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A STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL QUALITY INDICATORS:
OHIO'S VENTURE CAPITAL PROGRAM

DISSEPTION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
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ABSTRACT

Previous state policy efforts at school reform have been hampered by a lack of consensus on what constitutes success. Ideally, Ohio's Venture Capital Program is seed money for systemic reform that fundamentally impacts every aspect of schools—the structure, practice, and classroom dynamics. It enables educators to invest in professional development to improve student learning. Venture Capital encourages educators to take risks in creating a more effective education system. This study compares and contrasts the perceptions of state legislators and local educators on what constitutes effective indicators of success for Venture Capital schools.

The methods used to collect data for this study were interviews and surveys. The study examined three sets of data: (1) state-level stakeholder interviews, (2) school-based data of 65 randomly selected schools collected by the Venture Capital Assessment Team, and (3) a survey of state legislators and local educators' perceptions on indicators of success.

Generally speaking, legislators supported the need for school improvement and Venture Capital's objective for systemic reform. However, there was
considerable disagreement on which indicators of success should guide the performance of schools participating in the Venture Capital Program. Generally speaking, state and local stakeholders valued a wide array of indicators.

Based upon the findings of this study, several conclusions can be drawn. First, Ohio legislators see a need for and strongly support renovating and revitalizing the public education system. Second, interviewed do not possess indepth knowledge about Venture schools and/or quality indicators. Third, state stakeholders place the highest value on indicators related to parental involvement, but there is not a consensus on how to assess this important reform variable.
To God be the Glory

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and my son

Vivian Juanita Davis and Carl LeVon Davis
Sincere appreciation and respect goes to my advisor Dr. Brad L. Mitchell for his guidance, encouragement, and patience from the beginning to the end of this doctoral program. Next to God, his patience has been my sustaining strength. To the other members of my advisory committee Dr. Frank Walter and Dr. Bill Wayson, sincere gratitude and thanks. Thank you Dr. Wayson for helping to make this study. I will love you for years to come. Thanks and appreciation also go to two of my coworkers, Gary Kennedy for his ideas and Wendell Garner for his patience in responding to my many calls. My academic journey has been enriched by my good girlfriends: Dr. Cynthia Tyson, Dr. Melanie Carter, and Diaayah Saleem. Dr. Linda (Chick) Tillman, you are one of the most user friendly people that I know. You have been an inspiration and a mentor through it all. Thanks to all others who have encouraged me through this difficult and trying journey. Carl, honey, this goal is for you. I love you. I'll see you in the morning. Above all, thanks be to my Lord and Savior and soon coming King, Jesus Christ who is the head of my life. His Mercy and Grace has brought me through this time. For those of you who can, accept the blessings that He has bestowed upon you for helping me.
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Background of the Study

The April 26, 1983 release of *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* focused attention on the serious predicament of American public schools. The report argued that the nation's economic problems were caused by "a rising tide of mediocrity" in the public schools (p. 5). The report asserted that "if an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war" (p. 5). Following the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, state legislators became much more involved in educational reform.

Since 1983, thousands of educational reforms have been developed and implemented at the federal, state, and local levels. Like the rest of the nation, Ohio pushed educational reform, culminating with the passage of an omnibus reform package in 1989 (SB 140). Senate Bill 140 (Laws of Ohio 1989-90), along with its counterpart House Bill (HB) 111, focused on changes in the areas of
curriculum and instruction, testing, and administration. The Act established fairly radical strategies for educational reform such as greater state regulation through excellent and deficient schools; and broader parental choice through inter and intra open enrollment. Following the third annual report of the National Education Goals in September 1993, some Ohio school leaders were still concerned that students were not obtaining the skills and knowledge needed to effectively function in an information society (Removing the Barriers, 1994).

In the early 1990s, at the heart of Ohio's school improvement strategy was the Venture Capital Program. The strategy was to create a performance or results-based education and provide equal opportunity to a quality education for every child in Ohio (Sanders, 1995). In August 1991, Ted Sanders, former Under Secretary of Education, was appointed Superintendent of Public Instruction for Ohio by the State Board of Education. Sanders was asked to review and to make recommendations to Governor Voinovich's Task Force on Education. In his 1992 report, Department Restructuring: A Report to the State Board of Education, Sanders outlined his basic reform strategy (Stevens, 1995).

Sanders understood the challenge as "a call for a transformation of education in Ohio, one that would give communities and their schools the flexibility to make decisions, providing they are willing to accept responsibility for the results of student learning" (Stevens, 1995, p. 11). He responded to the task force's findings with 41 recommendations targeted to various education communities.

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1 School improvement refers to efforts that focus on long term, positive change in schools (ODE, 1995).
Most significant was his backing local renewal initiatives supported by state funds. Sanders accepted the task force's recommendations stating: "The Department of Education will support and sponsor innovation and experimentation by school districts in the transformation and improvement of education in Ohio" (Sanders, 1992, p. 12). At the heart of Sander's support of local experimentation was a concept he labeled Venture Capital.

Ohio's Venture Capital Program

Ideally, Venture Capital is seed money for systemic reform\(^2\) that fundamentally impacts every aspect of education—the structure, practice, and relationships of what goes on in schools and in classrooms. It enables educators to invest in professional development\(^3\) to improve student learning. Venture Capital encourages educators to take risks in creating a more effective education system (Venture Capital in Ohio Schools, 1995). To qualify for Venture Capital grants, schools must document and submit an improvement plan reflecting how they intend to change and improve (Currently, there are 561 Venture Capital schools in Ohio). Venture schools must go beyond the structure of conventional schooling and pursue fresh approaches and fundamental change.

Venture Capital is a legislative investment in the ability of educators to create and develop effective new educational systems. Over five-years Venture Capital

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\(^2\) Systemic reform is transferring sight-based improvements occurring in individual venture schools to schools throughout the district.

\(^3\) Professional development (also staff, or teacher, development) is a long-term process to provide staff and teachers with opportunities for growth and learning within the organizational framework. It is based on high performance teaching and learning and provides the kind of guidance that learning communities need to support school improvement and renewal (ODE, 1995).
schools are to make fundamental changes in teaching and learning, assessment, governance, organization, and professional development (Venture Capital in Ohio Schools, 1995). Venture Capital efforts at educational reform must also have the support of parents and the community. It provides funds for innovation and makes it possible for educators to accept responsibility for the results of student learning.

