in the field and the work of the PSI (Allen et al., 1999).

First, to describe the covenant of teaching and learning, Allen et al. (1999) used the analogy of a filtering screen. Decisions concerning a school's instructional and curricular goals, objectives, and activities must be filtered through the question: "Is this within the letter and spirit of our covenant?" (Allen et al., 1999, p. 3). Allen et al. (1999) provided further description:

A covenant of teaching and learning captures the beliefs that people in a school and its community hold about what they want their students to know, what teaching and learning strategies will bring about these competencies, and how students will demonstrate the acquisition of these competencies (p. 3).

Therefore, a covenant of teaching and learning clarified the beliefs of the school, identified the school's practices, and unified the collective energy of members of the organization (Allen et al., 1999).

Second, according to Glickman (1993), shared governance was a decision-making process in which an organization's beliefs were implemented, based on the premise that decisions should be made by those closest to the implementation. Ideally, teachers' involvement in decisions was limited to core instructional issues. Shared governance addressed teachers who no longer accepted isolation within their classrooms, but rather, expected to be involved in their work. The League promoted shared governance as the preferred method of decision making within schools because it involved all stakeholders of the school (Allen et al., 1999).

Third, action research was a five-phase method of discovery in which a school (a) selected an area of focus based on that school's needs or weaknesses, (b) collected data, (c) organized the data, (d) analyzed and interpreted the data, and (e) took action on the need or weakness originally identified (Calhoun, 1994). Calhoun (1994) described action research as a process of learning to inquire together. Within this process, knowledge about the school among the teachers and action on the school's needs or weaknesses were generated simultaneously (Calhoun, 1994).

Therefore, schools joining the League in 1990 began the daunting task of integrating the League's three-part framework within their schools. Schools were given access to an information retrieval system of successful instructional programs and research on shared governance, a League newsletter, workshops and meetings, an annual conference, a support network of other schools, consultation services by telephone, and an on-site visit. Today, there are more than 50 elementary, middle, and high schools that are members of Georgia's League of Professional Schools (Educational Projects Database, 2001). League schools are located in urban and rural settings, and serve children from various combinations of high, medium, and low SES families (Allen et al., 1999). Additionally, the League of Professional Schools has started university/public school collaboratives in other states (Allen et al., 1999).

Efforts of the University of Georgia through the PSI and public schools to implement the League's premises were nationally recognized as one of the top university, business, and school collaborations in the nation by the Business-Higher Education Forum (Glickman & Allen, 1992). Additionally, the PSI and the League were promoted as an

accepted model of school reform by the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSR D) program (Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, 1998). With abundant funding appropriated by Congress, the number of schools participating is expected to expand (The National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, n.d.).

In America's educational system, teachers' perceptions of the amount of control they have over their work are at a low level (Heid & Leak, 1991; Nyberg & Farber, 1986; Williams, 1990). Moreover, many of the nation's brightest students are discouraged from entering the field of education because of the lack of professional control teachers are presently granted (Berry, 1986). In addition, many of the country's most gifted teachers have become disenchanted with their lack of involvement in the decisions made in schools and have chosen to find employment in other fields of work (Sacks, 1984). Bureaucratic schools are flawed by their impersonal nature, inflexibility, and feelings of apathy (Ballantine, 1997).

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this examination was twofold: (a) to determine the effect of membership of the League of Professional Schools on academic achievement among elementary school students, and (b) to determine the effect over time of individual school membership of the League of Professional Schools on academic achievement among the League's elementary schools. Essentially, this investigation was intended to determine whether or not the League of Professional Schools was meeting one of its original anticipated results: improving academic achievement (Northwest Regional Educational

Laboratory, 1999). However, clarification must be given to the fact that the original goal of the program was to help schools become more democratic institutions (Glickman, 1993). Improved student achievement was viewed as an expected result of the program in high-implementation schools (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1999).

First, this inquiry attempted to determine if schools that integrated the concepts of the League of Professional Schools, paid fees to PSI, and received the various services provided to the League of Professional Schools, had students who achieved higher academically than did non-League schools. Only schools serving students of similar socioeconomic status (SES) were academically compared. Second, the issue of academic improvement within individual League schools was addressed. This study explored whether or not schools who belonged to the League of Professional Schools for four years performed better on an academic assessment after their fourth year with the League than they performed on the same assessment the year before they joined the League. Thus, the purpose of this investigation was to examine whether the academic achievement of individual League schools increased, decreased, or remained the same after four years of integrating the League's three-part framework and receiving PSI's services.

In response to the state of teacher involvement in their work, Carl Glickman (1989) asked, "At last, is it time for teachers to be equals, rather than perfunctory advisers, in the remaking of education?" (p. 8). With the overall goal of assisting schools to become democratic institutions focused on improving student learning, and the end result being increased student achievement in high-implementation schools, Glickman formed the

League of Professional Schools (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1999). To achieve the goal of becoming a democratic institution and to realize the result of increased student achievement, the League suggested schools begin with a charter, or a school-wide constitution. Next, the League proposed that a covenant, or a statement of the school's principles of learning, should be clearly defined. Finally, the League espoused the use of action research, or a systematic means of studying the effects of programs on learning (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1999). The effects of these methods on student achievement and the myriad of other problems facing our traditionally governed schools were the crux of the problem that this research addressed. Stated differently, the problem explored in this investigation was how to address teachers' lack of involvement in the educational process and whether or not the combined use of the methods prescribed by the League, shared governance, an instructional covenant, and action research, was an effective way to improve student achievement.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed:

1. What is the effect of League of Professional School membership on academic achievement among elementary school students?
2. What is the effect over time of individual school League of Professional Schools membership on academic achievement among League elementary schools?

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

Null hypothesis 1. There is no difference in academic achievement between Georgia's League and non-League elementary schools.

Research hypotheses 1. There is a difference in academic achievement between Georgia's League and non-League elementary schools.

Null hypothesis 2. There is no difference in academic achievement of League schools joining Georgia's League of Professional Schools during the 1996-1997 school year, from the year before these schools joined the League and four years after they joined the League.

Research hypotheses 2. There is a difference in academic achievement of League schools joining Georgia's League of Professional Schools during the 1996-1997 school year, from the year before these schools joined the League and four years after they joined the League.

### Definition of Terms

League school. For the purposes of the present investigation, a League school was a school that became a member of the League of Professional Schools at any time between 1990 and 1999, implemented the strategies suggested by this organization, and did not withdraw from the League during or before 1999.

Non-League school. A non-League school was a school that did not belong to the League of Professional Schools between 1990-1999.

Former League school. A former League school was a school that belonged to the League of Professional Schools at any time between 1990 and 1999, implemented the strategies suggested by this organization, but withdrew from the League during or before 1999.

Academic achievement. For the purposes of the present investigation, academic achievement was measured by third- and fifth-grade Composite Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (Riverside Publishing, 2000) in both League and non-League elementary schools. Academic achievement also was measured by Reading Comprehension and Math Total NCE scores from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in League schools joining the League in the 1996-1997 school year.

Elementary students. Elementary students were students who were enrolled in League and non-League elementary schools.

Elementary schools. Elementary schools were Georgia public schools configured to house both Grades 3 and 5 students.

### Procedures

Participants in the section of this study that addressed the first research question included all third- and fifth-grade students in Georgia who attended a League or a non-League school housing both Grades 3 and 5 during the 1999-2000 school year. All former League schools were identified and removed from a list of all of Georgia's elementary schools. Controlling for one of the independent variables, socioeconomic status, the remaining schools were assigned to one of the following three groups based on their Clusters, as determined by the Council for School Performance (1999): high,

schools that joined the League in the 1996-1997 school year (Georgia Department of Education, 2000b). These NPR scores were then converted to NCE scores. Repeated measures ANOVAs for each set of subscale scores were undertaken to compare the achievement of each of these schools from the year before they joined the League to the achievement of these schools from each subsequent year after joining the League.

### Significance of the Study

From its inception, the League of Professional Schools has closely examined its work within public schools. Most literature conducted on the League has been qualitative in design. Specific aspects of the League's work included several qualitative doctoral dissertations, 25 case studies, a comprehensive qualitative examination undertaken by an independent research organization, and one comprehensive quantitative study conducted by an independent research organization. The findings of this study, A League of Their Own: Evaluating School Reform Efforts (Harkreader & Henry, 1997), along with the findings of other research on the League will be discussed in more detail in a review of related literature. Therefore, the researcher expected this investigation to add to the existing literature conducted on the League of Professional Schools by quantitatively examining the League's effect on student achievement. Also, the researcher hoped this examination would add to the dearth of existing quantitative research conducted on the League of Professional Schools.

The researcher presumed findings from this investigation would help schools to decide whether or not to join the League. Evidence suggesting effectively improved or significantly reduced student achievement may have influenced other schools' decisions

to implement and to integrate the premises of the League of Professional Schools and to receive the services offered by the League. Additionally, findings that suggested no difference between League and similar non-League schools or no improvement among individual League schools after three years of membership with the League of Professional Schools may have been equally important to schools contemplating comprehensive school reform.

A goal of this research was to make a significant contribution to the existing body of school reform literature at the national, state, and local levels. This inquiry examined a nationally approved and accepted model of school reform. With consideration to the national impact of the success, failure, or inconsequential effect of the League of Professional Schools on academic performance, the researcher expected this examination to add to the body of literature formed from critical analysis of school reform. In other words, this investigation was designed to determine whether or not a Congressionally-promoted and widely-accepted model of comprehensive school reform actually affected academic achievement. Therefore, as national policymakers seek evidence to support or refute the future allocation of tax dollars toward comprehensive reform initiatives, studies such as this investigation may be particularly significant.

The greatest anticipated benefit of this study was to the State of Georgia. Indeed, the fact that the League of Professional Schools was the product of efforts extended by staff of the University of Georgia, the flagship of the state's University System, made this examination critical to its citizens, educators, and children. This inquiry was unique in that it examined Georgia's contribution to national comprehensive school reform within

the State of Georgia. Thus, this investigation had geographical significance that created a purpose for conducting the research in Georgia. Stated differently, Georgia was the ideal state to conduct such an investigation because although the League of Professionals Schools achieved national acceptance, use, and significance, it represented a model created in Georgia.

Also, the researcher hoped this examination would assist the public schools of the Valdosta State University service area in their understanding and use of the current concepts of school reform so these schools could provide a better education for the students they serve. This area included 42 counties stretching across South Georgia from the Alabama border on the West to the Atlantic Ocean on the East. Few schools within this region have implemented comprehensive school reform models. Evidence suggesting the League of Professional Schools was effecting positive change may have influenced more schools in this area to consider implementing the League's premises.

If evidence were found that elementary schools belonging to the League of Professional Schools had higher levels of academic achievement than did non-member schools, or that academic achievement levels in League schools increased overtime with League membership; school personnel, both statewide and nationally, may have wanted to consider integrating the League's premises within their own schools. Conversely, if evidence suggested League membership had no effect or a detrimental effect on student achievement, then current League schools may have needed to consider other models of school reform. Therefore, the educational significance of the investigation was to advance the knowledge in the field of education.

### Delimitations of the Study

This investigation was limited, geographically, to the State of Georgia. The geographic delimitation of the study, therefore, required the participants, limited to elementary school students, to have attended a public school within this state. Further, time was controlled by the researcher so this research only involved archival data from the 1995-1996 through 1999-2000 school years and the achievement of recent elementary school students. In delimiting the measuring instrument, the researcher defined academic achievement as third- and fifth-grade Composite ITBS NCE scores from League and non-League elementary schools. Also, only schools posting data on the Georgia Public Education Report Card were included in this research (Georgia Department of Education, 2000b). Final delimitations included all operational definitions previously defined.

### Limitations of the Study

Among the threats to internal validity that may have limited generalizations from this research were history, testing, differential selection of participants, and selection-history interaction (Gay & Airasian, 2000). A possibility existed that the performance on the dependent variable, student achievement, was affected by the occurrence of an event not associated with the experimental treatment, or League status. Internal validity was additionally threatened by the effect of taking one test upon the scores of a subsequent test (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Also, any difference in achievement between League and non-League schools may have been attributed to differences that existed between these schools before the formation of the League and these distinct groups. Additionally, selection-history interaction threatened the internal validity of this investigation because

"one group may profit more or less from a treatment, or have an initial advantage, because of maturation, history, or testing factors" (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p. 376).

Threats to internal validity such as maturation, statistical regression, and instrumentation were addressed by the researcher with the consistent use of a measuring instrument, and a single measurement of the dependent variable (Gay & Airasian, 2000). A single measurement of the dependent variable negated any effect of maturation by the participants because that measurement occurred only once in time. Any threat to validity by statistical regression, or the tendency of extreme scores to regress toward the average on subsequent tests, also was negated by a single measurement of the dependent variable. Consistent use of a standardized instrument addressed any threats to internal validity caused by instrumentation. A final threat to internal validity, experimental mortality, was addressed by the researcher with the use of a purposive sampling method, delimitations, and archival data. Therefore, the opportunity for both League and non-League schools to drop out of the experiment was eliminated by the researcher before data were collected.

Among the threats to external validity that may have limited generalizations from this research were population validity, ecological validity, multiple-treatment interference, and the interaction of personological variables and treatment effects (Gay & Airasian, 2000). With respect to population validity, the potential size of the sample being investigated, elementary schools in Georgia, threatened generalizations from the findings of this study to all elementary schools. Also, all students involved in the study resided in the same geographic and culturally unique region of the country. Therefore, ecological validity was threatened by the fact that the implementation of the premises of the League

in an area other than Georgia may induce a reaction that is different from that noted in this investigation, due to some unknown cultural factor. Also, possible differences in achievement between League and non-League schools may have been attributed to multiple unknown treatments. Achievement differences also may have been attributed to distinct personological reactions of participants at various levels of a variable (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

Further threats to external validity that may have limited generalizations from this research included the specificity of variables such as the operational definition of the independent variable, the measuring instruments, the time of the study, and the specific set of circumstances being investigated (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Interaction of history and treatment effects, or long- and short-term effects that may have occurred during the study, also threatened the external validity of this investigation. Final threats to external validity included experimenter effects (i.e., the experimenter bias effect) and reactive arrangements (i.e., the Hawthorne effect, the novelty effect, and seepage effect) (Gay & Airasian, 2000). With regards to the Hawthorne effect, students attending League schools may have possessed a special feeling that affected their achievement. The novelty effect was an issue because students attending League schools may have possessed increased interest or motivation because their schools were undertaking a unique initiative. Seepage also may have limited generalizations in that a possibility existed for non-League schools to implement the premises of the League of Professional Schools. However, it must be noted only League schools had access to the services provided by the PSI.

### Organization of the Study

This chapter discussed the purpose for conducting this research and the significance of this investigation. Also stated were the research questions and the hypotheses. In addition, the definition of terms and general procedures to be used in this research were discussed. Chapter 1 concluded with the limitations of this inquiry.

Found in Chapter 2 of this report is a review of the related literature including sections related to school reform, democracy in education, empowerment, and the League of Professional Schools. In Chapter 3, the researcher includes a discussion of the methodology. Chapter 4 documents the results of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the findings, discusses threats to internal and external validity, and provides implications of the findings and recommendations for future practice and research.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

School reform is a diverse and complex issue due to the length of time U.S. schools have engaged in reform and the varied means by which reforms have been attempted. Democracy in education has been present since the birth of the Republic, however, throughout the history of U.S. education this fundamental purpose for providing public education has been forgotten. Therefore, the rediscovery of education's democratic purpose has reclassified democratic education as a reform effort. The League of Professional Schools is one such reform method currently being used to reintegrate the original democratic purpose of educating youth within our schools (Glickman, 1993).

This review of related literature examines the place of the League of Professional Schools within the diffuse context of school reform. Beginning with a general discussion of school reform, the review also includes a summary of empirical examinations of specific reform efforts. Because the League of Professional Schools is a model of democratic school reform, a review of democratic school reform also is reported. Teacher empowerment follows the discussion of democracy in education, including related concepts such as shared decision making, autonomy, teacher professionalism, the change in leadership styles necessary to affect empowerment, and action research. Finally, the League's three-part framework is reviewed in addition to studies specifically conducted on the League of Professional Schools.

### School Reform

Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) categorized reform into two distinct types. The first of these two types of reform involved an intensive focus on components of curriculum and instruction. Such reforms specified curricula, teaching materials, methods of instruction, and feedback mechanisms such as assessment methods. Change in a specific domain of student learning was often the end result of these types of reforms, and the effects could be directly measured by objective assessments (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). The second type of reform involved the reorganization of school processes. These types of reforms often focused on contexts of the work environment that could be altered to improve student achievement (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). In an effort to provide more detailed context to the broad topic of school reform, specific reforms of both types described by Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) will be discussed in more detail.

Young (1997) described reform as the only constant feature in education while condemning the inability of the U.S. educational system to narrow the focus of reform. Often, reforms were not given enough time to work before they were replaced with a new experimental idea (Young, 1997). Thus, as a whole, education failed to improve with the use of reform efforts. Noted among recent reform efforts that Young believed were not working were excessive individualization and modification for children with disabilities, heterogeneous grouping, and block scheduling. Additionally, Young contended reform could be improved by actively involving teachers in the decision-making process before reforms were implemented and including courses on the management of increasingly complex social and behavioral problems of children.

Banks and Banks (1997) postulated most school reform efforts ignored issues related to gender, race, and class diversity. Yet, if national and global needs for the next century were to be met, reformers should have considered issues of diversity and democratic ideals, and assisted students in acquiring the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to construct communities that promoted common good (Banks & Banks, 1997). To transform school reform to reflect diversity and to educate students in a multicultural society, Banks and Banks (1997) recommended forging civil discourse, helping students understand how they are connected to people different from themselves, and ensuring a high-quality education for all students.

Bunting (1999) questioned the need for reform given the results of past reform efforts. However, by citing several contemporary reform efforts, Bunting contended reform offered perspective and insights that transcended numerical data. Reform was necessary because it was a means by which schools adapted to a changing society, and was given new life by what schools did with the focus and spirit of the reform on a daily basis. Bunting (1999) suggested successes from existing reform should be incorporated into future reforms. The successes and failures of past and present reform efforts, however, will surely shape the direction of future school reform. An analysis of school reform's history clarifies these successes and failures.

Cuban (1993, p.2) depicted the history of school reform as "hurricane winds sweeping over the sea." On the sea floor all remained calm while strong winds formed huge waves on the surface, and fathoms down currents swirled. The waves on the surface represented the discourse of reform advocates, the swirling waters beneath the surface signified

modified instructional materials, while the calm ocean floor symbolized the unchanged classroom (Cuban, 1993).

Other authors shared Cuban's metaphor of waves to describe the long history of U.S. school reform (Parker & Parker, 1995; O'Shea and O'Shea, 1997). For example, Parker and Parker (1995) described the history of U.S. education as waves of school reform designed to attain excellence in student achievement and to provide equal educational opportunity. According to O'Shea and O'Shea (1997), educational reform from the past few decades occurred in waves driven by factors including an awareness that public education must be restructured so graduates may be able to compete in a changing world market.

The search for a more perfect educational system began with the service of elite White males with a classical European curriculum, followed by a liberal arts curriculum, and, more recently, a basic-subjects curriculum reflecting Western values and economic needs (Parker & Parker, 1995). Immigration, industrialization, and urbanization created a great diversity of children in U.S. public schools as democratic concern for the many challenged the notion that education was for the elite few. Reforms of the 1800s included Emma Willard's expansion of education to include women and John Dewey's progressive movement that urged the adoption of pedagogies such as child centered learning. Lyceums, idealism, McGuffey Readers, and pragmatism also emerged in this era. In the final decade of the 1800s, the National Education Association's Committee of Ten recommended a college-entrance high school curriculum in an effort to standardize

college entrance. Critics of this recommendation argued the curriculum neglected the needs of the majority who had to leave school for work (Parker & Parker, 1995).

Progressive education, begun in the 1800s, continued to make slow progress against traditional education in the early 20th century (Parker & Parker, 1995). However, the National Education Association released the Cardinal Principles report which urged the implementation of the broad curriculum that Dewey favored and recommended education serve the following seven goals: health, basic skills, worthy home membership, vocation, worthy use of leisure, citizenship, and ethical character. An additional reform movement, George S. Count's social reconstructionism, which questioned the excesses of capitalism, began in the first half of the 20th century during the Great Depression. This movement resurfaced in the 1960s in the form of Head Start and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and as part of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society (Parker & Parker, 1995).

Another prominent reform advocate, James B. Conant, began urging for the acceptance of his national public school goals during the middle of the 20th century (Parker & Parker, 1995). However, this attempt at national public school unity was not realized until 1989, when President George H. Bush and the state governors agreed on six national goals for public education. Conant's other contributions to reform included recommendations to consolidate small high schools and to improve teacher education, as well as for state governors to meet on a regular basis to share problems and goals. Recently, two teacher education reform groups, the Holmes Group and educator John Goodlad and his colleagues, incorporated Conant's recommendations for teacher

education reform. Also, the Interstate Compact on Education, which was formed upon Conant's recommendation, led to the Education Commission of the States. Parker and Parker (1995) noted the Education Commission of the States presently administers the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which compares student achievement by state and region.

The second half of the 20th century produced the greatest amount of educational reform (Parker & Parker, 1995). Included in this time period was the development of Jerome S. Bruner's conceptual learning theory, which led to new teaching methods and text book approaches. Also, the Cold War and the Soviet's successful launch of Sputnik led to the creation of the National Science Foundation and the 1958 National Defense Education Act, which created new curricula and textbooks (Parker & Parker, 1995). According to Bunting (1999), as a result of the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik, schools were blamed for having failed to teach students basic math and science skills. Thus, a concerted effort to bolster academic skills was made by legislators and educators of the era. However, critics of this new reform initiative charged the function of education was greater than the narrowly focused emphasis on math and science curricula, and that other important goals were sacrificed (Bunting, 1999).

Following the reforms of the Sputnik era, schools again became the target of attack from reform proponents (Bunting, 1999). Bunting (1999) noted problems of society changed, leading the swing of the pendulum from an academic focus towards more humanistic reforms. In the Vietnam and civil rights era, society was faced with moral dilemmas which demanding math and science curricula could not solve (Bunting, 1999).

Therefore, emphasis of school reform changed and efforts were made to match curricula to the experiences, interests, and developmental stages of students. In addition to making curricula more relevant to students, efforts were devoted to making adult authority less restrictive and school procedures more flexible (Bunting, 1999).

The reforms of the late 1960s were blamed by reform advocates for a decline in academics and a disregard for traditional values of discipline and hard work, and resulted in the pendulum of reform swinging from nurturing students back to an academic focus (Bunting, 1999). Bunting (1999) cited lagging competition with the Japanese and the ominous predictions of reports such as A Nation at Risk as the impetus for new changes that were reminiscent of the Sputnik era. These changes included more required courses, stricter academic standards, and stronger disciplinary codes. Results of these more recent reform efforts were mixed, as evidenced by slightly improved Scholastic Aptitude Test scores that were criticized because the gains were too race-specific (Bunting, 1999).

Increased decentralization in the form of site-based management resulted from the following wave of reform (O'Shea & O'Shea, 1997). O'Shea and O'Shea (1997) noted reformers revised school governance policies and procedures to strengthen collegial participation among teachers and students. Other reform initiatives from this wave included curricular reform, the re-establishment of economic leadership, and the restructuring of class groups, levels, and schools. Research suggesting students learned best when educators and parents collaborated on their behalf and that family involvement was prerequisite to student outcome improvement also drove more recent educational reform. These factors led reform proponents to demand rigor and responsibility from

public schools and to target issues such as accountability, increased educational expenditures, and the time students spend in school. However, early changes occurring at the local level were idiosyncratic, implemented by small groups, and produced marginal results that were easily eroded (O'Shea & O'Shea, 1997).

O'Shea and O'Shea (1997) noted the primary focus of reform in the 1990s was instruction. Citizen groups lobbied for effective instruction which would prepare all students to compete in a global economy. These authors described current school reform as a social-political issue affecting all students, emphasized activities that defined the knowledge base expected of graduates, and encouraged the design of curricula that allowed students to achieve learning outcomes. Also, current reform agendas emphasized activities which encouraged local districts to implement reform according to a strategic plan, and the active involvement of all stakeholders in the educational process (O'Shea & O'Shea, 1997).

Therefore, through this tracing of reform's many directions and ever-present shifts of focus, it has become apparent school reform is a vast topic of discussion. Empirical data, however, suggested some methods of school reform were more successful than were others. To provide a deeper review of school reform literature, the following portion of this literature review examines empirical investigations of the most cited and recent reform efforts.

#### Empirical Examinations of Reforms

Direct Instruction, one such reform effort used in schools, has received attention from researchers (Ashworth, 1999; Brent & DiObilda, 1993; Harper, Mallette, Maheady, &

Brennan, 1993). This reform measure was defined as a unified system of instruction and materials often involving clearly defined objectives, structured scripts, and frequent interaction between teacher and students with positive reinforcement and immediate corrective feedback (Brent & DiObilda, 1993; Harper et al., 1993). Harper et al. (1993) reported mixed results as they developed a generalizable problem-solving strategy for mathematics word problems based on teacher- and student-led Direct Instruction among 52 second-grade students. Comparison of pretest and posttest measures of problem solving and protocol use indicated an average 30% improvement, with short term retention averaging 90% and 80%, and long term retention averaging 83% and 61%, respectively (Harper et al., 1993). Direct Instruction students performed as well as did traditionally-instructed students on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, whereas they performed notably higher than did traditionally-instructed students in mathematics on the Metropolitan Achievement Tests (Brent & DiObilda, 1993). Finally, Ashworth (1999) concluded Direct Instruction was more successful than was a basal program because Direct Instruction focused on building students' ability to decode words, built confidence incrementally over time, allowed teachers to monitor student progress more regularly, and integrated systematic procedures by which immediate corrective feedback was provided to students.

Whole language education was another effort of reform addressed by researchers (Bruck, Teiman, Caravolas, Genesee, & Cassar, 1998; Dahl, Scharer, Lawson, & Grogan, 1999; Freppon & McIntyre, 1999; Traw, 1996). Although teachers and administrators expressed a pronounced preference for whole language, Traw (1996) reported no

significant change in achievement among students after the implementation of whole-language instruction in an examination of two school districts implementing a whole language curriculum. In a comparison of spelling skills of third-grade students who had received whole-language instruction since they began school and those of third-grade children who had received instruction through a phonics program since beginning their formal education, Bruck et al. (1998) noted the phonics group produced more accurate word spellings, and their spelling of non-words included more conventional, phonologically accurate patterns than did the whole language group. Similarly, Dahl et al. (1999) documented achievement gains for 178 students on various reading and writing activities after foundation concepts such as phonemic and phonological awareness, phonemic segmentation, and letter-sound relationships were taught. In contrast, however, Freppon and McIntyre (1999) reported students in a constructivist-based whole-language setting used more reading strategies and exhibited positive stance patterns in a comparison of low-income first-grade students' acquisition and use of reading strategies and reading attitudes in skills-based and whole-language settings.

Mastery learning garnered attention from schools and researchers as a reform effort (Laney, Frerichs, Frerichs, & Luke, 1996; Mevarech & Susak, 1993; Ritchie & Thorkildsen, 1994; Slavin, 1990). Slavin (1990) interpreted positive effects of mastery learning on experimenter-made measures as supporting the view that mastery learning assisted teachers in focusing on a given set of objectives. Consistent with this view, cooperative-mastery learning and mastery-learning students scored higher on measures of higher order questioning skills and originality among students trained to generate

questions than students participating in cooperative learning groups without the mastery learning component (Mevarech & Susak, 1993). However, Ritchie and Thorkildsen (1994) contended such gains produced from mastery learning may have been attributed to students knowing they were in a mastery learning program (Ritchie & Thorkildsen, 1994), a form of the Hawthorne effect (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Additionally, written pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest scores measuring understanding of economic concepts suggested the combined cooperative-mastery method was superior to other methods of instruction in promoting learning and retention (Laney et al., 1996).

Additionally, the effect of ability grouping on student achievement has been the subject of investigation (Hoffer, 1992; Linchevski & Kutscher, 1998; Lou et al., 1996). Although Hoffer (1992) noted negligible effects of ability grouping on achievement in a study using data from the Longitudinal Study of American Youth, a meta-analysis conducted by Lou et al. (1996) yielded results favoring homogeneous grouping. Conversely, average- and low-performing students in mixed ability classes performed significantly higher on measures of achievement, leading Linchevski and Kutscher (1998) to conclude student achievement need not have been compromised in a heterogeneous setting.

According to Gutierrez and Slavin (1992, p.333), "a nongraded elementary program is one in which children are flexibly grouped according to performance level, not age, and proceed through elementary school at their own rates." Therefore, nongraded programs often involved cross-grade grouping, or the grouping together of students who would otherwise have been in different grade levels. In a synthesis of research conducted on

nongraded schools, Gutierrez and Slavin (1992) noted positive achievement effects of simple cross-grade grouping for single subjects and for several subjects. Less consistently successful were forms of nongrading that made extensive use of individualization. Thus, these researchers concluded nongraded schools could positively effect student achievement if cross-age grouping was used to allow teachers to provide more direct instruction to students rather than if it was used as a framework for individualized instruction (Gutierrez & Slavin, 1992). Additionally, nongraded first graders outperformed their traditionally-grouped counterparts, according to empirical data on student report cards, while no statistically significant difference in readiness scores emerged between kindergarten students in traditional classes and those in nongraded clusters (Tanner & Decotis, 1994).

Merit pay also was investigated as a recent reform effort (Ballou & Podgursky, 1993; Dickson, Walton, & Guy, 1992; Smylie & Smart, 1990). Teacher support of and opposition to merit pay and career-ladder programs were strongly associated with working relationships with other teachers, underscoring incongruities and tensions with the programs and characteristics of teachers' work (Smylie & Smart, 1990). Findings of a survey issued to teachers and administrators revealed the Career Ladder Project, the career ladder program of a large metropolitan school district in Arizona, gained increased acceptance and participation (Dickson et al., 1992). Findings from the 1987-1988 Schools and Staffing Survey, which involved 56,000 public and 1,500 private school teachers, indicated teachers of districts using merit pay systems were neither demoralized nor hostile toward merit pay, and teachers of disadvantaged and low-achieving students

generally supported this initiative. Additionally, teachers from private schools favored merit pay systems more than did teachers from public schools (Ballou & Podgursky, 1993).

Research on charter schools indicated all public schools would benefit by becoming more consumer-oriented, flexible, accountable, goal-driven, and professional institutions (Manno, Finn, Bierlein, & Vanourek, 1998). According to the Hudson Institute's Charter Schools in Action Project, the demand for charter schools, characterized by smaller school size, focused missions, and freedom from excessive regulation, exceeded the supply. Growing evidence supporting charter schools' educational effectiveness and charter schools' ability to foster innovation and to promote accountability also was noted (Finn, Bierlein, & Manno, 1996). Another report from the same study revealed charter schools were havens for children who had bad educational experiences elsewhere and were popular with their primary constituents. Families and teachers sought out charter schools primarily for educational reasons, and teachers in charter schools felt empowered (Vanourek, Manno, Finn, & Bierlein, 1997). However, charter schools experienced problems with transportation, as well as questions about the extent of freedom from state regulation, funding, facilities, special-needs students, and accountability (Urahn & Stewart, 1994).