Venture Capital's approach to reform is comprehensive; and it encourages schools to choose from existing school improvement models or to develop their own (Ohio Department Education, 1995). Venture Capital provides opportunity for teachers to be creative and innovative in their teaching while focusing on new ways of learning for students. It enables educators to invest in professional development to improve student learning.

In the fiscal year 1993-1994, funding was appropriated through House Bill (HB) 152 to be used by the Department of Education to "create a statewide network of school improvement sites by providing competitive Venture Capital grants to schools that demonstrate the capacity to invent or adopt school improvement models" (Laws of Ohio, 1995). Schools were awarded five year grants which provided them with the necessary financial capital to produce and maintain innovation and change in schools. Funding for the biennial beginning FY 94 was $19 million and the first 307 venture schools were funded.
The second biennial beginning FY 96 was approximately $26 million and the remaining 154 schools were funded. We are now in the third biennial. This study covers the first and second biennial.

Statement of the Problem

This study examined how state and local stakeholders view the Venture Capital Program. It specifically focused on indicators of school and student success. Essentially, how do stakeholders access the success of failure of Venture Capital schools. Three research questions formed the bedrock of the study.

1) What do state educational leaders and local educators consider important indicators of success for Venture Capital schools?
2) How do state educational leaders assess legislative support for the Venture Capital Program?
3) What are state educational leaders' perceptions on how Venture Capital is being implemented?

There is little consensus on what constitutes successful school reform. This may be due in large part to the lack of mutual understanding of indicators of success (IOS). For state legislators, an increase in test scores, for example, may be an acceptable indicator of success.

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4 State educational leaders are all 22 interviewed state stakeholders. However, this study focused on interviews of state legislators since the researcher was particularly interested in their perceptions of Venture Capital.

5 Local educators refer to teachers at Venture Capital schools. For a comparison and contrast of legislators and local educators' perceptions, see the section on Survey data in Chapter 4. Perceptions of members of the Venture Capital Assessment Team are also outlined.
For teachers, an increase in student participation and grades may be more meaningful.

Indicators can drive school improvement by fostering ownership among participants. Indicators serve to clarify goals while identifying and bringing specific points of disagreement to the surface. The use of indicators can assist local and state stakeholders in clarifying vague goals and reduce the use of confusing jargon. There is very limited research on how local and state stakeholders view indicators of success. In the last fifteen years, numerous state legislatures have enacted highly experimental school reform initiatives. Many of these initiatives were implemented in the absence of solid program evaluation. Ohio’s Venture Capital Program is a typical example of an innovative idea with minimal initial evaluation research.

When determining or identifying school and/or student success, what, for example, are local and state legislators using as indicators? Who (local, state, or both) determines school indicators of success and why? Whose indicators are more important and why? What is the congruence between state and local indicators?

For educational reform to be effective in educating all students, schools cannot continue to function in their traditional modes of teaching and learning. Schools must do more to teach, to reach, and to tap the potential of all students. The current system of teaching and learning offers very little variation, does not provide the conditions or environment for learning, and limits student success.
both in and out of the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Some authorities feel that schools must shift to a more adaptive method of teaching where learning is adjusted to individual students by considering their backgrounds, talents, and their interests (Fiske, 1991, Darling-Hammond, 1996). Indicators of success guide us in what to look for when attempting radical reform.

For school reform to be successful, consensus must be built between those who initiate and support school reform and those who implement it. In order for educational reform to be meaningful and successful, policymakers and educators must determine what indicators are important in determining student and school success.

Overview of Research Methodology

This research was shaped by a qualitative inquiry paradigm. Little research has been done to compare local and state stakeholders' perceptions of indicators of success for Venture Capital schools. Elite interviews were the primary method used for data collection.

The research employed qualitative methods (Patton, 1990; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; and Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) and used multiple strategies for collecting data: field notes, quotations from interviews of state legislators, document analysis (i.e. interoffice memos, Sanders, 1995), and existing longitudinal data on venture schools from the Venture Capital Assessment Team. Names of interviewed stakeholders were solicited from key participants involved in the Venture Capital Program.
Interviewed Participants

The first set of data collected were from interviews. The researcher received the names of members of the House and Senate Education Committees\(^6\) from the House and Senate Clerks. Interview letters (Appendix B) were sent to all 30 members of the Education Committees (of which 17 responded) and five other key state educational leaders\(^7\) requesting their participation in the research. The researcher interviewed 22 state educational leaders. Of the 22, two were telephone interviews; and one legislator mailed his response to the researcher. The interviews included 17 legislators, the two State Superintendents of Public Instruction, a representative of the Venture Capital Assessment Team\(^8\) (Team), a representative from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), and a representative from the Education Commission of the States\(^9\) (ECS). In the process of interviewing, it was determined that three legislators were not familiar with Venture Capital.

Since an intent of the study was to discover state legislators' perceptions on what constitutes effective indicators of success in relation to the Venture Capital

\(^{6}\) Hereafter referred to as state legislators.
\(^{7}\) Hereafter referred to as influentials since they play a role in influencing reform initiative policy and implementation.
\(^{8}\) Prior to leaving ODE, the former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ted Sanders, commissioned Dr. William Wayson with assessing venture schools indicators of success. Forming a team of 10-12 experts who regularly visited various schools throughout the state for the purpose of assessment, Wayson began the Venture Capital Assessment Team. The Team's purpose is to visit venture schools, assess their indicators of success, write reports, submit these reports to the schools and to the ODE. The Team also hold workshops for schools on how to develop indicators and make indicators work for school improvement that will lead to student success.
\(^{9}\) ECS is a nonprofit, nationwide interstate compact that was formed (1965) to help governors, state legislators, state education leaders, and others to develop policies to improve the quality of education at all levels. The compact (comprising 49 states and various territories, the District of Columbia, etc.) acts as a
Program, this unfamiliarity with the program was significant. Therefore, these responses were included. Overall, the study prompted several legislators, to make inquiries into the program.

The interviewed legislators served on the House and Senate Education Committees. They were chosen because of their oversight role of the Venture Capital Program. Eleven were Republicans and six were Democrats. Nine were in the House of Representatives and eight were in the Senate. Five represented urban areas, six represented suburban areas, and six represented rural areas. The two state superintendents and the ODE representative were chosen because of their roles in the initiation and implementation of the program. A representative of the Assessment Team was selected due to the team's role in program evaluation. The ECS representative was chosen for his role in tracking and monitoring innovative state legislation, such as Ohio's Venture Capital initiative. There was no legislative request for ECS to monitor the program (ECS, personal communication, February 24, 1997).