Site-based management was one method school officials used to reform schools democratically. Bulach and Malone (1994) explored the relationships among school climate, group openness, and group trust in the implementation of school-based decision making as a reform initiative in Kentucky. The Tennessee School Climate Inventory and

the Group Openness and Trust Scale were used among 292 teachers in 13 schools. Responses to this instrument revealed school climate significantly affected implementation efforts (Bulach & Malone, 1994). Additionally, Wohlstetter and Mohrman (1994) summarized research investigating how site-based management could be implemented for long-term school improvement. Schools found success with site-based management when they engaged in a broad set of reform activities, developed school-wide consensus on goals, and involved all teachers in the decision-making process. Other critical factors to success with site-based management included actively working to include parents, using state and district curriculum frameworks to focus reform efforts, and redesigning school schedules to increase teacher interaction. Obstacles to the successful implementation of site-based management included autocratic principals, staff factionalism, and staff apathy. Implementation of site-based management involved time and pervasive change, which affected almost all aspects of the organization (Wohlstetter & Mohrman, 1994).

School choice was another method used to reform schools (Carnoy, 1998; Rist, 1991; Sosniak & Ethington, 1992). In Milwaukee's school choice pilot program, only 600 of Milwaukee's 98,000 public school students applied for the 400 slots available for voucher students in 7 participating private schools. By the end of the school year, only 290 voucher students remained and one private school filed for bankruptcy protection (Rist, 1991). Sosniak and Ethington (1992), using multiple measures of curriculum content and of procedures governing work with that content, revealed little support for the argument that choice was currently an inventive way to create a positive change in the academic

lives of students and teachers. Additionally, Carnoy (1998) examined the national experiences of Chile and Sweden with educational vouchers in relation to commonly-held assumptions of school choice advocates and opponents. Academic achievement did not improve in either country as a result of school choice, school choice primarily benefited better-educated parents, and voucher plans were intimately connected with political agendas (Carnoy, 1998).

The effort to reform education by providing parents with the choice of which school, private or public, their children will attend through publicly-funded vouchers has been found to be controversial (Glickman, 1993). Chubb and Moe (1988) argued parents should be afforded the opportunity to send their children to private schools because private schools academically outperformed public schools. Private schools experienced greater amounts of autonomy, whereas larger levels of bureaucracy hampered public schools. Also, Chubb and Moe contended educational reforms were destined to fail because the root of the problems within the U.S. educational system was the direct democratic control of schools by local school boards. Schools would gain greater autonomy through a competitive system created by school choice for parents. Glickman (1993), an opponent of school choice and advocate of democratic control of schools, noted, "The aim of choice-and-voucher systems, to allow schools to compete individually, would represent further distancing of education from its common and core goal of fostering citizenship in a democracy and would lead to greater emphasis on subgoals" (p. 11). Therefore, efforts to reform schools by providing choice to parents and goals to reform schools through democratic methods have evolved in diametric

opposition. A more detailed discussion of reforming education through democratic means follows.

### Democracy in Schools

Brodinsky (1976) summarized the 12 major events which shaped U.S. schools. First among his list of events was Thomas Jefferson's introduction of a plan for the first statewide school system to the Virginia legislature. Entitled A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, this legislation called for statewide public education from first grade to the university level for all free children of Virginia. Through his bill, Jefferson became the first U.S. policy maker to understand the purpose of education was to preserve and to perpetuate democracy. The preamble to this legislation contained the idea that it was necessary to illuminate the minds of the people to assure those entrusted with power did not become tyrannical. Disappointingly to Jefferson, the legislation passed 17 years later, significantly weakened by the provision that each county court was left to determine when the act should be carried into execution (Brodinsky, 1976).

Fourth on Brodinsky's list was the work of Horace Mann (Brodinsky, 1976). Known as the father of U.S. public schools, Mann espoused the idea that free education was the birthright of every U.S. child. Differing from Jefferson only in his expansion of education to all children, Mann proposed making the common school available to all with tax support, public control, and compulsory attendance (Brodinsky, 1976).

Dewey (1991), reflecting upon Jefferson's ideas, noted democracy was much more than a method of governance. An early proponent of integrating democratic values in education, Dewey noted, "The foundation of democracy is faith in the capacities of

human nature; faith in human intelligence, and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience" (p. 135). Like Mann, Dewey believed in democratic equality and each person was equally entitled to the development of his/her own potential. Also, he believed that because teachers were those who had direct contact with students, they should have been afforded regular opportunities to participate in decisions of school matters. Without such input and faith in the ability of those that we chose to teach our youth, the collective experience and knowledge of the school staff would have been wasted. Also, denial of power and involvement led directly to a lack of a sense of positive responsibility among teachers. An additional argument made by Dewey was as teachers were treated more democratically, this treatment filtered down to the students of those teachers. Finally, according to Dewey (1991), the incorporation of democratic principles in our social institutions such as our industry, businesses, churches, and most importantly, our schools, only served to strengthen our political democracy.

The ideas of Dewey, recorded in the early half of the 20th century, remained an inspiration to numerous democratic reformers of education to the present day. Among such reformers wereSizer, Wood, Gutmann, Levin, and Glickman (Glickman, 1993; Gutmann, 1987; Hopfenberg et al., 1993; Sizer, 1996; Wood, 1992). Drawing from Dewey's ideas, Sizer (1996), creator of the democratically-oriented Coalition of Essential Schools, proclaimed, "a free and powerful education is the absolute right of every citizen and that this education must be first and foremost seen as the mainspring of a democratic community" (p. 147). Wood (1992) agreed with Dewey's notion that the single purpose of

education was to prepare our youth to participate in a democracy. Noting this purpose had been lost on education, Wood pronounced the following:

Traits such as a commitment to community and a desire to participate, values such as a sense of justice, equality, or liberty, skills of interpretation, debate, and compromise, habits of reflection, study, examining multiple perspectives...are the basics that are being shoved [aside] for state-mandated tests, worksheets, and objectives (p. xxiii).

Gutmann (1987) concurred, stating: "The professional responsibility of teachers is to uphold the principle of nonrepression by cultivating the capacity for democratic deliberation" (p. 76). Levin, architect of the democratically-oriented Accelerated Schools Project, credited Dewey for his belief in the potential of students and teachers to shape the world around them and to participate in collaborative inquiry into shared problems (Hopfenberg et al., 1993).

Glickman (1993), architect of the democratically-oriented League of Professional Schools, concurred with the Jeffersonian ideals of the purpose for education espoused by Dewey. Referring to the reason why the U.S. educated its youth, which became lost in countless reform efforts and fragmentation of goals for education, Glickman stated the following:

The essential value of the public school in a democracy, from the beginning, was to ensure an educated citizenry capable of participating in discussions, debates, and decisions to further the wellness of the larger community and protect the individual right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (pp. 8-9).

Instead of all schools aspiring to accomplish the original goal of education to prepare students to participate in a democracy, schools became lost in aspirations of achieving secondary sub-goals such as improving test scores, self-esteem, and character (Glickman, 1993). Glickman noted failure to accomplish these varied and numerous sub-goals and schools losing sight of their primary purpose led to student apathy, isolation of students from the life of society, and public dissatisfaction with the educational system. Noting sub-goals would be accomplished more readily as by-products of responsibility and participation, Glickman (1993) stated,

If our schools were to focus on the main goal of citizenship and democracy and show students how to connect learning with the real issues of their surroundings, then more students would learn basic skills, would use higher-order thinking, would learn aesthetic appreciation, would excel in academics, and would graduate (p. 9).

In a discussion of whether or not democratic values should be inculcated through school curricula, Dayton and Glickman (1994) traced the historical, legal, and constitutional factors that legitimized the function of democratic principles in U.S. education. This discussion began by arguing the fundamental purpose of education was the preparation of students for citizenship and participation in a democracy. Before instruction could be meaningful, the authors argued students must understand how education was relevant to their circumstances. These authors suggested education should allow students to become active participants in a democratic community with aspirations to improve their own lives as well as their community. Accordingly, democratic values, as established in the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Constitution,

and interpretations of the Constitution by the judicial system must become integrated with subject matter, learner needs, and societal needs during curriculum development if this fundamental purpose was to be realized. Recognizing the U.S. Constitution as the foundation of U.S. democracy and as containing values forged from human struggle for freedom and thoughtful contemplation, Dayton and Glickman (1994) identified freedom of belief and expression, equality, fair treatment, and limitations of the scope of governmental power as some of the Constitution's values.

Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) interviewed and observed educators, policymakers, and students from 25 districts in 21 states over a 5-month period in their study of democratic participation in small town schools. Data on citizen involvement, administrator-teacher collaboration, teacher collegiality, student voice, and cooperative learning were presented in the findings of this investigation. Results indicated a dearth of the democratic concepts described by Dewey and his contemporaries being used in schools. Among the recommendations to enhance democratic participation in academic matters were increasing citizen involvement, making administrators responsible for increased collaboration, encouraging teacher initiatives for democratic learning in the classroom, and involving students in democratic lessons (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1990).

Garrison (1988) suggested democratic dialogue has disappeared from teacher education and from the education community. To reincorporate the ideals of democratic education into present educational structures, the process must begin in teacher training institutions. Garrison (1988) claimed these institutions should, therefore, focus on an inquiry-oriented paradigm of teacher education.

Also addressing democratic education in teacher preparation, Zeichner (1989) described the lack of attention given to ideals of equality, in terms of both working conditions for teachers and problems of learning for children, as a crisis in our education system. Apparently, concepts of the democratic school and of school- and community-based teacher education could have contributed to alleviating this inequality. However, according to Zeichner, these concepts were often a neglected component of the reform agenda for teacher education. Also, parents and the community should have been just as involved as teachers in efforts to empower and to involve more people in decisions concerning schools and education (Zeichner, 1989).

Like all reform efforts, measures to reinstate democratic principles in education have not been immune to criticism (Dixon, 1998; Plank & Boyd, 1994). For example, in an analysis of the relationships among antipolitics, institutional choice, and democratic governance, Plank and Boyd (1994) presented the main arguments against democratic governance in education and discussed recently proposed alternatives to such governance structures. It must be noted, however, Plank and Boyd did not discuss educational democratic governance in the same sense as did Dewey (1991) and his contemporaries. According to Plank and Boyd (1994), because democratically elected Boards of Education ran all schools, democratic governance was the current state of education. Alternatives to this current method of governance included relying upon a central authority like the courts to govern education, delegating choices to educational experts, decentralizing authority to the school level, and providing institutional choice to parents (Plank & Boyd, 1994). Therefore, the democratic reforms proposed by Dewey and his

contemporaries may have been more appropriately applied to Plank and Boyd's third alternative, decentralizing authority to the school level, as educational decisions were made at the school level by teachers. Because educational decisions were made democratically by teachers in the governance system proposed by Dewey and his contemporaries, the criticisms of democratic education proposed by Plank and Boyd could still be applied to the proposals of Dewey and his contemporaries. Among these criticisms were majority decisions disregarded the views of the minority; vocal and well organized minority views were sometimes given too much attention; the views of the majority were sometimes wrong; and democracies were fragile, inefficient, and chaotic (Plank & Boyd, 1994).

Dixon (1998) reviewed the reform structures, principles, and practices proposed by Glickman, Levin, and Sizer, comparing and contrasting these ideas with the democratic ideas of the authors of The Federalist Papers, 18th century propaganda written to promote the ratification of the Constitution by the states. Conceptions of the democratic educators and Publius, the authors of The Federalist Papers, were presented in terms of the following elements of democracy: beliefs about the nature of individuals and the masses, government, participation, access to and dissemination of information, the nature of problems and knowledge, expanse of government, and value priorities (Dixon, 1998). When presented in this manner, several distinctions emerged in the meaning of similar language used by Publius and democratic educators. Dixon attributed these differences to the fact that the democratic views of the educators were those of community democracy, whereas the democratic ideals of Publius were those of liberal democracy. Among the

flaws of democratic education identified by Dixon during his comparison of the community and liberal perceptions of democracy was the presumption made by democratic reform proponents that school stakeholders were capable and willing to make decisions. Administrators also were believed to be willing and able to permit shared decision making. Additionally, school staff were presumed to have appropriate levels of knowledge, motivation, ownership of the educational process, collaborative capability, consensus-forming ability, and the ability to discuss and to debate controversial issues in an open and professional manner. In contrast, Publius, according to Dixon, did not place such faith in individuals. Rather, only the most talented of the republic, determined by a rigorous election process, decided public policy within a system of critical oversight, checks, and balances. Also, as determined by the length of terms representatives would serve, a grace period of time was extended to those talented few to learn the complexities of the legislative process (Dixon, 1998).

Moreover, Dixon (1998) claimed community and liberal views of democracy differed on their views of elections. While Publius argued the election of good leaders was possible over the expanse of a large territory and vast population, local schools, as Dixon enunciated, did not have this vast pool of representatives from which to choose. Also, the elections of the liberal democratic faction legally sanctioned those chosen to make decisions. School elections had no such legal authority, thereby placing little consequence on those defeated in these elections. Policies decided upon by school consensus also stood the possibility of being rejected by legitimate legal authorities. Therefore, these and other contradictions between the liberal connotation of democracy

espoused by the authors of the Constitution and the community connotation espoused by democratic educators led Dixon to proclaim that the reform efforts of democratic educators were "doomed to failure or to limited success at best" (p. 38).

Smith and Meier (1994) examined the role of bureaucracy in the educational performance of public school students, and noted bureaucracies existed because school systems needed administrators and administrative capacities to function effectively. Reducing bureaucracy imposed administrative tasks on teachers. These administrative burdens, postulated Smith and Meier (1994), would likely impair the performance of teachers, rather than improve it.

#### Teacher Empowerment and Related Issues

Teacher empowerment was a value-laden concept educators found difficult to define, yet was critical to recent efforts of school renewal (Brandt, 1989; Kizilos, 1990; Starratt, 1995). Empowerment involved allowing each member of organization to find a fulfilling way of exercising his or her talents in the accomplishment of the organizations' common ideals, with the understanding that members of a community were able to achieve together what they could not achieve on their own (Starratt, 1995). Short and Greer (1997) postulated empowering teachers would create a positive work environment allowing school participants to initiate and to implement new ideas, resulting in enhanced learning opportunities for students. The six dimensions of teacher empowerment identified by Short and Greer were decision making, professional growth, status, self efficacy, autonomy, and the belief among individuals that their work made an impact on the school. Therefore, within the broad context of empowerment, related issues will be

discussed such as shared decision making, autonomy, professionalism, and the change of leadership styles of both teachers and administrators necessary in renewing educational institutions through empowering the members of those institutions.

Brandt (1989), in an interview with empowerment proponent Ann Lieberman, discussed positive developments in the teaching profession and actions needed to facilitate those changes. Teacher empowerment enabled teachers to participate in group decision making and to make key choices affecting their own work. Brandt noted individual autonomy, which led to teacher isolation, should be replaced by a collective autonomy in which teachers would have a voice in curricular and instructional matters beyond their own classrooms. Transformation to teacher empowerment was time consuming and called for new skills and attitudes that had to be provided in different organizational structures (Brandt, 1989).

Romanish (1987) asserted conservative forces have driven educational reform, resulting in the mechanization of the role of teacher. According to Romanish, little has changed in education as schools still seek a single best system to apply to all students. Reform has simply attempted to streamline that single system to optimum performance. Romanish noted proponents of reform must view education in a broader context and avoid narrow goals. True reform, claimed Romanish (1987), would empower teachers as transformative intellectuals. Referring to the ideals adopted by democratic educators, Romanish (1991) contended democratic ideals could not be taught by a school system that was not run democratically. Moreover, Romanish (1991) claimed teachers should be allowed a more active role in school restructuring, and proponents of restructuring and

school renewal must view teachers' control over professional affairs as a key element to their plans.

In a similar response to the role of teachers as technicians of external ideas and curricula, Perrone (1991) wrote an extended letter to teachers addressing the concerns teachers have for their work with students and reflecting on the art of teaching. To Perrone, teaching meant decision making about curricula, materials, and pedagogy, and if teachers lacked such basic decision-making authority, schools could not improve. Empowerment grew from concrete authority vested in knowledge, understanding, and the act of guiding the language and craft of teaching. Also, the intellectual and moral power possessed by teachers needed to assume a larger role within schools (Perrone, 1991).

Kizilos (1990) defined empowerment as the process of coming to feel and behave as though one has power over significant aspect of one's life or work, with the term "power" referring to autonomy, authority, or control. Citing Conger and Kanungo and demonstrating the general confusion about a definition for empowerment, Kizilos suggested empowerment was a process of enhancing self-efficacy among members of an organization by identifying conditions that led to powerlessness and removing those conditions. Accordingly, empowerment was the fountain of youth to tired employees, transforming them to eager participants who internalized the goals and values of the organization (Kizilos, 1990).

Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph (1996) prescribed a three-step process to empower an organization. Included within this process were sharing information with all participants in the organization, creating autonomy through boundaries, and replacing

former bureaucratic structures with self directed teams. Sharing performance information helped people in an organization understand the organization, built trust, and allowed people to behave as owners of the organization. Creating autonomy through boundaries involved clarifying roles and goals, defining values and rules that supported actions, creating procedures that supported empowerment, providing training, and holding people accountable for their actions. Finally, replacing the old hierarchy with self-directed teams entailed providing direction and skills training for empowerment, using diversity as a team asset, providing support and encouragement for change, moving gradually, and recognizing the process would be difficult and require time and patience (Blanchard et al., 1996).

The democratic principle of shared decision-making was more easily defined than was the broader concept of teacher empowerment (Perrone, 1991). Shared decision-making, as applied to education, involved the inclusion of teachers within the decision-making process of schools. As it related to teacher empowerment, shared decision-making was an outcome of empowerment and acknowledged needs for cooperative action on behalf of students (Perrone, 1991).

Several researchers analyzed the act of involving teachers in the decision-making process (Livingston, Slate, & Gibbs, 1999; Sickler, 1988; Weiss, 1995; Winter, Keedy, & Newton, 2000). In particular, Sickler (1988) described the efforts of the ABC Unified School District in Cerritos, a suburb of Los Angeles, to empower teachers. Top level management began the empowering process by reducing its own numbers through attrition to provide more direct communication to schools and to move more funds into

schools. Also, schools were given more control over their own expenditures. After streamlining district level management, control over curricula was completely turned over to teachers throughout the district. Collaboration on curricula allowed opportunity for interaction among teachers of different schools, grade levels, and subject areas. Teachers reported a greater sense of ownership of the curricula they had a voice in developing. Training also was established to allow teachers leadership opportunities within their schools. In addition to the support provided by the top levels of leadership in the district, empowerment was aided by efforts from the teachers' union and a collaborative network of school districts and universities, co-directed by John Goodlad, called the Laboratory in School and Community Education. Results of the empowerment efforts of the district included increased test scores, decreased absenteeism among students, and decreased absenteeism among teachers (Sickler, 1988).

Weiss (1995) participated in a longitudinal study that compared decision making in terms of interests, ideology, information, and the institution in six high schools with shared decision making and six high schools without shared decision. Interviews revealed the following: schools with and without shared decision making made decisions on roughly similar issues, shared decision making schools did not devote more time to curricular or pedagogical matters, and the nature of decisions from shared decision making schools were slightly more innovative than those decisions made in schools without shared decision making. This research revealed the history and norms of the institutions strongly influenced teachers' willingness to innovate, while principals were less influenced by the institution and retained more latitude in reform mindedness. Also,

teachers tended to ignore external information sources that would have mediated the institutional influence. Weiss (1995) concluded that to make shared decision making a successful enterprise in the face of the resistance created by the forces of the institution, creative measures must be taken to strengthen the three remaining components of the decision making process: interests, ideology, and information (Weiss, 1995).

Livingston et al. (1999) interviewed 50 principals of rural schools from Georgia to determine their beliefs regarding decision-making practices. Principals indicated strong agreement with the statement that teachers were professionals possessing the expertise to make key decisions regarding the education of students. Also, rural principals strongly agreed with the statement that those working closest to the students had the best understanding of how to best meet the needs of the students. Examination of the daily practices of these schools revealed teachers were often involved in decisions regarding instructional material, instructional programs, rules regarding the daily functioning of the schools, mission statements, and professional development. However, fewer principals involved teachers in decisions regarding daily schedules, employment of new faculty, expenditures of the instructional budget, and the evaluation of personnel (Livingston et al., 1999).

Winter et al. (2000) examined teachers' attraction to school council service and factors that impacted that attraction. Participants, randomly-selected public school teachers enrolled in graduate education courses at three Kentucky state universities, performed three tasks. These teachers completed a form that elicited biographical information and included measures of seven teacher personal characteristics. Afterwards, teachers read

one of four content-validated versions of a formal job description for a teacher vacancy on the local school council. Management or instructional leadership was one of two validated sets of school council job attributes emphasized on each version of the job description. Whether the principal was the council chair or a council member with a teacher serving as the chair was specified on each of the four versions of the job description. Finally, a two-item instrument revealing the degree of teacher attraction to the school council job depicted in the job description was completed by each participant. Findings revealed teachers with fewer dependent children and no experience on school councils rated school council positions more favorably than did teachers with greater numbers of dependent children and prior school council experience. The combined effects of dependent children and school council experience explained 6.8% of the variance in teacher rating of a school council position (Winter et al., 2000).

Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) identified six organizational conditions of schools from a review of the social-psychological literature on job design. The researchers then examined the effect of these conditions on the job commitment of 1,213 teachers from 78 elementary schools throughout Tennessee. Organizational qualities identified by the researchers included the following: performance efficacy, psychic rewards, task discretion and autonomy, learning opportunities, managing students' behavior, and principal buffering. Further, the researchers divided these six conditions into the following two groups: those that impinged on the tasks of defining boundaries and conducting the task of teaching, and those that affected the instructional role of the teacher. Participants in the study were divided into three groups based on their amount of

teaching experience. Rosenholtz and Simpson indicated novice teachers' commitment was influenced more by organizational supports for the management of boundary issues. Experienced teachers were influenced by organizational qualities that affected instructional tasks. Midcareer teachers had a lower commitment to their jobs and placed greater emphasis on autonomy than did novice teachers and veterans (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990).

Heid and Leak (1991) claimed teachers' educational authority was derived from their roles as subject-matter specialists. However, teachers exercised almost no control over the design and administration of the institutions in which they worked. Decisions regarding curricula, scheduling, class size, and the allocation of money and space were made by school boards, administrators, and legislatures (Nyberg & Farber, 1986). Also, decisions regarding teaching material were made by experts who examined standards, tests, and curriculum guidelines (Heid & Leak, 1991).

The amount of autonomy teachers perceived from their work environment was asserted by researchers to have an impact on several aspects of schools (Pearson & Hall, 1993). Authors of several studies suggested low levels of autonomy had adverse effects on education (Berry, 1986; Hall, Villeme, & Phillipy, 1989; Kremer & Hofman, 1981; Lieberman, 1988). Conversely, high levels of teacher autonomy had positive effects on different aspects of education (Burden, 1981; Hall et al., 1989; Ingersoll, 1996; June, Wenger, & Guzzetti, 1987; Perry et al., 1997; Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990; Schoen & Winocur, 1988; Weary, Gliecher, & Marsh, 1993).

Kremer and Hofman (1981) asserted lack of teacher autonomy and low professional status for teachers were two of several factors that accounted for teachers leaving the profession. The authors noted teacher turnover might be reduced if school officials were more responsive to teachers' needs for more autonomy than the current state of responsiveness school officials now exhibit. Also, Hall et al. (1989) claimed low job satisfaction was a direct result of low perceptions of autonomy. Similarly, Lieberman (1988) asserted teachers who left the profession due to a lack of autonomy were experienced teachers who served as mentors in the development of new teachers.

Berry (1986) added to the literature condemning low teacher autonomy. In his study, college seniors indicated they would avoid teaching as a profession because of the lack of professional control granted to teachers. These students developed their perceptions of low teacher autonomy in the field of education through their own high school experiences. Thus, students were discouraged from entering the teaching profession due to a perceived lack of control among teachers who were already in the profession (Berry, 1986).

In contrast to authors who claimed negative effects of low autonomy, Burden (1981) claimed experienced teachers better provided for varied student needs when they perceived more control within their work environment than when they perceived less control within their work environment. Furthermore, according to Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990), teachers were influenced by factors that affected the performance of instructional tasks when they were allowed more autonomy in the work environment than they were previously offered. Also, new teachers who possessed a high degree of

autonomy expressed satisfaction in their job and reacted positively to teaching. Those teachers who expressed the highest amount of satisfaction and had the highest perception of autonomy related a willingness to reenter the profession if faced with the opportunity (Hall et al., 1989). Finally, teachers who perceived a high degree of autonomy expressed a positive relationship with their administrators (June et al., 1987).

Ingersoll (1996) examined the effects of a faculty's collective influence over school policy and the autonomy of individual teachers in their classrooms. Results indicated increases in faculty influence over policy were significantly linked with decreases in school conflict. More important than the significant association of faculty involvement with decreased school conflict was the significant relationship of individual autonomy in the classroom to decreased school conflict (Ingersoll, 1996).

Similarly, Perry et al. (1997) conducted a longitudinal analysis tracking the adjustment and amount of perceived control newly-hired, tenure-track faculty experienced for the first three years of employment at post-secondary institutions. These researchers hypothesized perceived personal control, gender, time, teaching experience, and type of institution would be critical to the adjustment of new faculty. Newly-hired faculty members were initially interviewed about their adjustment experiences. One year later, the faculty members who were initially interviewed completed a survey regarding their job satisfaction, stress, negative emotions, and perceived control. The same survey was completed after a second year of employment, and again after the third year. Perry et al. reported perceived control, either by itself or in combination with institution type and time, was a critical factor that affected new hires' emotional well-being, stress levels, job

satisfaction, and emotions generated from work. Those newly-hired teachers who perceived greater control believed they had more control over their career in general, were less likely to consider quitting their job, had lower levels of job stress, and were more satisfied with their teaching and their career than were those newly-hired faculty who reported less control (Perry et al., 1997).

Weary et al. (1993) used comparisons between administrative reports on teacher autonomy levels and teacher reports on their own autonomy levels to determine actual and perceived autonomy levels among teachers. According to the results, some teachers might have believed they possessed a greater capacity to influence events than they had in reality, whereas other teachers believed they had less capacity to influence events than they did actually have. The authors noted these differences between individual perceptions of autonomy levels and actual levels of autonomy, as reported by administrators, determined subsequent cognitive, emotional, and behavioral developments (Weary et al., 1993). In addition to greater cognitive, emotional, and behavioral developments of teachers with a higher perceived level of autonomy, Schoen and Winocur (1988) reported teachers with higher levels of perceived autonomy possessed greater levels of self-efficacy, or self-confidence, in their teaching performance than did teachers with lower levels of perceived autonomy.

Results of research on the positive effects of high teacher autonomy have not been ignored by all school officials (Lieberman, 1988). In fact, several efforts to increase teacher autonomy have been attempted by school officials in various parts of the country. According to Lieberman (1988), one of these efforts was made by Myrna Cooper in the

creation of the New York City Teacher Consortium. Lieberman (1988) noted the creation of Cooper's consortium involved teachers in leadership positions, provided models of professionalism, and created positive climates in difficult environments. Further, Lieberman (1988) discussed the efforts of a principal in Maine to increase teacher autonomy within his school by involving teachers in a restructuring program. In addition, developers of a program in California increased teacher autonomy by expanding the role of teachers to include teaching other teachers (Lieberman, 1988).

June et al. (1987) altered a packaged method of instructional supervision in their effort to increase teacher autonomy. These authors began their efforts by setting a specific goal of creating an autonomous teacher. Next, in the envisioning stage of their model, June et al. (1987) introduced the term coprincipalship, which they defined as the act of involving teachers in decisions made in the school. Finally, the authors provided support to the teachers during implementation and reinforced their efforts with feedback and observation. The researchers used a comparison of pre- and post-test surveys to determine the degree of autonomy change. June et al. (1987) claimed the modifications they made to a packaged program of instructional supervision increased teacher autonomy.

In addition to shared decision making and autonomy, enhancing the professionalization of teaching was an issue that has been discussed within the broader context of teacher empowerment. For example, Maeroff (1988) recounted the demoralization and lack of status presently plaguing the teaching profession. According to Maeroff, if teachers were given the proper circumstances to become more expert as

teachers, doors would open toward empowerment. Maeroff contended conferring status on teachers, building up their knowledge base, and giving teachers access to the processes of decision making would allow teachers to be treated with more dignity, to feel better about themselves, to have more autonomy over the way they teach, and to influence more readily decisions affecting the schools. Thus, teacher empowerment was viewed as the professionalization of teaching, or the creation of an environment in which teachers acted and were treated as professionals (Maeroff, 1988).

Flinders (1989) urged educators to enlarge their understanding of professionalism to include the artistic skills and judgment demanded by good teaching. This task was described as difficult because teaching artistry, or the creative processes involved with teaching, was neither well understood nor mandated at the system level. However, the encouraging of teacher collaboration and the involvement of teachers in decision making facilitated this process (Flinders, 1989).

Gable and Manning (1997) elaborated on the concept of professional collaboration among teachers. These authors suggested teachers at all grade levels and disciplines needed to work cooperatively with colleagues and representatives from other professional disciplines to address the public's demands for fundamental change in the school system. Gable and Manning contended including teachers in reform efforts and holding teachers accountable for outcomes increased the chances for reform to succeed. Predicated on voluntary participation, respect, equitable distribution of resources, and a shared sense of responsibility and accountability, collaboration was defined by Gable and Manning as the interaction between parties who engaged in shared decision making to work for a

common goal. Advantages for collaboration included ownership of the instructional process and goals accompanied by a responsibility for positive outcomes, learning between teachers with the establishment of professional collegial relationships, and the opportunity to work together to effect school change (Gable & Manning, 1997).

Driscoll (1998) described educational reform efforts of the past two decades that were premised on professionalism, illustrated contemporary reform efforts that focused on professionalism and community, and presented themes for further research and consideration in the field of educational reform. Citing a sociologist's definition of a profession, Driscoll argued teaching could not be considered a profession because teaching lacked a shared knowledge base and control of teaching licenses belonged outside the ranks of the profession, as opposed to professions such as law and medicine. According to Driscoll, other calls for professionalism for teachers included recognition of teachers' work through better compensation packages and improved working conditions. Driscoll noted recent reform efforts designed to improve education by elevating the professionalism of teachers have attempted to establish blue-ribbon commissions to define what professional knowledge and training may look like. Similar efforts have attempted to make professional accreditation standards more powerful in state licensing and certification, and to codify a professional knowledge base for practice and preparation (Driscoll, 1998).

Leadership was another issue related to teacher empowerment. Walters (1992) defined the style of leadership often associated with teacher empowerment in schools as an art and entitled it supportive leadership. Walters called for leaders to pay attention to their

subordinates, be supportive, work with people instead of over them, and realize people are more important than things. Also stressed were flexibility, action, support, and working with people's strengths (Walters, 1992). O'Donnell (1992) defined the leadership style that accompanied successful transformation to empowerment as nurturing leadership. The nurturing leader was caring, accessible, respectful, experienced, and stable. Also, the leader nurtured his/her self, others, and his/her organization (O'Donnell, 1992).

Sergiovanni (1994) urged school leaders to adopt a community theory in their schools. Adopting this community theory involved viewing the school as a moral community; understanding values; providing a framework for understanding community; serving as a moral voice to compel staff and students to act accordingly; and sharing values, ideas, and purposes. Under Sergiovanni's plan, school leaders conveyed shared values and defined each school as a covenantal community. Also, democratic principles and concepts provided a foundation for the school; educational action research enhanced academic, social, and moral development of students; and informed reflections enhanced the academic, social, and moral development of the school's students (Sergiovanni, 1994).