Document analysis occurred prior to and following interviews. Some documents, for example, were received from the former state superintendent of public instruction prior to interviews. Other documents pertaining to Venture Capital were received from the Ohio Department of Education during interviews.
Document analysis serves several purposes. It yields excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational, clinical, or program records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys (Patton, 1990). For Venture Capital, document analysis was in the form of interoffice memos, newsletters, and booklets provided by the Ohio Department of Education. By corroborating the researcher's observations and interviews, documents make the findings more trustworthy (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

**Significance**

Comparing research on state and local perceptions is needed to discover what is expected and what works in school reform. Clearly, data outlining policymakers' indicators of success would prove useful in terms of designing programs and appropriating funds for future state educational reform initiatives. Furthermore, little research has been done in the area of comprehensive systemic reform (Fuhrman, 1994).

This study focused on what state stakeholders are seeking as signs of school and student success. It seeks to provide rich information for aiding policymakers in their decisions about the future of Venture Capital. Furthermore, it serves to benefit others in creating models for programs and initiatives while providing principal funders and state policymakers with a basis for making better decisions.
Limitations

This study of various stakeholders’ perceptions focused on those stakeholders directly involved with Venture Capital and those Venture Capital schools mentioned in the study. Given that this is the study of one program and a set of specific stakeholders, comparisons will not be made to other reform programs. The descriptive nature of the study promoted self-reported attitudes of participants at particular points in time.

Self-reporting bias is not a real concern of this study because the focus was on stakeholder perceptions. It was clearly expected that state and local stakeholders would hold certain assumptions about the nature and quality of Venture Capital Schools. The purpose of this study was to uncover any patterns of perceptions as they related to school success indicators.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents relevant theoretical and empirical literature for the study. It focuses mainly on what is known about the relationship between educational research and policy-making at the state level. The notion of stakeholder analysis provides a central perspective. The literature review seeks to address questions such as:

1. How do various stakeholders at the state and local level identify, view, and decide what determines school and student success?

2. How do state and local stakeholders incorporate educational research knowledge into program evaluation efforts?

In particular, the literature review will examine program evaluation knowledge related to "high profile" education reform initiatives (Madsen, 1994). A synthesis of what is known about the uses of educational program evaluation will provide a pertinent context for understanding the significance of program implementation and evaluation, particularly when "high profile" initiatives are involved. This
Chapter seeks to locate state stakeholders' perceptions of what constitutes school success in a context of policy evaluation and implementation. The literature on program evaluation, stakeholder analysis, and school reform form a foundation for the study.

The literature on the use of policy research is important in a time when state governments have become more aggressive and insistent in setting education policy and in seeking information regarding performance results (Malen, 1988). In the last ten years, it has become evident how states have expanded policy on educational accountability through issues such as student assessment (Fuhrman, 1994). Policy research offers stakeholders evidence on what it is they are supporting, deciding, or even information on what they would like to know more about. In particular, it is important to know if, and how, program evaluation information affects state and local education policy-making (Malen, 1988). The relationship between educational researchers and educational policymakers is not an adversarial one; however there is a culture of misunderstanding separating them (Hetrick & Van Horn, 1988). Policymakers, for instance, usually question ideas coming from people who are not accountable for their mistakes in the public arena; and researchers tend to be very cautious in presenting their work in political contexts.

Program evaluation is important especially when new and "high profile" programs are initially implemented. Fast paced evaluations can be tricky and problems can arise. It depends on who is doing the evaluation, for example, and
too often programs are not evaluated (Madsen, 1994). Also, the nature of politics is to seek out research-based knowledge that supports a desired policy position (Lutz, 1988). Education researchers can provide policymakers with the ammunition (sources of knowledge used for influence and persuasion) to fight, maintain, promote, and/or kill a high profile policy option. Often, policymakers tend to ignore information that is not consistent with their own beliefs. If evaluation reports call into question the stability of highly established beliefs, the most comfortable solution is to ignore the evaluation (Malen, 1988).

Over the past ten to fifteen years, numerous state legislatures have enacted highly experimental school reform initiatives. Many of these initiatives were implemented without any solid program evaluation backing. The Venture Capital Program in Ohio has a similar history.

Following the third annual report of the National Education Goals in September 1993, there was a concern by some Ohio school leaders that students were not reaching the goals that were set to prepare them with the skills and knowledge needed to function effectively in today's technical society (Removing the Barriers, 1994). Although progress was being made, it became clear that significant educational improvements were still needed. In response to this concern, experimental-oriented schools were awarded grants and expected to engage in a new education enterprise to improve student learning. Thus, began the Venture Capital Program.
Stakeholder analysis literature seeks to compare and contrast how various actors in a political arena attempt to promote their own interests. This literature is significant to understanding the Venture Capital Program because various state and local stakeholders have considerable opportunities to influence the implementation of the program. Educational reform stakeholders are becoming more interested in educational program evaluation information because they realize that this information has the capability to impact legislative decision-making especially when it involves significant fiscal and political investments. Policymakers' orientations (familiarity with and adaptation to a particular culture) shape how they respond to and make decisions relevant to various issues under consideration (Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1985).

Marshall et al (1985) inform us that there is a shared sense of what is appropriate among policy actors in action, reaction, and choice" or "assumptive worlds" (p. 90). Through socialization, this "sense" is instilled in the policy culture or environment (which contains elements of belief, perception, evaluation, and intention); is guided by perception; and affects policy-making. The "assumptive worlds" of policymakers are significant because they guide policymakers in influencing policy, or responding to the reality they perceive (Marshall, 1988).

Literature on systemic educational reform is also important to understand. The concept of systemic reform focuses on how student learning can be improved through a holistic overhaul of policies, programs, and practices. When examining how state policy influences the systemic redesign of public education,
the literature points out that: (1) the relationship between research and policy is problematic and (2) there is a lack of clear direction from policymakers. Systemic reform is extremely difficult to implement due to political, bureaucratic, resource, and social constraints. The Venture Capital Program is a systemic effort to transform the nature and quality of individual schools. Advocates for coherent and systemic state policy on school reform are becoming more aggressive.