Starratt (1995) defined the following elements of this reinvented style of leadership: it was rooted in meaning; it emerged out of a vision of what the leader and his/her colleagues could accomplish; it was immersed in an awareness of drama; it involved communal articulation of the vision that built into a covenant; it involved expressing the collective vision in the everyday life of the school; and it required continuous renewal of

the institution. Goldman (1998) used case studies of three principals to illustrate how leadership styles affected school ambience. According to Goldman, good leadership practice meant acknowledging each person's differing gifts, strengths, and concerns, and utilizing them appropriately. Change needed to occur in the leadership of schools because the school as an organization was a mirror image of the values and beliefs of its leader (Goldman, 1998).

Prestine (1991), using a multiple case study approach, selected 4 of the 10 schools that began Essential School Restructuring in 1989, a restructuring effort in Illinois, for intensive study. Enrollment at these schools ranged from 329 to 1,000 students. Data collection consisted of intensive open-ended interviews and follow-up interviews with key actors and representatives of relevant stakeholders and interest groups, examination of documentary and archival evidence including reflective journals, and observation and participation in conferences, workshops, and cadre meetings. Two major themes emerged from the case studies: (a) factors or conditions that impeded change in traditional conceptions of the role of the principal, and (b) factors or conditions that promoted changes to a collaborative, shared governance model. Factors that impeded change in traditional conceptions of the role of the principal included a lack of the following: stability, support, trust, and commitment. Conditions that promoted changes to a collaborative, shared governance model included new conceptions of power, a need for a systematic agreement, a willingness to take risks, and the acknowledgement that change is a difficult process (Prestine, 1991).

To provide principals with insight on teachers' perspectives on effective leadership, Blase and Kirby (1992) conducted a qualitative examination focusing on teacher perspectives regarding strategies principals used to influence, to motivate, and to empower teachers. According to the teacher sample, principals who were open and effective praised teachers' efforts, conveyed high expectations for teacher and student performance, and actively involved teachers in decision making. Also, effective principals judiciously evoked the power of authority, consistently modeled effective practice, and nudged teachers to consider alternatives to instructional and discipline problems. Finally, principals who were open and effective supported teachers by providing materials, training opportunities, and backing in discipline matters. These strategies were used simultaneously with honesty, optimism, consideration, and high visibility (Blase & Kirby, 1992).

Brunner (1997) conducted a four-year study in which she asked superintendents and their staffs to characterize their leadership styles. Authoritarian styles were more prevalent among superintendents than were collaborative styles. Interestingly, many superintendents who regarded themselves as collaborative leaders were described by their staffs as authoritarian leaders. Noting such benefits of collaboration as the advancement of social justice with emphasis on student achievement and democratic values obtained in equitable input and opportunity, Brunner offered several tips for superintendents to become collaborative leaders. Specifically, Brunner advised superintendents must learn to speak about power as a collaborative concept, recognize collaboration is not

delegating, value others' decision-making capabilities, share information, and include everyone in the decision-making process (Brunner, 1997).

Brouillette (1997) conducted a qualitative examination of the behaviors and activities of three high school principals as they implemented shared governance in their schools. In each case, the decision to implement shared governance was made at the district level with the hope of giving teachers and parents a larger voice in decisions made at the building level. Only one of the three principals described their experiences with shared governance as successful. This principal was supportive of the change from the onset of the decision to implement shared governance. The other principals claimed to support the initiative but seemed less clear on what shared governance was. Also, the principal who found success in the transition between styles of governance defined shared governance as giving all involved a voice, so they were not left feeling helpless, eventually losing motivation and becoming less committed to high standards of professional behavior. The other two principals viewed shared governance as affording employees the freedom for experimental approaches and entrepreneurial activity. All of the schools experienced turmoil and conflict during the transition. As this conflict intensified, the principal who claimed success stubbornly adhered to the shared governance model, while the two others reverted back to more traditional styles of governance (Brouillette, 1997).

Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) noted empowerment required a change in leadership roles for teachers. This changed leadership role involved teachers leading within and outside of the classroom, contributing to a teaching community, and influencing other teachers toward improved educational practice (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). Keedy

and Finch (1994) examined the process through which a high school principal began to share the governance duties of the school with the teachers. Teachers attained leadership roles on task forces and, as a result, gained an increased sense of self-efficacy through their role realignment (Keedy & Finch, 1994).

In addition to involving teachers in critical decisions regarding the school, schools moved teachers' efforts beyond their individual classrooms to improve educational practice throughout the entire school, with the employment of a critical study process known as action research (Calhoun, 1992, 1994; Joyce, Wolf, & Calhoun, 1993). This critical study process usually followed a sequential six-step process which included formulating a problem, planning for data collection, collecting and analyzing data, reporting the data, and taking action to address the problem. However, Schwartz, Slate, and Onwuegbuzie (1999) viewed action research as a cyclical process involving the following eight steps: (1) identifying the problem; (2) reviewing the relevant literature; (3) formulating research questions and/or hypotheses; (4) developing a plan of action for the research; (5) implementing the plan; (6) analyzing the data and interpreting the results; (7) communicating the findings; and (8) repeating the cycle using a problem redefined from what was learned during the previous cycle. Action research may have been a simple collaboration between a few teachers or it may have been used throughout the entire school (Calhoun, 1992, 1994; Sagor, 1997). Additionally, action research was typically used "to help select and clarify goals, select procedures, and study progress in terms of effects on students, teachers, administrators, and parents and other community members" (Calhoun, 1992, p.89). Calhoun (1992) provided further description of action

research, by noting the following: "The premise is that developing accurate assessment of collectively established goals pushes a school faculty to conceptualize what is worth accomplishing through curriculum, staff development, or instruction" (p. 89).

Additionally, Sagor (1997) credited action research with replacing congenial working environments with more productive collegial environments, as well as enhancing student performance.

Schmoker (1996) concurred with the use of data within schools to improve schools. According to Schmoker, teamwork in combination with the setting of measurable goals and the regular collection and analysis of data led to continual school improvement. Calhoun (1994) referred to the process of continual school improvement, or the regular collection and analysis of data in attempts to achieve measurable goals, as school renewal. The use of data, according to Schmoker (1996), revealed easily-concealed strengths and weaknesses of the school, prioritized which problems to address, allowed staff to maintain focus and goal-orientation, and revealed progress on problem areas that motivated and sustained the efforts of the staff. A reform effort that employed the use of action research, shared decision making, and an instructional focus has been the League of Professional Schools.

#### League of Professional Schools

Like site-based management, the League of Professional Schools was a model of democratic reform. However, the League of Professional Schools differed from site-based management in that site-based management sought to involve teachers in all decisions, whereas the goal of the League was to involve staff members only in decisions

that affected teaching and learning (Glickman, 1993). Glickman defined these decisions as core-impact and comprehensive impact decisions that were used to enact the schools covenant, or agreed upon educational values. Issues appropriate for shared decision making in League schools included staff development, instructional programs, curricular matters, learning assessments, and the instructional budget. In addition to shared decision making and a covenant of teaching and learning, League schools employed action research to determine the results of educational programs and to determine where to focus limited time, energy, and human resources. Therefore, the League of Professional Schools operated within a three-component framework consisting of an instructional covenant, shared decision making, and a critical study process (Glickman, 1993).

Among the research conducted on the League of Professional Schools were several doctoral dissertations, studies conducted by members of the Program for School Improvement (PSI), and qualitative and quantitative examinations by organizations external to the League. Hawkins (1996) examined the relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and their participation in activities advocated by the League of Professional Schools. Findings of this doctoral research were consistent with previous research in that efficacy among teachers was highest in elementary schools and lowest in high schools. Additionally, female teachers possessed higher degrees of efficacy than did male teachers. Although teachers' participation in League activities increased with the amount of time schools belonged to the League of Professional Schools, sense of efficacy was not significantly related to time spent in the League (Hawkins, 1996).

The majority of the early investigations conducted on the League of Professional Schools was undertaken through PSI's on-site visits with schools, as PSI provided technical assistance and feedback to individual schools in the school's efforts to implement the League's premises. This empirical evidence was contained in three volumes of a monograph entitled Lessons from the Field: Renewing Schools Through Shared Governance and Action Research (Allen, 1993; Glickman & Allen, 1992; Hansen & Allen, 1994). Although subsequent examinations were conducted by members of the PSI and were published in various sources, this monograph provided insight into the successes and failures of the League's early efforts. Included in this collection of literature specific to the League were case studies documenting the experiences of individual schools in their efforts to implement League premises as recorded by faculty members of those schools (Aiken et al., 1993; Cain & Cash, 1994; Deweese et al., 1992; Hix, 1992; Leland, 1993; Locke, 1993; Mathis, 1994; Reese, 1994). Typical of these experiences, as conveyed in these case studies, were feelings of trepidation concerning issues of time, increased work loads, and power struggles (Aiken et al., 1993).

Roberts (1992) surveyed participants in a League Orientation and Planning Workshop whose schools were considering joining the League to determine whether or not past practices of schools affected their decision to join the League, and how such practices could affect efforts to execute League premises. Participants were asked to record their reasons for attending the workshop, describe recent changes in instruction made in their schools and how these decisions were made, and identify their schools' priorities for instruction including factors that impeded or enhanced these priorities. Roberts then

compared these data from schools that thereafter chose to join the League to schools that did not. Schools joining the League reported a collegial atmosphere in their schools, had principals who encouraged risk taking and encouraged input in decisions, and were often involved in formal and informal discussions concerning instruction (Roberts, 1992).

Kirby (1992) examined shared decision making in four schools participating in the League for at least two years using minutes from leadership team and faculty meetings as well as interviews with teachers, facilitators, and administrators. Results from this investigation led to the formulation of four propositions to aid in the process of involving faculty in decisions. Faculty members addressed more significant issues such as instructional concerns (a) after minor faculty concerns had been resolved; (b) when formal structures were established for goal setting and making decisions; (c) when more people were involved in the prioritization of concerns and possessed a stake in the outcomes, and (d) when the data base for generating concerns, alternatives, and solutions was comprehensive and objective (Kirby, 1992).

Roberts and Dungan (1994) used a hermeneutic-phenomenological inquiry approach to explore the dimensions of participants' voice within the shared-decision making framework of four Georgia League schools. Open-ended interviews with 21 teachers and students revealed increased quality and frequency of communication among faculty, both within and across grade levels and departments, and between faculty and administration. Increased communication often fostered collegiality among faculty. In cases where faculty morale had not increased from the incorporation of shared decision making, teachers noted their opinions were heard but were not valued or utilized. Increased

participation by faculty members in decision making was reported by all participants and often resulted in teachers assuming leadership roles. Half of the participants expressed a desire for more voice in the areas of personnel decisions, budgeting, scheduling, and discipline, whereas half believed these decisions should be left to their administrators. Although results indicated no increases in parental or student involvement in decisions as a result of participation with the League, shared governance had an indirect impact on instruction through the promotion of teacher collaboration and the clarification of instructional issues. Shared governance's greatest impact was on professional growth opportunities and staff development (Roberts & Dungan, 1994).

Lunsford (1994) interviewed 15 principals of Georgia League schools to determine the reasons for principal commitment to shared governance, the perceptions of their roles as principals after the implementation of shared governance, and the methods these principals used to balance central office and state mandates within the framework of a shared governance process. Reasons for implementing a program that involved shared governance included critical incidents such as participation in leadership development programs, faith in teachers, desire to bring about change, and the fact that collaboration was a natural style of leadership. New roles for principals emerged as they became facilitators and coordinators, participating members of groups, and encouragers and supporters of decisions. As for dealing with state and central office mandates in addition to school produced initiatives, 3 of the 15 principals involved in the study reported no problems, 3 more principals stated they managed to buffer their faculty from the district while providing as much freedom as they could, while the remainder expressed concerns

with these restrictions and actively worked with local boards to alter them (Lunsford, 1994).

In a qualitative analysis, Allen (1995) interviewed students from five League elementary schools to ascertain the level at which students were involved in the decision-making process at schools that practiced shared governance. Interviews consisted of focus groups of 10 to 12 students and generally lasted for 45 minutes. Students from each grade level, ethnic background, and level of academic achievement were involved in the focus groups and were asked the following questions: (a) if a friend was changing schools tomorrow and would now be coming to your school, what would that friend need to know about your school?; (b) if you wanted to change something that goes on in your classroom, what would you do?; (c) if you wanted to change some of the things that you do in your school, what would you do?; and (d) what would make this an even better school? Also interviewed were the principal, teachers, and the Executive Council, or elected governing body. Although responses in the focus groups varied greatly from school to school, Allen identified two major categories from her focus group interviews: relationships within the school community and freedom to choose. Schools and classes within schools varied significantly in the degree to which children were involved in decisions, as well as with respect to the method in which they were involved. In addition, Allen suggested schools that had engaged in shared governance for a longer period of time often involved their students in more decisions than did their counterparts (Allen, 1995).

Glickman (1995) surveyed teachers and administrators of more than 52 schools that had been in the League for more than five years. Moderate to substantial student improvements were reported by 97% of the respondents in the areas of participation in classroom and school-wide decision-making, learning, and attitudes toward learning. Improvements in the areas of faculty participation, learning, and attitudes toward the improvement of teaching and learning were noted by 96% of the respondents. Also, 96% of those surveyed cited improvement in parent participation within their schools as well as parent support for educational innovation (Glickman, 1995).

Calhoun and Allen (1996) summarized the findings of four studies conducted on League schools to determine what was happening during the action research process and what was the effect of action research on students. Of 52 schools involved in the studies, 24 were focusing on student learning or changes in instruction or curricula, whereas the remaining 28 schools focused their attention on varied issues such as aspects of school climate, scheduling, and inclusion of special education students. Schools that selected student learning goals as their area of focus were found to collect data on student learning. However, few schools collected data on a regular basis, and most League schools found the incorporation of action research as the most difficult aspect of the League. Effects of action research on students occurred where schools formed student learning goals, and included increased student participation in decisions and improvements in student achievement (Calhoun & Allen, 1996).

RMC Research Corporation (1999) was contracted by the League to conduct an external, formative evaluation of the League to complement the internal evaluation

processes used by the League which had been previously reviewed. Using a series of questionnaires and focus group interviews, this evaluation summarized the perceptions of students, teachers, counselors, administrators, and paraprofessionals of the impact the League had on the following areas: (a) school climate, focus, and organization; (b) educational beliefs and practices and personal and professional development of staff; (c) quality and outcomes of students' educational experiences; (d) critical issues facing League schools; and (e) what the League was providing that assisted schools in moving forward. The report, which presented the findings of this comprehensive analysis to the League, concluded with several recommendations to the League for improvement (RMC Research Corporation, 1999).

School climate, focus, and organization was assessed using a questionnaire that listed 34 statements of educational practices advocated by the League in the schools' implementation of shared governance, action research, and the school covenant (RMC Research Corporation, 1999). Each of these statements were reported as being true in their schools by 38% of the respondents. The most commonly-used practice advocated by the League was "Selects representatives for leadership positions in the schools following a well-understood, democratic process" (p. 8), whereas the least used educational practice advocated by the League was "Uses multiple, ongoing procedures to monitor the covenant's implementation" (p. 9). A rating of the degree to which League membership contributed to the use of each of the 34 practices within schools on a scale of 1, representing no contribution, to 5, representing great contribution, revealed the League's greatest impact on the use of practices involving shared governance. As for specific

practices, schools reported League membership had the greatest impact on the inclusion of the school's values in the covenant and the least amount of impact on engaging parents and students in conducting action research. Changes in school climate included increased involvement and empowerment of staff, increased communication, increased focus on teaching and learning, and expanded student-focused classrooms using democratic instructional practices. Schools that reported no change in school climate cited the previous use of shared governance before joining with the League, the need to enhance their methods for incorporating shared decision making, and the presence of teachers who believed that all students could not learn. The use of shared governance was generally praised for enhancing school climate, however, a frustration noted in the focus groups was having school decisions blocked or reversed by school boards (RMC Research Corporation, 1999).