Program Evaluation

A Historical Perspective

While more and more educators and policymakers are now embracing the idea of educational evaluation, evaluation is not new. Based on the work of Ralph W. Tyler, often called the father of educational evaluation, Stufflebeam & Shinkfield (1985) identify five major periods of evaluation:

(1) the Pre-Tylerian Period (developments prior to 1930);
(2) the Tylerian Age (1930 to 1945);
(3) the Age of Innocence (1946 to 1957);
(4) the Age of Realism (1958 to 1972); and
(5) the Age of Professionalism (1973 to 1985).

In the early 1930s, Tyler coined the term "educational evaluation". Tyler also published a broad and innovative view of both curriculum and evaluation which, over the next 15 years, provided clear-cut alternatives to other views. The main distinction in Tyler's approach was its concentration on clearly stated objectives.
He defined evaluation as "determining whether objectives have been achieved" (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985, p. 17). Using this definition as a point of reference for new curriculum, evaluators were able to help curriculum developers clarify what was expected in student behaviors. It was here that the focus of evaluation shifted away from the content to be taught and focused more on the student behaviors that were to be developed. For the next 25 years, this approach set the stage for focusing on student outcomes. What followed was known as the period of social irresponsibility. While educational opportunities were made more available for underprivileged students during this period, these opportunities were never realized. Some viewed this lack of participation from those who had the opportunity and responsibility for making educational opportunities and conditions better for all students as a wasteful period in history.

The late 1940s and 1950s—the Age of Innocence—was a period of complacence in terms of the serious problems facing society. The war had ended, and the depression was over. It was a time for acquiring resources and building and expanding industries. It was also a time for the expansion of educational services, personnel, and facilities. Community colleges emerged and small schools consolidated with others in order to provide the wider range of educational services that larger school districts were providing such as guidance, community education, and mental and physical health services.

However, not everyone benefited from this period of vast development. Extreme class and racial prejudice existed keeping those in inner cities and rural
areas segregated and living in despair and poverty. While education expanded
to all students, there was little interest in holding educators accountable in
identifying the needs of underprivileged students, or in identifying and solving the
problems in the educational system.

Educators collected data and wrote about evaluation, but did not relate how
this data could help improve educational services. This lack of effort carried over
into evaluation as well. Educators began to do more in the way of testing and
developing new designs for analyzing educational services. Yet, since no
analysis had been done on what was needed to assess and improve education,
these contributions were not based on actual results. One possible contribution
to this is that initially, educational evaluations were at the discretion of the local
school district. Depending on local interest and the availability of expertise,
schools could choose whether or not to evaluate. In addition, during this time
federal and state agencies had not become deeply involved in the evaluation of
programs. The lack of external pressures, accountability, and support for
evaluations at all levels led to the Age of Realism.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, federally funded large-scale curriculum
development projects began requiring evaluations ending educators' choice of
whether or not they wanted to do evaluations. Consequently, further
developments of evaluation methodologies had to be grounded in relevant
concerns leading to educators doing more field experiences. One major change
that guided this shift from voluntary evaluations to mandatory evaluations was
the 1957 National Defense Educational Act (NDEA) enacted as a result of the Russian launch of Sputnik I. The NDEA provided funding for new educational programs in math, science, foreign language, and guidance and testing and expanded services throughout the school district. Additionally, new national curriculum development programs were established, particularly in the math and science areas. Following this enactment, funds were established to evaluate these programs. It was during this period—the Age of Realism—that evaluation expanded as an industry and a profession.

During the Age of Realism, four approaches to evaluation were represented. First, the Tyler approach was used to help define objectives for new curricula and to assess the degree to which the objectives would be realized. Second, in order to better reflect the objectives and content of the new curricula, new nationally standardized tests were developed. Third, the professional judgment approach was used which rated proposals and periodically checked on the efforts of contractors. Finally, many evaluators began using fieldwork to evaluate curriculum development. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, discussions and debates followed regarding new ways of using evaluation. Of concern was the need to make judgments about the merit of the object being evaluated; and about how evaluation should be instituted. These discussions and debates led to today's Age of Professionalism.

In the early 1970s, the field of evaluation became more solid as it began to emerge as a distinct profession—the Age of Professionalism. This growth was not
without pain. Evaluators were facing an identity crisis regarding their role in evaluation. They were unsure if they were testers, researchers, administrators, teachers, or philosophers. Furthermore, with no special organization dedicated to evaluation as a field, no specialized journals, and no published literature (unpublished papers were circulated through an underground network of practitioners), it is no wonder that the field of evaluation was fragmented. Given the earlier amorphous condition of evaluation, the progress of educational evaluators during the 1970s is quite remarkable (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985). Consequently, a number of professional journals were begun: Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Studies in Evaluation, CEDR Quarterly, Evaluation Review, New Directions for Program Evaluation, Evaluation and Program Planning, and Evaluation News. These journals still exist today.

Traditional Functions of Program Evaluation

Evaluation has only recently been institutionalized. The literature suggests that the 1962 Juvenile Delinquency Program enacted by Congress was "the first federal program to require evaluation" (Shadish et al., 1991, p. 25). Additionally, as early as 1966 several evaluations of the Head Start program were performed: the 1967 Child Health Act; the 1968 Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments, and more. In 1977, the Committee on Labor and Human Resources held the first congressional hearing on the cost, management, and utilization of program evaluation. While it is suggested that a requirement of the 1962 Juvenile
Delinquency Program was that it be evaluated, the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) became the first major piece of legislation to mandate evaluation requirements (McLaughlin, 1975) for federally funded programs. Senator Robert Kennedy, the principal originator, viewed evaluation as a means of political accountability and required that Title I (a provision of ESEA aimed at providing compensatory education to disadvantaged children) of ESEA perform annual evaluations. This requirement forced educators to shift their concern for educational evaluation from focusing on theory and supposition to focusing on practice and implementation.

Since scholars are at odds about the role of evaluation, its purpose and a definition is offered. The purpose of evaluation depends on the perspective one uses (Dynes & Marvel, 1987). From an accountability perspective, evaluation attempts to make the best possible use of tax resources by examining the merit of a program and holding managers accountable. From the knowledge perspective, which this study employs, evaluation establishes evidence that leads to new knowledge about social programs and about the effectiveness of governmental strategies for addressing these programs. Finally, from a management perspective, evaluation serves as a flexible management tool and a support system for assessing and improving the operational efficiency of government programs.