Educational beliefs and practices and personal and professional development of staff were positively impacted by involvement in the League with the use of shared governance, "best practices" (p. 17) information provided at League conferences, and action research (RMC Research Corporation, 1999). League activities that impacted beliefs, practices, and adult development were the creation of alternative classroom structures and instructional practices and the use of action research data and the covenant to change instructional practice. Positive changes in adult interaction included increased use of teams, open interaction, focused dialogue, and action-oriented meetings. The creation of alternative classroom structures and instructional practices, the expansion of student input and participation in leadership activities, and the application of increased

focus on specific content areas were cited by participants as League-related activities that directly impacted students and the quality and outcomes of their educational experiences. As for critical issues facing the League, schools requested assistance in the creation and implementation of action research plans that reflected schools' goals and the enhancement of teaching and learning, in the creation of more efficient and effective processes for shared governance, and in the development and revision of their covenants. To help League schools move forward the League was providing guidance and essential practices, professional development and information, technical assistance, and networking opportunities (RMC Research Corporation, 1999).

Finally, the Council for School Performance conducted an independent quantitative examination of the League's effect on student achievement (Harkreader & Henry, 1997). Controlling for socioeconomic status of student populations served by the school and for leadership of schools that may be motivated to conduct school reform, Harkreader and Henry (1997) used 18 indicators of academic performance, including Curriculum Based Assessments (CBA) and the ITBS, to compare League schools with similar non-League schools. Specifically, these indicators included the percentage of third- and fifth-grade students scoring above the national average on the ITBS in Mathematics and Reading as well as the percentage of fifth-grade students scoring in the top quarter of students on the ITBS in Mathematics. Also included in these indicators were the percentages of third- and fifth-grade students meeting the state goals on the CBA in Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, as well as the percentages of third- and fifth-grade students

scoring at or above the state quality standards on the CBA in Mathematics and Science (Harkreader & Henry, 1997).

League schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of students meeting the requirements on 6 out of the 18 academic performance indicators than did non-League schools, and had slightly higher percentages of students meeting the requirements on the remaining 12 indicators than did non-League schools (Harkreader & Henry, 1997). Among schools considered to be High Implementation League schools by the League of Professional Schools, 74% and 55% of third-grade students met the state goal on the CBA for Social Studies and Science, respectively. In comparison, only 57% and 38% of third-grade students from non-League schools met the state goal on the CBA in Social Studies and Science, respectively. Also, 70%, 62%, and 87% of fifth-grade students from High Implementation League schools met the state goal on the CBA in Social Studies, Science, and Reading, respectively; while 52%, 46%, and 79% of fifth-grade students from non-League schools met the state goal on the CBA in these same subjects, respectively (Harkreader & Henry, 1997).

### Summary

School reform was driven by societal, economic, and historical changes. Two centuries of educational change produced many quick fixes, shifts of focus, swings of the pendulum, and lasting innovations, many of which had empirical evidence that supported and refuted them. Most pertinent to this study were the early 20th-century reform proposals of John Dewey, which were based on Jeffersonian ideals of democracy. The ideas of incorporating democracy within schools were adopted, refined, and developed by

recent reform advocates such as Sizer and Glickman. Concepts such as teacher empowerment and related issues such as shared decision making, teacher autonomy, the professionalization of teaching, and changes of leadership roles for administrators and teachers served as building blocks for recent models of reform such as the Coalition of Essential Schools and the League of Professional Schools. Presently, democratic models of school reform and decisions to improve instruction made at the school level compete with ideas to reform education by providing parents with the choice of what schools their children will attend.

The League of Professional Schools was but a microscopic element in the wide issue of school reform. However, the impact the League had on its member schools may be considered large. Evidence provided by the League, doctoral students, and external agencies suggested the League's use of shared governance, an instructional covenant, and action research involved teachers in decisions, developed collegiality in schools, empowered teachers, professionally enhanced teachers, and positively affected student achievement.

### Rationale

Interestingly, the investigation conducted independently of the League by Harkreader and Henry (1997) under the auspices of the Council for School Performance, was the only empirical investigation of academic performance in League schools to date. Perhaps the fact that the purpose of the League of Professional Schools was to prepare students for productive lives in a democratic society rather than to improve levels of student achievement was one reason why more quantitative studies were not conducted on the

topic of academic achievement in League schools by either the League of Professional Schools or by researchers independent of the League. Other reasons for the lack of empirical evidence on student achievement levels in League schools were the difficulties inherent in evaluating this type of reform effort. Harkreader and Henry (1997) expanded upon these difficulties by noting the following:

The problem for the evaluation of reform is that different domains of student learning could be selected in different schools and the impacts on any specific indicator could be relatively small due to it being the focal outcome for only a few schools. Because the expected pattern of results cannot be specified in advance, it is difficult to distinguish this expected pattern of outcomes from those found by fishing (p. 12).

Despite the reasons for the lack of research on academic performance of League schools and the difficulties inherent in such research, the fact remained that there was a dearth of empirical evidence concerning student achievement in League schools. Therefore, this lack of evidence on student achievement in League schools served as the rationale for this study.

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

This quantitative research examined (a) whether or not membership to the League of Professional Schools had an effect on schools' academic achievement, and (b) the effect of League membership on academic achievement over time among those schools that joined the League during the 1996-1997 school year. Achievement data on League and non-League schools were collected from archival sources on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. This test provided the basis for the statistical analysis. Included in this chapter are a discussion of the participants, ethical considerations made during the course of the investigation, instrumentation, and the procedures that were used in the examination. A summary follows an explanation of the research design and methods of data analysis.

#### Participants

Research question 1. A purposive sampling method was used to select the elementary schools employed in this quantitative examination from Georgia's public schools serving elementary-aged students ( $n = 1,166$ ) (Council for School Performance, 1999).

Elementary schools were (a) public schools in the state of Georgia listed by the Council for School Performance in one of 13 clusters designated as Elementary School Clusters (Council for School Performance, 1999), and (b) elementary schools containing both Grades 3 and 5, as determined from the Georgia Public Education Directory (Georgia Department of Education, 2000a). From the list of 1,166 elementary schools clustered by

the Council for School Performance, schools were classified as League schools ( $n = 63$ ), Former League schools ( $n = 36$ ), and non-League schools ( $n = 1,067$ ).

League schools were elementary schools currently participating in the League of Professional Schools as of the 1999-2000 school year, excluding the one school that joined the League during the 1999-2000 school year. Former League schools were schools that at one time belonged to the League but terminated their membership during or prior to the 1999-2000 school year. Schools categorized as Former League schools were excluded from this study because many of these schools belonged to the League for several years and their League membership may have had a lasting effect on the academic achievement of these schools as measured in 1999-2000. Schools that belonged to the League but departed during the 2000-2001 school year ( $n = 16$ ) were considered a League school during this investigation because these schools belonged to the League when the measurement for academic achievement incorporated in this study occurred. Non-League schools were elementary schools that at no time belonged to the League of Professional Schools. The single Georgia school that joined the League during the 1999-2000 school year was eliminated from this examination because of the assumed negligible effects of the League on student achievement after such a short time of involvement with the League. Also, schools joining the League during the 2000-2001 school year ( $n = 3$ ) were considered non-League schools because these schools joined the League after the 1999-2000 school year, the time of the measurement for academic achievement (see Table 1).

After classifying Georgia's 1,166 elementary schools as League, Former League, or non-League schools and eliminating the Former League schools, schools not containing both Grades 3 and 5 were identified and excluded from this study. This delimitation was included as part of the purposive sampling method to ensure uniformity and manageability of data, as well as to facilitate the clear interpretation of the results of this examination. Of the 63 League schools and 1,067 non-League schools identified from the Council for School Performance list of 1,166 Georgia public elementary schools, 4 League schools and 117 non-League schools were excluded from the study by this delimitation. An additional 24 schools were excluded from the study by the delimitation of not including schools that did not post data on the Georgia Public Education Report Card (Georgia Department of Education, 2000b). Therefore, this investigation compared the achievement of 58 League schools to 926 non-League schools (see Table 1). Also, one League school, Lamar County Primary, was not clustered by the Council for School Performance. Therefore, this particular school was not included in the study or as part of the original 1,166 schools.

To facilitate meaningful comparisons of Georgia schools and districts, further classification of League and non-League schools included the 13 cluster groupings to which each elementary school was assigned by the Council of School Performance (1999). Clustering procedures were described by the Council for School Performance as follows:

1. Schools and systems were grouped according to grade level and enrollment. Elementary schools were generally grouped by Grades Pre-K-5.

2. Schools were assigned to one of 13 clusters. The Council for School Performance defined a cluster as a group of schools or school systems with similar demographic characteristics. These demographic factors had a strong impact on student performance and comprised the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced priced lunches, the principal's estimate of the students' socioeconomic status (SES), and the percentage of White students in the school (Council for School Performance, 1999).

3. Clusters were combined into the following three broad categories according to socioeconomic criteria: High to Middle SES schools, Middle SES schools, and Low SES schools.

Elementary school cluster assignments remained stable from year to year. The Council for School Performance reported in their clustering from 1998-1999 most of the schools from the previous year were in the same clusters, with new schools and the few schools with significant changes in student population characteristics being assigned to new clusters that better matched their population. Even with these limited changes, from 1997-1998 to 1998-1999, the possibility of a school moving out of the broader categories of High to Middle SES schools, Middle SES schools, and Low SES schools to which they were previously assigned remained remote. This investigation incorporated these three broad categories to facilitate meaningful comparisons between League and non-League schools. In 1998-1999, the last year the Council for School Performance clustered schools, elementary school clusters were described as follows:

1. High to Middle SES elementary schools were composed of schools from Clusters 1, 2, and 3 ( $n = 264$ ). Cluster 1 contained the highest number of students coming from

that joined the League in 1999-2000, Middle SES schools included 18 League schools and 371 non-League schools (see Table 1).

3. Low SES elementary schools were composed of schools from Clusters 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 ( $n = 439$ ). Average percentage of students from low SES homes ranged from a high of 65% among Cluster 13 schools to a low of 43% among Cluster 10 schools. Percentage of students from middle SES homes, on average, ranged from a high of 37% among Cluster 10 schools to a low of 25% among Cluster 13 schools. Student eligibility for free or reduced lunch ranged from an average of 70% in Cluster 10 to an average of 92% in Cluster 13. Average percentage of White students ranged from 49% in Cluster 10 to 3% in Cluster 13. Whereas the majority of schools from Clusters 9, 10, and 11 were located in primarily rural counties, the majority of schools from Clusters 12 and 13 were located in heavily populated urban or suburban areas. Declining to consider Former League schools, schools that did not house both Grades 3 and 5, and schools that did not post data, Low SES schools consisted of 17 League schools and 342 non-League schools (see Table 1).

Table 1

Number of Participants by League Status and Cluster Grouping

League Status	Cluster Group			Total
	1-3 ( <u>n</u> )	4-8 ( <u>n</u> )	9-13 ( <u>n</u> )	
League				
Included in Study	23	18	17	58
* Not Housing Grades 3 and 5	1	1	2	4
*Not Posting Data	1	0	0	1
*Joining League in 1999-2000	0	1	0	1
Non-League				
Included in Study	213	371	342	926
* Not Housing Grades 3 and 5	12	45	60	117
*Not Posting Data	3	13	7	23
* Former League	11	14	11	36
Total	264	463	439	1,166

\* Denotes schools excluded from the study.

Note. The total n = 1,166 included all schools designated as elementary schools by the Council for School Performance (1999).

Research question 2. A purposive sampling method was employed to select the schools used in this section of the study. To determine the effect of League membership

over time, Georgia elementary schools joining the League of Professional Schools in the 1996-1997 school year were examined. Schools were selected from this school year because in 1996-1997, a particularly large number of Georgia elementary schools joined the League ( $n = 13$ ). However, only 12 of these schools were included in this section of the study because a single school did not post data on the Georgia Public Education Report Card (Georgia Department of Education, 2000b). To preserve the anonymity of these schools, only findings from the entire group were reported.

#### Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting this investigation, a proposal was presented to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Valdosta State University. Upon IRB approval of the proposal, archival data were collected from the Georgia Public Education Report Card (Georgia Department of Education, 2000b). No schools were identified during the study, as only group information was summarized.

#### Instrumentation

The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) was used to measure student achievement because this test has produced scores that had large reliability and validity coefficients, and the ITBS has been used as an accurate measure of student achievement in numerous studies (Frisbie & Cantor, 1995; Qualls & Ansley, 1995; Williams & Montgomery, 1995). In terms of purpose, the ITBS was designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of student progress in the basic skills (Impara & Plake, 1998). Additionally, the Riverside Publishing Company (1997) cited the following appropriate purposes for which the batteries were designed to serve:

1. Helping teachers determine the extent to which their students have the knowledge necessary to successfully deal with the academic aspects of the instructional program;
2. Providing information to parents that allows for the home and school to work cooperatively in the student's best interest;
3. Estimating the developmental level of students to assist teachers in the adaptation of materials and instruction to meet individual needs;
4. Identifying areas of least and greatest student development to assist teachers in planning instructional goals and strategies;
5. Providing achievement information to monitor year-to-year developmental changes and to make programming decisions to accommodate individual differences;
6. Identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses in class performance to identify areas of curriculum change and changes in instructional strategies.

Available in Levels 5 through 14, which correspond roughly to the age of the students taking the tests, and Forms K, L, and M, Riverside Publishing (2000) designed the test to be used in Grades K through 8. The Core Battery was composed of sections for Listening (Levels 5-8 only), Word Analysis (Levels 5-8 only), Vocabulary, Reading, Language, and Mathematics. Beginning with Level 7, the Complete Battery also included Social Studies, Science, and Sources of Information. The Survey Battery was a Reading, Language, and Mathematics battery using subset items from the Core Battery to produce an assessment of basic skills using a minimal amount of testing time. Students were given a limited amount of time, which varied by Level and by subtests, in which to answer questions arranged in a multiple-choice format. Local schools generally administer the

ITBS in the Spring of each year. Riverside scores the tests and sends these results back to local districts for interpretation. In regards to reliability, most alpha coefficients for subtests have been found to be in the .80s and .90s across Forms K, L, and M. In general, for Levels 5-8, lower score reliabilities have been reported by researchers than for higher levels. Core Total and Composite reliabilities were all above .90 (Impara & Plake, 1998).

Riverside summarized evidence for content-related, criterion-related, and construct-related validity of ITBS scores by studying the nature of the basic skills construct, investigating subtest intercorrelations and correlations with the Cognitive Abilities Test, and equating studies related to score meaning (Impara & Plake, 1998). Gay and Airasian (2000) defined content validity as "the degree to which a test measures an intended content area" (p. 163). Consisting of both item validity, or the relevancy of test items to the measurement of intended content area, and sampling validity, or the degree to which the test samples the total content area, "content validity is of particular importance to achievement tests" (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p. 163). Gay and Airasian (2000) expanded upon the importance of content validity to achievement tests by stating, "a test score cannot accurately reflect a student's achievement if it does not measure what the student was taught and was supposed to learn" (p. 163). In determining the grade placement of and the emphasis given to particular skills in the ITBS, the Riverside Publishing Company (1997) considered a variety of current instructional materials, including textbooks. Riverside consulted subject matter standards, such as those published by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the International Reading Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English, to determine content to be included in the

ITBS and the emphasis to be placed on that content. Also, work by national curriculum groups on methods, content, and assessment was closely examined by Riverside in the areas of mathematics, social studies, the arts, geography, science, English, history, and civics. Cultural fairness and appropriateness of the materials and test questions were established by reviews of the test items by educators representing diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Results from word frequency studies in selected subject areas, studies of error frequencies, and tryouts of questions with age-appropriate students were investigated by Riverside in determining test content. Finally, the Riverside Publishing Company (1997) considered suggestions, criticisms, and questions to create a test that would produce item and sample valid scores.

Criterion-related validity, composed of both concurrent validity and predictive validity, involved correlating a test with a second test or measure (Gay & Airasian, 2000). The second test served as the criterion to which the validity of the first test was judged. Concurrent and predictive validity differed in that the former was the degree to which scores of the first and second test correlated when the tests were taken at about the same time. The latter referred to the degree of correlation between the two tests when they were taken at different times. Often, test designers and researchers used predictive validity to prognosticate how well individuals would perform in future situations (Gay & Airasian, 2000). The Riverside Publishing Company (1997) reported moderate to high correlation coefficients between Developmental Standard Scores of the various levels and subscales of the ITBS and Standard Age Scores of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). Also, Riverside cited several predictive validity studies that reported moderate to high

correlation coefficients with criterion such as high school grade-point average, American College Tests scores, first year college grade-point average, and final college grade-point average (The Riverside Publishing Company, 1997).

Gay and Airasian (2000) referred to construct validity as "the most important form of validity because it asks the fundamental question: What is this test really measuring?" (p. 167). Researchers and test developers often determined construct validity by analyzing convergent, divergent, and content-related evidence to ascertain whether or not the presumed construct was what was actually being measured by the test (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Riverside cited several studies which verified the construct validity of ITBS scores (The Riverside Publishing Company, 1997). Many of these investigations involved vertical equating. Other construct-related issues examined in these inquiries included the following: the use of out-of-grade tests with developmentally disabled and accelerated readers; discrepancies between scores of inappropriately and appropriately placed students; floor effects; standard errors by score level; analytic scoring of direct assessments; and the content and sequence effects of customizing, or changing, standardized tests (The Riverside Publishing Company, 1997).

Research question 1. To answer the first research question, this investigation employed the 1999-2000 ITBS scores from Grades 3 and 5 because it was the most recent set of ITBS scores available. Scores for the schools selected in the purposive sample were obtained from the Georgia Public Education Report Card (Georgia Department of Education, 2000b). These scores were reported as National Percentile Rankings (NPR) and included Reading Comprehension, Reading Vocabulary,

Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Sources of Information subscale scores, and a Composite score. This Composite NPR score was calculated by averaging the standard scores of the following subtests: Reading Total, Mathematics Total, Language Total, Social Studies, Science, and Sources of Information (Impara & Plake, 1998). The Composite standard score was then converted to the Composite NPR, which was reported on the Georgia Public Education Report Card. Only the Composite scores reported on the Georgia Public Education Report Card were included in this portion of the examination for both Grades 3 and 5 of the schools selected for this study.

Research question 2. The ITBS was used to determine the effect of League membership on academic achievement over time. Schools joining the League during the 1996-1997 school year were chosen to address this question because this school year included a large number of schools new to the League. Therefore, the 1995-1996 ITBS scores of these schools were used to gage the academic performance during the year prior to the year these schools joined the League. However, in the 1995-1996 school year, the State of Georgia did not require schools to take the full battery of tests included with the ITBS. Therefore, only Reading Comprehension and Mathematics scores were reported on the Georgia Public Education Report Card (Georgia Department of Education, 2000b) as NPR scores from the 1995-1996 school year. Both of these subtests from Grades 3 and 5 were used in this study as a baseline measurement of academic achievement prior to joining the League for schools joining the League during the 1996-1997 school year. Reading Comprehension and Mathematics ITBS scores from these same schools for the subsequent years also were used in this examination to determine if there were any trends

taken, whereas the dependent variable was academic achievement, as measured by ITBS Reading Comprehension and Mathematics scores.

### Analysis of Data

Research question 1. A 2 (League status) X 3 (cluster group) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to measure the effect of League status on students' scores on the ITBS to determine if membership to the League of Professional Schools had an effect on academic achievement. Level of significance for the study was set at .05. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS] (1999), a post-hoc Scheffé test was utilized if any ANOVAs yielded significant  $F$  values. Additionally, effect sizes were reported as small, medium, and large for any significant  $F$ s (Cohen, 1988; Huck, 2000).

Research question 2. The researcher conducted two sets of repeated measures ANOVAs, one for each subscale (i.e., Reading Comprehension and Math), to determine the effect of League membership over time. Level of significance for the study was set at .05. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS] (1999), a post-hoc Scheffé test was utilized if any ANOVAs yielded significant  $F$  values. Additionally, effect sizes were reported as small, medium, and large for any significant  $F$ s (Cohen, 1988; Huck, 2000).

### Summary

This chapter explained how this inquiry accomplished the purpose of the study and answered the research questions. Participants and measures of academic achievement also were divulged. Finally, procedures for the collection and analysis of data were discussed.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

This chapter begins with a discussion of the findings from the first and second research questions. Tables are referenced as an aid to understanding the results. A summary concludes this chapter.

#### Research Question 1

A 2 (League status) X 3 (cluster group) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to measure the effect of League status on third-grade students' Composite scores on the ITBS to determine if League of Professional Schools had statistically significantly higher levels of overall academic performance than did non-League schools. Initially, measures of skewness and kurtosis pertaining to ITBS Composite scores were calculated to determine the appropriateness of this statistical method. Specifically, standardized skewness coefficients were computed by dividing the skewness coefficient by its standard error. Additionally, standardized kurtosis coefficients were calculated by dividing the kurtosis coefficients by its standard error. These two standardized values subsequently were deemed to indicate non-normality if they were larger than 3 in absolute value (Onwuegbuzie & Daniels, in press). Although the standardized kurtosis value of -.21 was within acceptable limits, the standardized skewness value of 3.06 was slightly above normal limits. Therefore, with the assumptions of normality inherent in

this statistical technique not having been fully met, these results should be interpreted with caution.

As expected, a statistically significant difference was present,  $F(2, 978) = 123.94, p < .001$ , in Composite scores as a function of cluster level. A Scheffe' post-hoc analysis revealed that high-to-middle clustered schools ( $M = 62.91, SD = 6.62$ ) statistically significantly outperformed the middle clustered schools ( $M = 53.77, SD = 6.04$ ) and the low clustered schools ( $M = 47.04, SD = 6.82$ ). Also, middle clustered schools had statistically significantly higher scores than did the low clustered schools. The main effect of cluster level yielded an effect size of .50, which was a large effect size (Cohen, 1988).

No significant difference between League and non-League schools on third-grade ITBS Composite scores was found,  $F(1, 978) = .16, p > .05$ . Also, no interaction between League status and cluster level prevailed,  $F(2, 978) = 1.61, p > .05$ . Means and standard deviations of third-grade ITBS Composite scores broken down by each independent variable are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations on the Third-Grade ITBS as a Function of League Status and Cluster Level

Cluster	League		Non-League	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
High-Middle	63.37	5.88	62.86	6.70
Middle	55.95	7.65	53.66	5.94
Low	45.39	6.62	47.12	6.83

A 2 (League status) X 3 (cluster group) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to measure the effect of League status on fifth-grade students' Composite scores on the ITBS to determine if League of Professional Schools had statistically significantly higher levels of overall academic performance than did non-League schools. The standardized skewness value of 1.19 and the standardized kurtosis value of -.42 were within acceptable limits. Therefore, the assumptions of normality, inherent in this statistical technique, appear to have been met.

Again, as with the third-grade students, a statistically significant difference was present,  $F(2, 978) = 114.73, p < .001$ , in Composite scores as a function of cluster level. A Scheffe' post-hoc analysis revealed that high-to-middle clustered schools statistically significantly outperformed ( $M = 62.17, SD = 5.77$ ) the middle clustered schools ( $M = 53.37, SD = 5.12$ ) and the low clustered schools ( $M = 47.31, SD = 6.54$ ). Also, middle

clustered schools had statistically significantly higher scores than did the low clustered schools. The main effect of cluster level yielded an effect size of .48, which was a large effect size (Cohen, 1988).

No significant difference between League and non-League schools on fifth-grade ITBS Composite scores emerged,  $F(1, 978) = .97, p > .05$ . Also, no interaction between League status and cluster level was found,  $F(2, 978) = .39, p > .05$ . Means and standard deviations of fifth-grade ITBS Composite scores broken down by each independent variable are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations on the Fifth-Grade ITBS as a Function of League Status and Cluster Level

Cluster	League		Non-League	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
High-Middle	62.70	4.88	62.11	5.87
Middle	53.38	5.20	53.37	5.12
Low	48.98	7.78	47.22	6.48

Research Question 2

Repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted for third-grade Reading Comprehension, third-grade Mathematics Total, fifth-grade Reading Comprehension, and fifth-grade Mathematics Total ITBS scores for the 12 League schools during the 1995-

1996-1997 school year reported yearly gains in Reading Comprehension from the year before these schools joined the League, 1995-1996, through the 1998-1999 school year. Scores from the 1999-2000 school year, however, fell below the 1997-1998 levels. The mean difference yielded an effect size of 1.9, which was a very large effect size (Cohen, 1988). Further, a paired samples  $t$ -test was conducted to determine the degree of achievement gained between the 1995-1996 school year and the 1999-2000 school year. A strong relationship was present between the scores,  $r(12) = .89$ ,  $p < .001$ , and the scores had 79.57% of the variance in common. The outcome of the  $t$ -test,  $t(11) = -2.55$ , was statistically significant at the .05 level. An effect size of .35 was calculated by dividing the mean difference by the pooled standard deviation of the scores from the 1995-1996 and 1999-2000 school years (Huck, 2000). Using Cohen's (1998) criteria this value represented a small-to-moderate effect size. Finally, League schools joining the League during the 1996-1997 school year reported higher third-grade mean Reading Comprehension scores than the corresponding state average for this academic year. Table 5 contains mean scores pertaining to the League, as well as the state average, across the five years of study.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of League Third-Grade Reading Comprehension ITBS Scores and Means of State Third-Grade Reading Comprehension ITBS Scores

Year	League Third-Grade Reading Comprehension		State Third-Grade Reading Comprehension
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>
1995-1996	51.83	8.55	51.00
1996-1997	53.75	7.94	52.00
1997-1998	54.80	7.51	53.00
1998-1999	55.32	7.88	54.00
1999-2000	54.68	7.75	54.00

Third-grade mathematics. No significant difference was present,  $F(4, 8) = 1.60, p > .05$ , in League third-grade Mathematics Total ITBS scores from the 1995 to 2000 school years. As with the third-grade League Reading Comprehension scores, although not statistically significantly different, League Mathematics Total mean scores revealed slight yearly gains from the year before these 12 schools joined the League, 1995-1996, through the 1998-1999 school year. The mean score from the 1999-2000 school year dropped slightly from that of the 1998-1999 school year. Unlike the League Reading Comprehension scores, however, League Mathematics Total scores from the 12 schools that joined the League during the 1996-1997 school year fell below the state average.

Table 6 presents the League third-grade Mathematics Total means and standard deviations compared to the State of Georgia's means for this same grade and subscale.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of League Third-Grade Mathematics Total ITBS Scores and Means of State Third-Grade Mathematics Total ITBS Scores

Year	League Third-Grade Mathematics Total		State Third-Grade Mathematics Total
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>
1995-1996	52.75	5.88	59.00
1996-1997	53.08	6.29	59.00
1997-1998	53.15	6.63	61.00
1998-1999	54.02	6.10	61.00
1999-2000	54.01	5.69	62.00

Fifth-grade reading comprehension. A repeated measures ANOVA revealed no significant difference,  $F(4, 8) = 1.60, p > .05$ , between League fifth-grade Reading Comprehension scores from the 1995 to 2000 school years. As with the third-grade League Reading Comprehension scores and third-grade League Math Total mean scores, although not representing a statistically significant difference, League fifth-grade Reading Comprehension scores revealed slight yearly gains from the year before these 12 schools joined the League, 1995-1996, through the 1998-1999 school year. The mean score from the 1999-2000 school year dropped slightly from that of the 1998-1999 school

year. When compared to the state average for fifth-grade Reading Comprehension, League schools joining during the 1996-1997 school year fared slightly better in every year included in this study except the 1995-1996 school year, the year before these schools joined the League. Table 7 presents the League fifth-grade Reading Comprehension means and standard deviations, as well as Georgia's means from this same grade and subscale.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of League Fifth-Grade Reading Comprehension ITBS Scores and Means of State Fifth-Grade Reading Comprehension ITBS Scores

Year	League Fifth-Grade Reading Comprehension		State Fifth-Grade Reading Comprehension
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>
1995-1996	52.75	5.88	53.00
1996-1997	53.08	6.29	52.00
1997-1998	55.15	6.63	53.00
1998-1999	54.02	6.10	53.00
1999-2000	54.01	5.69	53.00

Fifth-grade mathematics. No significant difference was present,  $F(4, 8) = 1.98, p > .05$ , in League fifth-grade Mathematics Total ITBS scores from the 1995 to 2000 school years. Although not representing a statistically significant difference, League fifth-grade

scores on the ITBS and to determine if membership to the League of Professional Schools had an effect on academic achievement. No significant difference was found between League and non-League Composite ITBS scores from the 1999-2000 school year in the third and fifth grades. Also, repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted on third- and fifth-grade Reading Comprehension and Mathematics Total ITBS scores from the 1995 to 2000 academic years of League schools joining the League of Professional Schools during the 1996-1997 school year. A statistically significant improvement was found in third-grade Reading Comprehension scores from the 1995-1996 to the 1999-2000 school years of League schools. However, no significance was found in third-grade Mathematics Total scores or fifth-grade Reading Comprehension and Mathematics Total scores. A general trend of yearly improvement was noted among League schools from mean scores in third- and fifth-grade Reading Comprehension and Mathematics Total scores. When compared to Georgia's means for these same subscales and school years, these League schools had higher mean scores than the state in third- and fifth-grade Reading Comprehension, but not in the Mathematics Total subscale.

## Chapter 5

### OVERVIEW, SUMMARY, COMPARISONS OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter contains an overview of the study, a summary of the major findings, and comparisons with previous research. Implications of the findings for both future research and practice are discussed. In the final section, conclusions are presented.

#### Overview of the Study

The origin of U. S. school reform, or efforts within this country to produce a more perfect educational system, can be traced to the very beginning of the system itself; a time when elite White males from 13 separate British colonies were served with a classical European curriculum (Parker & Parker, 1995). A rapidly changing society emboldened by a revolutionary zeal and impassioned by democratic ideals such as liberty, republic, and the individual rights of man, soon demanded a change to this original system of education. From that original point of change to the current system of education prevalent in the U. S. today, the presence of school reform has been one of the very few constants in U. S. education.

Broad and sweeping assessments of the national educational system were soon to join these other forces, a society in constant flux and nationally significant historical events such as the American Revolution and the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite, further to drive reform efforts. Among the most recent of these assessments were A Nation at Risk

and A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983). These reports cited declining Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, large public illiteracy rates, and low U. S. standings in international student achievement comparisons to warn the U. S. system of education would continue to falter until schools were restructured in a manner that would grant teachers more autonomy and professionalism. Results from educational research conducted on a scale smaller than that of the national level supported these conclusions (Elmore, 1987).