The literature offers many definitions of evaluation. Tyler defines it as, "the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually
being realized" (House, 1986, p. 16). Evaluation is also defined as the policy-analytic method used to produce information about the value, or past worth, and/or future courses of action (Dunn, 1981). Again, to evaluate is to simply determine, or estimate, the worth or merit of something (House, 1986). To evaluate, then, is to estimate the value of some object or activity. In educational programs, this estimation includes a range of activities which seek to discover the value of a particular program. Value is discovered by asking such questions as:

1. How is the program supposed to work?
2. What would happen without the program?
3. What would happen if the program was expanded?

Evaluation is also shaped and guided by distinctive features (American Institutes of Research, 1970). Evaluation:

1. establishes merit by establishing criteria for those concerned about a particular program,
2. is applied since programs are either dropped or extended on the basis of the evaluation information, and
3. is multi-dimensional being concerned with objectives, process, components, and other dimensions (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985; Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1991; & House, 1986).
In answering value questions such as "what difference does it make?" evaluation seeks out information and makes choices based on this knowledge. However, because evaluation is shaped by other forces (personalities, individual goals), some scholars argue that it is limited in doing the very thing that it is designed to do which is to affect decision-making (Patton, 1986; Zusman, 1976; Raizen & Rossi, 1981). Traditionally, some scholars believed that evaluation was to provide information for those who made decisions (House, 1986, p. 20). Since evaluation seeks to generate information, these scholars (Patton, 1986; Zusman, 1976; Raizen & Rossi, 1981) argue that the role of evaluation is to contribute to the making of policy and this information should be applied to decision making in improving programs. Other scholars (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985) argue that this specificity of the role of evaluation is too limited.

While the role of evaluation has continued to expand (House, 1986; American Institutes of Research, 1970), other scholars reject this notion that evaluation should provide information for decision makers arguing that there are too many clients who are served by evaluation to concentrate on a certain audience. Since it is impossible to serve the needs of all clients at the same time, priorities must be set. Still, evaluations must go beyond serving only the "policy-shaping community" (House, 1986, p. 20). This community is described as a system of small changes that seem to characterize the policy process" (Schneier & Gross, 1993, p. 225). They argue that Congress (during and since the Reagan and Bush administration) should have made more attempts to collaborate rather than
to control agency officials. In attempts to control officials, for instance, the norm for the Committee on House of Appropriations was to have budget cuts.

New approaches to educational evaluation point out how the once limited perspective of the role of evaluation has shifted to include the use of various models and metaphors (House, 1986). Concepts and methods have been adapted while others have been invented and combined in new ways for practicing evaluation (Shadish et al, 1991). The latest shift in evaluation has occurred in two ways. The first was by determining the methods or models to be used in deciding who should be served by evaluations. When considering methods for evaluating, not all methods are useful for all evaluations. Scholars differ on their choice of methods. Stake (1991), for example, prefers using methods of observation, document analysis, and open-ended interviewing (qualitative) while Campbell prefers more experimental methods (quantitative) that offer such measures as internal and external validity and covariance analysis.

The second shift in evaluation was in discovering that individuals are guided by images and metaphors in their thinking about social policy. Understanding metaphors is important because much of what we think about is metaphorical in nature (House, 1986). While metaphors are shaped by individual experiences, experiences shape individual perspectives. Each (metaphors and perspectives) plays a role in how decision-making is played out with various audiences. Individuals experience one thing in terms of another. The term, or metaphor,
urban renewal, for instance, can be viewed differently by varying audiences. Often viewed as the slum, the metaphor of urban renewal can be viewed as either a place that was once healthy and is now morbid, or as a viable, low-income community. While the former offers no hope for the future, the latter offers important social benefits to residents in playing a role in developing the community. The latter would more likely generate federal support.

House (1986) suggests that it is this underlying (metaphor of the slum) disease that gives shape and direction to much of policy-making when seeking solutions to problems. Metaphors can be important to program evaluation in understanding the Venture Capital Program because when urban or inner city schools (poor, slum) are applying for Venture Capital funds, it carries one perception, while suburban (middle/upper-class) carries another. It is best that no stone is left unturned, or overlooked, when seeking to evaluate a program when schools apply for competitive grants for Venture Capital.

Understanding metaphors also aid when doing evaluation because different audiences desire different types of information, policies interact, and different policy issues require different types of studies. In broadening one's view of the role of evaluation by the use of models, methods, metaphors, and practice, language also lends itself to a better understanding of how evaluation plays a role in policy decision-making. Metaphors shape our language and aid in determining what method (qualitative or quantitative) of evaluation one decides to use. Furthermore, when choosing to evaluate, one's choice of language helps
to address and focus attention on the purpose of evaluation. Are evaluators, for example, attempting to improve or impact on a program? Distinctions need to be made between the two. "Improvement involves a judgment about whether something is better, whereas impact involves the more limited question of whether or not something is different" (Patton, 1986, p. 70). Some scholars argue that the greatest impact of evaluation is on the people whose work is being judged—those who manage education programs and those who provide the services of the program (Raizen & Rossi, 1981). Therefore, when evaluating educational programs, personnel (those involved in the program) need to be evaluated as well (Shadish et al., 1991).

The use of evaluations to increase the awareness of program activity, to motivate the desired behavior of those evaluating, and to promote public interest cannot be ignored (Comfort, 1982). Still, evaluators must keep a broad view of these roles in order to enhance their participation, particularly if evaluators are seeking to use their research to influence school reform.

Program Evaluation and School Reform

The literature also suggests that looking to evaluations to improve school reform may be looking in the wrong place. An argument is that the failure in educational policy is largely due to the problems of organization, administration, and the conflicting perceptions of educational needs (Comfort, 1982). This view visits the tensions of measuring the effects of schooling (Zajano & Mitchell, 1988). When examining whether schools are meeting their goal of student
achievement, for instance, too often achievement is measured by standardized exams. This method of evaluating serves several purposes:

(1) the desire of policymakers to have an understanding and aggregate means of assessing and controlling what schools do,

(2) the needs of researchers who seek to measure the effects and relationships of different variables, and

(3) the needs of practitioners who wish to focus on the "bottom line" of skills and content since this is where teachers and their students will be judged (Zajano & Mitchell, 1988).

Some scholars argue that this focus on standardized exams rather than on those skills (mathematics, computer, science, team building) that prepare students to work in a competitive workplace and to become leaders in society interferes with and hinders schools from reaching their desired outcome of student achievement (Fuhrman, 1994; Immerwahr, 1991; Zajano & Mitchell, 1988). Moreover, some of the failure of evaluation of school reform can be attributed to failures of the evaluation itself and failures of program implementation (Comfort, 1982; Shadish et al., 1991; Madsen, 1994). Therefore, seeking to evaluate a program alone in determining how effective it is for school reform may result in overlooking what needs to change, improve, or be reformed.

Furthermore, evaluation happens in many ways. Traditional evaluations (as illustrated from the Push/Excel story under Program Evaluation and Legislation)
assume that unless ongoing programs are organized into a formal, self-conscious activity and carried on by people who have no investment in the program's activities, there is not much that can be learned about a program (House, 1986). Other scholars disagree. Evaluation happens all the time (Cohen, 1993).

Individuals who are intimately involved in a program learn about the program daily. This close involvement allows teachers, for example, to correct mistakes as they occur and to try new tactics. They may, for instance, try out new reading techniques in class by asking colleagues what techniques work best for them. The argument is that it is this kind of intimate evaluation that is needed for the evaluation of programs. This kind of evaluation is a product of both the commitment and the specialized knowledge that some programs require (Cohen in Bryk, 1983). For systemic reform to occur, when reform enters the classroom, the intimacy coming from the teacher's specialization, experience, and commitment need to be considered. This intimacy of being involved in and informally, or unconsciously, evaluating a program is what some (teachers) can report about a program that others (evaluators) cannot.

Program Evaluation and the Results of School Reform

The literature informs us that there is still much work to be done. Today's concern about the results of school reform must still address the gulf between state intent and local practice. Social conditions have gotten worse (dismantling of affirmative action programs, rise in unemployment due to the relocation of
industry, increase in racial divide) and the socio-economic stage of disadvantaged students is still poor contrary to what President Kennedy intended over thirty years ago with the ESEA Title I project. Given that these social ills still exist today, when seeking to foster equal educational opportunity what role does evaluation play in school reform, particularly when appraising equality in public schools and in school districts?

Program Evaluation and Legislation

Head Start, the Child Health Act, and other evaluations were attempts to investigate a relationship between the legislative process and evaluation research. The purpose was to probe the use of evaluation as a tool in legislation. In the early 1970s, these evaluation efforts were aided by proposed sunset legislation which would mandate the systemic utilization of evaluation by Congress.

During the 1970s, the improvement of evaluation tools aided in the implementation of many federal programs (the G. I. Bill; the Land Grant College Act; the Education of Handicapped Children Act; the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and many more). These programs defended federal efforts in elementary and secondary education and other services. Federal agencies have continued to provide funding for evaluations through the Title I educational evaluation requirement. As a result of ESEA, there were three provisions set forth dealing specifically with federal funded programs. Title I requires that all federal programs be re-authorized every ten years (according to the schedule set forth in
the bill) and prescribes that re-authorization be preceded by a standardized committee review of the program. Title II mandates the establishment and maintenance of an inventory of federal programs. Title III requires that each congress, congressional committees must select a few programs to evaluate. This third provision may be more closely and directly involved in the evaluation of the community in the legislative process (Zweig, 1979).

However, once universally supported, new programs have come under suspicion by educators, policymakers, and the public. Factors such as economic inflation, the failure of some programs, and the continued support of other social programs that were failing have all served to cause a shift in the confidence of those who were once supporters of social programs. Today, legislators are realizing that program evaluation is needed more than ever. The promise of program evaluation in legislation is that it systematically and sensibly locates, collects, analyzes, and interprets the evidence that legislators need when deciding whether to enact, extend, or discontinue programs (Zweig, 1979; McLaughlin, 1975; Patton, 1986).

A problem in evaluation is that it is too political (House, 1986), for example, because government money is being used in evaluating, evaluators may be pressured to lean in favor of, or may be manipulated by, government in the evaluation process (Cohen in Bryk, 1983). One way to at least limit this politicking is for evaluations to be done by individuals who are not deeply committed to, or involved with, the program under evaluation. An external
evaluator may have higher credibility and greater objectivity, as well as a higher degree of independence, than an internal evaluator. On the other hand, amateur evaluators may not have the high skills of a professional evaluator, but they may have a better understanding of the program's unique evaluation needs. Amateurs may also be better able to develop a rapport with those involved in the program being evaluated. Still, in any evaluation, there is always the concern that policymakers, and others, may choose to disregard findings that do not support, or correspond to their goals, or values (Malen, 1988; House, 1986).

Program Evaluation: Rhetoric and Reality

While some scholars (Leviton & Boruch 1983; Malen, 1988; Chelimsky, 1986; Weiss, 1970; and Siegel & Tuckel, 1985) argue that evaluation has and does make a difference in decision-making, others (Patton, 1986 & Zusman, 1976) argue to the contrary. Patton (1986) argues that, by nature, evaluation studies have been ineffective; and unless they affect decision-making, evaluations will continue to be ineffective.

Zusman (1976) argues that there have been many more failures than successes of the impact of program evaluation studies on programs. Others argue that using evaluation as decision-making tools is happening more frequently than is justified (Dynes & Marvel, 1987). Still, while it is true that evaluations must impact decision-making, the perception of evaluations must be widened (Weiss, 1983; Dynes & Marvel, 1987). Those individuals doing, and desiring, evaluations must remember that evaluations must be accountable.
Since it can lead to negative or neutral findings, evaluation should be used with caution. So while evaluations are still evolving, better methodologies are needed. As long as this limitation exists, evaluation should be used only to improve programs (Dynes & Marvel, 1987). However, while the methodology of evaluation is still inadequate, more and more "evaluations are exerting increased influence on policy" (Dynes & Marvel, p. 45).

A caveat for evaluators is to remember that evaluations perform more functions than just seeking to affect decision-making. Evaluations also yield information affecting the allocation of resources, which is the most important conclusion that evaluations can provide—whether or not resources are being spent wisely. How evaluation is viewed then—rhetoric or reality—depends on whether language addresses the dimensions and characteristics of evaluation, whether perceptions of evaluation are widened, and whether evaluation is limited in performance.