The League of Professional Schools, one of several models from the most recent generation of school change spawned from the previously mentioned forces that have driven educational reform, was a model of comprehensive school reform, or a model to restructure a school so every aspect of the school was affected. As a comprehensive reform model, the League possessed several unique characteristics, when viewed as a whole, distinguished the League from all other reform models, both past and present. The first of these characteristics stemmed from Glickman's (1993) view on the purpose of education, an opinion that stands in accordance with the views of Thomas Jefferson and later, John Dewey. Glickman developed his initial public school and university collaboration that later blossomed into the League of Professional Schools based on the assumption that the purpose of education was to prepare children to be productive and functioning members of a democratic society. Therefore, League schools, in varying ways and to differing degrees, modeled the processes of any democratic institution by involving, or empowering, those most involved in the process of educating students, or

teachers, in decisions affecting curriculum and instruction. According to Glickman, the act of providing a democratic framework within the school and among the teachers would filter down directly to the students, who would, in turn, become prepared for life in a democracy by receiving their education from institutions practicing democracy. The League itself operated within a democratic framework including representatives from various member schools to serve on a governing council that made decisions concerning League events and services. Also, empowering teachers in this manner answered the call of reports such as A Nation at Risk and A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century that solicited restructuring efforts driven by teachers to increase teacher autonomy, as well as teacher professionalism (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983).

Another characteristic contributing to the overall uniqueness of the League as a reform model was the use by League schools of the school renewal process known as action research. By examining data created by the school, such as attendance data (teacher and student), discipline referrals, test scores, parental involvement statistics, report card grades, failure reports, Student Support Team referrals, and so forth, empowered teachers became further empowered to make sound decisions on curricular and instructional issues. Additionally, the use of action research in League schools allowed teachers not only to decide which curricular and instructional issues warranted their attention but also to establish baseline data against which the progress of teacher-led initiatives and innovations in curricular and instructional areas could be gauged.

schools chose to use block scheduling, whole language education, mastery learning, ability grouping, or any of the countless curricular and instructional programs, innovations, and models that have emerged from the broad tapestry of school reform.

This investigation, the second strictly empirical study conducted on the League of Professional Schools, employed a two-fold approach to investigate student achievement in League schools. League schools examined in this investigation, to varying degrees, received the services provided by the PSI and the League and implemented the League's three-part framework. First, a purposive sampling method was used to select the 58 League schools and the 926 non-League schools analyzed in this examination. These schools represented all public elementary schools in Georgia containing both Grades 3 and 5 that were listed by the Council for School Performance (1999) in 1 of 13 Elementary School Clusters. Additionally, schools included in this study reported ITBS Composite scores for both grades from the 1999-2000 test on the Georgia Public Education Report Card (Georgia Department of Education, 2000b). Council for School Performance (1999) cluster-group classifications for League and non-League schools were used to control for SES. Descriptive statistics were calculated, including means, standard deviations, and percentages (see Tables 2 and 3). A 2 (League status) X 3 (cluster group) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted following computation of standardized skewness and kurtosis coefficients pertaining to Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) Composite scores to determine the appropriateness of this statistical method. Level of significance for the ANOVA was set at .05.

The second component of the two-fold approach used to investigate achievement in League schools focused on the rise and/or fall of third- and fifth-grade Mathematics Total and Reading Comprehension ITBS scores of 12 League schools over a 5-year time period. As with the first component of this investigation, a purposive sampling method was used to select the elementary schools examined in this section of the study. Of the 12 schools chosen in this part of the investigation, all schools joined the League in the 1996-1997 school year, contained both Grades 3 and 5, and reported Mathematics Total and Reading Comprehension ITBS scores on the Georgia Public Education Report Card for the following school years: 1995-1996, 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1998-1999, and 1999-2000 (Georgia Department of Education, 2000b). Descriptive statistics were calculated, including means and standard deviations (see Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8). Standardized skewness and kurtosis coefficients pertaining to Mathematics Total and Reading Comprehension ITBS scores were computed to determine the appropriateness of the statistical method chosen for this section of the study (see Table 4). Upon completing the measurement of standardized skewness and kurtosis coefficients, two sets (i.e., one for each set of subscale scores) of repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted with an alpha level set at .05. Effect sizes were calculated and a follow-up paired samples *t*-test was conducted for any ANOVA that yielded a statistically significant *F* value. Additionally, means of achievement levels from both grade levels, subscales, and each school year of the 12 League schools were compared to those of the state average. Data in the form of state mean scores also were retrieved from the Georgia Public Education Report Card (Georgia Department of Education, 2000b).

### Summary of Findings

The major finding of this study was, among Grades 3 and 5 ITBS Composite scores, no statistically significant difference emerged between League schools and non-League schools. However, although not statistically significantly different, League schools exhibited slightly higher mean ITBS Composite scores than did their non-League counterparts in 2 of the 3 levels of the independent variable (i.e., cluster level) for third-grade and in all 3 levels of the independent variable for fifth-grade. In fact, only third-grade non-League schools from the Low SES comparison cluster posted higher mean scores than their League counterparts. Specifically, League High to Middle and Middle SES schools had slightly higher third-grade ITBS Composite scores than did their non-League counterparts, whereas fifth-grade mean scores from League schools were slightly higher than their non-League counterparts among High to Middle, Middle, and Low SES schools (see Tables 2 and 3).

Another important result from this investigation was the statistically significant improvement of the 12 League schools selected for the second portion of the investigation in the area of third-grade Reading Comprehension from the year before these schools joined the League (i.e., 1995-1996) to the 1999-2000 school year. Grade 3 mean scores of these League schools from the Reading Comprehension subscale increased steadily until the 1999-2000 school year, where these scores fell to slightly below the 1997-1998 level (see Table 5). Additionally, mean differences for scores from these school years yielded a very large effect size, suggesting a significant trend (Cohen, 1988). Also, a statistically significant paired samples *t*-test conducted to determine the

degree of achievement in third-grade Reading Comprehension gained between the 1995-1996 and 1999-2000 school years revealed a large difference in favor of the latter academic year, with a small-to-moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988).

Also of importance, no statistically significant improvements were found among League schools in third-grade Mathematics, fifth-grade Reading Comprehension, and fifth-grade Mathematics scores from the 1995-1996 to 1999-2000 school years. However, League schools slightly improved each year except the 1999-2000 school year in the area of third-grade Mathematics (see Table 6). Fifth-grade Reading Comprehension scores slightly increased each year from 1995-1996 to 1997-1998, but fell in 1998-1999, and dropped slightly again in 1999-2000 (see Table 7). With respect to fifth-grade Mathematics, League schools experienced mean gains in every year included in the investigation (see Table 8).

Comparisons between League third- and fifth-grade mean Reading Comprehension and Mathematics scores and state mean scores from the 1995-1996 through 1999-2000 school years revealed additional important findings. League schools outscored the state mean in third-grade Reading Comprehension scores in every year included in this examination (see Table 5). Among fifth-grade Reading Comprehension scores, League schools outperformed the state mean in every year except the 1995-1996 school year, the year before these schools joined the League (see Table 7). However, League mean third- and fifth-grade Mathematics scores of schools joining the League during the 1996-1997 school year fell below the state mean Mathematics scores for these two grade levels in every year included in this investigation (see Tables 6 and 8).

### Implications of the Findings

The present findings provide implications at the national, state, and local levels. As a nationally accepted model of comprehensive school reform, the statistically non-significant findings of higher third- and fifth-grade mean ITBS composite scores exhibited by League schools over their non-League counterparts may suggest the limited success of such comprehensive reform efforts. Therefore, schools across the country may need to consider whether or not to implement the premises espoused by the League of Professional Schools. Likewise, more schools within the State of Georgia and locally, from within the Valdosta State University service area, may need to give the idea of joining the League of Professional Schools consideration.

### Limitations of the Study

Threats to internal validity. The findings presented in this study should be viewed with extreme caution due to the threats to internal and external validity that prevailed. Most of the threats to internal validity that existed in this study occurred during the data collection stage of the investigation (Onwuegbuzie, in press). Among these threats were implementation bias, observational bias, multiple treatment interference, and time by treatment interaction. Implementation bias occurred because the League's premises likely were not implemented to the same extent and to the same degree in each League school included in this examination (Onwuegbuzie, in press). Observational bias occurred within the second component of the investigation because the small number of League schools included in this portion of the investigation created an insufficient sampling of the behavior of interest. Multiple treatment interference was pervasive throughout the data

collection stage due to the fact that League schools chose their own path to reform and, therefore, used a wide array of techniques to address a plethora of objectives. Time by treatment interaction occurred as a threat to internal validity because schools in the treatment group implemented the premises of the League for differing numbers of years. A further threat to internal validity, causal error, occurred during the data interpretation stage of the study. Causal error occurred from the inability to control carefully the independent variable in a school setting (Onwuegbuzie, in press).

Several additional threats to internal validity possibly occurred in the data collection stage of the study (Onwuegbuzie, in press). These possible threats included history, testing, differential selection of participants, and selection interaction effects by history. Other threats that may have threatened the internal validity of this investigation at the data collection stage included treatment replication error, evaluation anxiety, history by treatment interaction, and treatment diffusion. Certain reactive arrangements such as the Hawthorne effect, compensatory rivalry, resentful demoralization, and the novelty effect also may have occurred during the data collection stage and, therefore, could have possibly threatened the internal validity of this examination (Onwuegbuzie, in press).

Further possible threats to internal validity may have occurred at the data analysis and data interpretation stage of this study (Onwuegbuzie, in press). At the data analysis stage, a threat may have occurred from violated assumptions of normality inherent in the statistical procedure chosen for this investigation. However, it must be noted this threat was very remote because only a single standardized skewness value, that value pertaining to third-grade ITBS Composite scores, was slightly above the acceptable limits for

### Implications for Future Research

As revealed from the review of literature conducted in this investigation, there is a clear need for more empirical investigations to be conducted on achievement in League schools. Several considerations should be made in the design of future research studies. Among these considerations should be the use of additional measures of academic achievement. Georgia's recent replacement of the ITBS with the Stanford-9 Achievement Test (SAT-9) would suggest the comparison of achievement between League and non-League schools on the SAT-9 would merit investigation. Comparisons also could be made between these groups' performances on Georgia's newly implemented Criterion Reference and Competency Tests.

Additionally, longitudinal analyses of academic performance of League schools should involve more League schools, League schools from other geographic regions, and more academic areas. By expanding the scope of future investigations to include schools from other Leagues, the degree to which the League's premises are implemented (i.e. low, medium, and high) could be controlled without excessive limitations to the sample size. Finally, a mixed methodological approach may be useful in categorizing the areas and methods different League schools are applying their focus before their progress is compared to a control group. In other words, school-wide action plans could be used to separate League schools into different categories according to the areas where these schools are concentrating their shared efforts. A comparison of these League schools' progress in these areas to the progress of schools not using the League's premises in these

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**APPENDIX A: Institutional Review Board**

**Approval Form**

**Institutional Review for Human Subjects Research**  
 Office of Grants and Contracts, Valdosta State University  
 Research Qualifying for Exemption from Federal Regulations  
 for the Protection of Human Subjects  
 (Based on the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46.101.  
 and the Valdosta State University Policy on Human Subjects)



University procedures provide for review of research involving human subjects that may be exempt under federal, state, and university regulations. The exempt categories and exceptions are described on the reverse of this form. Exempt research may be approved by the IRB Administrator provided it is in accord with the Code of Federal Regulations and the general principles stated in the VSU Policy on Human Subjects. This form, properly endorsed, certifies that the research described here qualifies for exemption.

Principal Investigator Dan Altman Academic Title Student  
 Department/College Educational Leadership/Education Telephone 229-247-4466  
 Project Title Georgia's League of Professional Schools: An Examination of Student Performance on Standardized Measures  
 E-mail daltman@surfsouth.com  
 Starting Date May 4, 2001 Anticipated Termination Date May 3, 2002  
 If PI is a student, provide Faculty sponsor/mentor's name Dr. Martha Livingston, Educational Leadership  
 Grant (if sponsored) Title (if applicable) N/A  
 Funding Agency and application due date (if applicable) N/A

I. The category under which this research qualifies for exemption (categories are described on page 2) is circled:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

II. ABSTRACT: Brief description of a) purpose of the research, b) what subjects will do (if applicable), c) the nature of the data to be obtained, and d) how anonymity or confidentiality will be maintained. Additional sheet may be attached. Note: This section is obtained directly from the Application for Review completed by the PI.

This research will examine the achievement of Georgia elementary schools belonging to the League of Professional Schools. The subjects involved in the study will include all elementary schools in Georgia, both League and non-League, containing both Grades 3 and 5. The study will use archival data only.

III. Human Subjects (to be considered 'exempt' all of these responses must be answered "NO"):	YES	NO
Are any subjects presumed to be not legally competent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are any subjects under 18 years of age?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are any subjects confined in a correctional or detention facility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is pregnancy a prerequisite for serving as a subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are fetuses <i>in utero</i> subjects in this research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are personal records (medical, academic, etc.) used without written consent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are data from subjects (responses, information, specimens) directly or indirectly identifiable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are data damaging to subjects' financial standing, employability or reputation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is material obtained at autopsy used in the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

IV. The information provided above is based on the material provided in the Application for Review of Research presented to the Institutional Review Board of Valdosta State University dated (month, day and year) 05/02/01. Based on this application, this research is certified as exempt from federal regulations and is in accord with the general principles stated in the VSU Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. Signed and sealed

V. IRB Signature *T. H. Lanier* Date 5/4/01  
 cc: Faculty Advisor

VALID FOR ONE YEAR AS LONG AS APPROVED PROCEDURES ARE UNCHANGED

**RESEARCH QUALIFYING FOR EXEMPTION FROM FEDERAL REGULATIONS  
FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS**

(Quoted from the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46.101.)

- (1) **Educational Research Conducted in Educational Settings:** "Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (I) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (II) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods."
- (2) **Survey/Interview/Observational Research:** "Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior unless: (I) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (II) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation."
- (3) **Survey/Interview Research not Exempted in (2) Above:** "Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b) (2) of this section, if: (I) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (II) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter."
- (4) **Secondary Use of Existing Data:** "Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects." (See below for exceptions.)
- (5) **Evaluation and Demonstration Projects of Federal Programs:** "Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (I) Public benefit or service programs; (II) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (III) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (IV) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs."
- (6) **Taste and Food Quality Studies:** "Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (I) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (II) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture."

**Exceptions:**

See the *Valdosta State University Policy for Protection of Human Subjects*

([http://www.valdosta.peachnet.edu/grants/](http://www.valdosta.peachnet.edu/grants/forms/irb/irb98a.html)

[forms/irb/irb98a.html](http://www.valdosta.peachnet.edu/grants/forms/irb/irb98a.html)) and the following for clarifying notes on and exceptions to above exemption categories.

1. Research activities involving: minor subjects except in the case of categories 1 and 2, above: pregnant women where pregnancy is the focus of the research; prisoners; fetuses *in utero*; or persons incompetent to provide informed consent.
2. Research involving the use of medical, academic and other personal records (including psychiatric records) without consent.
3. Research involving the use of tissue obtained at autopsy.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH WITH HUMAN SUBJECTS**

- A. Valdosta State University and the individual members of its faculty, staff and student body recognize their responsibility for protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects.
- B. Appropriate professional attention and facilities shall be provided to insure the safety and well being of human subjects. No subject in a research activity shall be exposed to unreasonable risk to health or well being.
- C. Research involving children (persons under 18 years of age), other legal incompetents, and persons unable to give informed consent may be approved if there is no risk of suffering for the individual subject. On the other hand, research involving a child, other legal incompetent, or a person unable to give informed consent should not be approved if there would be a significant risk of suffering without the possibility of benefit to the individual subject.
- D. The confidentiality of information received from subjects in experiments or respondents to questionnaires shall be fully protected both during and after the conduct of a research activity, within the limits of the law.
- E. Before a subject participates in research involving risk or substantial stress or discomfort, this shall be carefully explained; the investigator shall be satisfied that the explanation has been understood by the subject; and the consent of the subject shall be obtained. The elements of informed consent are established by the federal government and by the University.
- F. A request by any subject for withdrawal from a research activity shall be honored promptly without penalty or without loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, within the limits of the research.

VALID FOR ONE YEAR AS LONG AS APPROVED PROCEDURES ARE UNCHANGED