Summary

In examining the relationship between program evaluation and research, the question the researcher seeks to answer is: "How do policymakers and educators use program evaluation research?" This summary concludes with an examination of how this literature relates to, and is important to, the Venture Capital Program. Today, evaluation has made its mark as a much needed and often used tool in public policy work. Numerous books deal exclusively with evaluation and many universities offer courses in evaluation methodology. It
appears that no matter how the role of evaluation is defined or used throughout the literature, it is viewed as central to reform. Since the late 1960s, there have been numerous and noticeable gains in evaluation. Nevertheless, its deficiencies alert us that there is a continued need to assess the role of evaluation. Finally, while the literature informs us that the institutionalization of educational evaluation is relatively new, other pressing concerns have surfaced.

First, a serious mistake in program evaluation continues to be that of overlooking the importance of theory, for instance, in not using theory-based prescriptions to inform us about how various methods should be used in practice (Shadish et al., 1991). Throughout the literature, scholars (McLaughlin, 1975; Parker & Parker, 1995; and Parker, 1994) warn that policymakers, in particular, are not correctly placing the blame for school problems. Some scholars argue, for instance, that problems in schools occur because of problems in the home (Goodlad, in Parker & Parker, 1995). Therefore, school reform must include the participation of parents as well as others in order to begin to deal with some of the social ills of political, racial, and socio-economic disadvantage that many children face (McLaughlin, 1975; Goodlad, in Parker & Parker, 1995). This knowledge is essential when doing evaluations because programs may be perceived as successes or failures depending on what is being evaluated.

The Venture Capital Program, for example, is a program that requires the involvement of parents, community, teachers, and a range of supporters, or stakeholders, for school reform. However, some might argue that to evaluate the
program without taking into account the home life of students diminishes the objective of Venture Capital which is to invest in new ways to improve all student learning. When evaluating such programs, theory-based evaluations aid in guiding and shaping what is to be evaluated as well as giving evaluators a framework in which to work. In the above argument, the theory is that school problems arise from problems at home that are often due to social ills. Thus, to evaluate the worth, or merit, of the Venture Capital Program in and of itself, in terms of its opportunity for the academic achievement of all students, would be insufficient if not all schools are benefiting from the program and if the home lives of students are not considered in the evaluation equation.

Second, disagreements surrounding evaluation and its role are largely because evaluation is too "sectorally fragmented" (Shadish et al., p. 8). Often when seeking to employ evaluation, those who are evaluating stay within their own comfortable discipline without using models from and/or seeking expertise in other fields. Educators and psychologists, for example, gravitate toward the American Evaluation Association; economists and political scientists gravitate toward the American Association of Public Policy and Management, and so forth. Furthermore, arguments still surround what methods (qualitative or quantitative) one should use when evaluating. Consequently, not much is being learned from the theories and practices undergirding evaluation across disciplines. While this is significant, there is no set method for using evaluation; and evaluation and its use continue to broaden. However, this poses no real concern for evaluation.
Lastly, the use of metaphors is important to program evaluation because either subconsciously or consciously underlying metaphors shape the decisions of much of social policy (Shadish et al., 1991). Marshall's (1989) notion of "assumptive worlds" supports the notion of metaphors by informing us that policymakers' worlds, in particular, are shaped and guided by beliefs and perceptions that effect policy-making. The researcher believes these areas will be of use when examining new "high profile" experimental programs such as Venture Capital. After all, the goal of school reform is designed to provide equal educational opportunity and to attain excellence in student achievement (Parker & Parker, 1995; Parker, 1994; McLaughlin, 1975; Zajano & Mitchell, 1988; Castenell, Brooks, & Timm, 1994). This goal will be difficult to achieve, or to evaluate, if examiners fail to take into account those who make up the program. It is the stakeholder-based evaluation, or analysis, that deals more intimately with a program.

**Stakeholder Analysis**

**A Historical Perspective**

The stakeholder approach to evaluation was developed in the late 1970s by the National Institute of Education, NIE, (Bryk, 1983). Stakeholders are individuals (students, parents, teachers) or groups (citizen's groups, labor unions, political parties, government agencies, elected leaders, and policy analysts).
Stakeholders have a stake in policies because they affect and are affected by governmental decisions (Dunn, 1981; Shadish et al., 1991; Mark & Shotland, 1985; Weiss, 1983; and Bryk, 1983).

The notion of stakeholder-based evaluation originated because different audiences were not being treated equally in having their needs met or their concerns addressed (Stake, R. E., 1991; Weiss, C. H., 1991; and Mark, M. M. & Shotland, R. L., 1985). Many evaluators began to realize that these unmet needs and concerns had to do with the pluralistic nature of society and social decision-making because public representatives were not adequately defining the broad range of questions for policy debate. This lack of definition was one of the major forces leading to stakeholder-based evaluation. Thus, the rise in stakeholder-based evaluation resulted from the failure (few effective programs) of so many evaluations over the last thirty years (Mark & Shotland, 1985; Weiss, 1983; Shadish et al., 1991, and Stake, R. E., 1991).

The concept of stakeholder analysis acknowledges the ways in which various stakeholders perceive, review, and use evaluation research information and how the voices of those stakeholders outside of policy were not being heard. The stakeholder approach is useful in:

(a) getting the leading players to cooperate,

(b) understanding a program more intimately, and

(c) getting decision makers to take evaluations into account when making decisions.

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An illustration of stakeholder-based evaluation is offered by Farra & House (1983) of the Push/Excel Program under stakeholder analysis and legislation.

Contrary to Patton's (1986) argument that evaluation should target decision makers, other scholars (Mark & Shotland, 1985; Weiss, C. H., 1983, 1991; Shadish et al., 1991, and Stake, R. E., 1991) argue that focusing on decision makers, or on one stakeholder, places limits on evaluation. Furthermore, evaluation is used differently. Since stakeholders view and use evaluation information differently, a concern is that this approach can contaminate the evaluator's judgment. When evaluating, for example, whose concerns are being evaluated? Seeking answers to this question can cause the evaluator to begin wondering whether their judgment has been impaired, or whether they have been truthful in communicating the results. Stake (1983) argues that while the evaluator should have a good sense of who they are working for, and about their concerns, the role of the evaluator should be more that of a civil servant versus an advocate for either stakeholder. Consequently, evaluation will emerge from observing the program rather than approaching the program evaluation with set ideas, success, or failure, from either stakeholder, or from the evaluator. This approach is different from earlier attempts at evaluation. Evaluators once felt that it was important to assess program effects rather than focus on the implementation, or needs, of the program.

Earlier practices of having separate evaluations resulted in failure because evaluations were not viewed as important by most clients. Yet, different
stakeholders face different situations and seek different information. Federally funded evaluations targeted to decision makers, or sponsors, for example, were more interested in information. Clients, or those evaluating, were more interested in changing conditions than in studying them (Weiss, 1983). Policymakers (members of Congress, state executives, local board members), for instance, need to know whether or not to continue, expand, or reduce program funding. Therefore, they are only partially interested in program outcomes. Program managers (program designers, national program staff) want more detailed information than policymakers. They want to know how to improve the program; however they are concerned with the number of people in the program in order to keep it working and to keep the clientele. Should managers, for example, add or cut the number of people on staff? Should they change the kind of clientele they serve?

Practitioners (teachers, psychotherapists) rely on their professional training and experience to tell them what they want to know in order to help clients. They do not really want evaluative information (Weiss, 1991). Clients (students, parents, community groups) want to know if the program can help them to decide whether or not to continue to participate in the program. Yet, like practitioners, clients rely on their own experience (how they are being treated) rather than on evaluative data. These kinds of discrepancies led to the rise of stakeholder-based evaluation. The term stakeholder-based evaluation, refers to "evaluations that involve stakeholder groups, other than sponsors, in the formation of
evaluation questions and in any other evaluation activities" (Mark & Shotland, 1985, p. 606).

Development of Stakeholder-Based Evaluation

The literature points out how early decisions that used policy makers as both the source of evaluation questions and as the audience for the results conceded to the consideration of multiple stakeholder groups. The stakeholder approach to evaluation was developed in the late-1970s by the National Institute of Education (NIE) with Norman Gold as one of the principal architects. In the mid-1970s this approach began within the NIE to mature through staff discussions. It was first put to use in 1977 in a request for proposals for evaluation of the Cities-in-Schools Programs. Here, evaluators were required to be responsive to the various groups of people associated with the program. This approach was designed to: (a) increase the use of evaluation results for decision making and (b) bring a wider variety of people into active participation in the evaluation process (Weiss, 1983).

The driving force behind the model is that it assumes that when individuals get the information they want, when they want it, and in a form that makes sense to them, this will increase their commitment to the use of evaluation. With relevant information in hand, for example, stakeholders know that not only can they have a say in the development of programs, but the development is in response to their interests. The justification for stakeholder involvement relies heavily on the idea that it can increase the use of evaluation results in decision-
making. This approach is an attempt to rearrange the evaluator's relationship with those involved in the program from focusing on evaluation (policymaker to evaluator) to stakeholder groups.

The promise of the stakeholder approach is that it recognizes that programs affect many individuals. It realizes and legitimizes the diversity of interests at play, and the multiple perspectives that these interests bring to the judgment and understanding of evaluation. When stakeholder-based evaluation works well, it seems to either provoke differences among those who have an interest in a program or evaluation or just make these differences clear. This is one reason why this kind of evaluation is unique and necessary. Finally, the stakeholder approach surfaced because:

(1) programs that were almost total failures in achieving their aims continued to operate,

(2) shortcomings that were pointed out by evaluators were not rectified, and

(3) directions for program improvement given by evaluators were not pursued (Weiss 1986).

Early evaluators were more concerned with their social science peers than with the concerns of those engaged in the program (Bryk, 1983). Today, in an attempt to bridge the gap in perceptions and semantics in the areas of understanding and interpretation among stakeholders, educational researchers are included in this group (Carter & O'Neill, 1995). These evaluators are
considered stakeholders because they are seeking evaluation knowledge to inform them on what does and does not work in education for school reform.

**Stakeholder Analysis and School Reform**

The literature informs us that research on state and local perceptions particularly, as well as comprehensive systemic reform, is needed to discover what works and what is needed in school reform. One place to begin is in determining who is represented by the local or state boards—constituents or state legislators. This determination is not to be taken lightly since it is clear that boards play a significant role in educational reform because they govern American education (Zeigler, Jennings, & Peak, 1974). Boards implement and monitor changes in schools. Zeigler et al note that (although they discuss local boards) understanding concepts of representation and receptivity would aid in determining who is being represented. Representation refers to "acting in the interest of the represented in a manner responsive to them" (p. 77).

Responsiveness is acting on the basis of those preferences that constituents express to board members. That is, constituents express their concerns and priorities relating to educational reform and board members take these expressions into account when implementing and monitoring change. As a student of the literature, it appears that there is little, if any, expression or contact between state and local stakeholders on what school reform should or is expected to do in seeking support from one or the other on their position of reform. This uncertainty affects their analysis and the results of school reform.
Although it may appear that no expressed priorities surrounding school reform has reached state legislators, over the past 15 years legislators have become more involved with educational reform (Fuhrman, 1994). Still, more research is needed on local and state stakeholders' perceptions before determining the results of school reform. It is clear that state legislators have become more visible in their role as supporters of educational change.

**Stakeholder Analysis and Legislation**

An understanding of how stakeholder evaluation is used in legislation may be better understood through the following illustration. The reason for using the Push/Excel story is to illustrate how important it is to know what needs to be or is being evaluated when doing program evaluation, particularly in "high profile" initiatives such as the Venture Capital Program. Similarities appear because, initially, Push/Excel was a "high profile" enterprise. Reform efforts were undertaken by those in the community and later supported by policymakers. Farrar & House's (1986) story of Push/Excel and its evaluation describe how attempts were made to mobilize a community for social change. While the evaluation of Push/Excel occurred in the 1970s, it still informs us of how important it is to recognize and understand values (and other differences) among various stakeholders when seeking to utilize stakeholder-based evaluation.

Through Push/Excel, efforts were being made to get "at risk" students interested in staying in, and returning to, school as well as getting schools to produce quality students. These efforts to bring about social change were
initiated in the African American community in 1977 by Jessie Jackson. Jackson and other non-policy stakeholders (parents, children, ministers, workers, community at large) viewed this attempt at social change as a charismatic movement.

On the other hand, policymakers viewed Push/Excel as a program and evaluated it as such. They further believed that the effects of Push/Excel would be difficult to pin down, unless it was evaluated as a program (Farrar & House, 1986). This evaluation occurred despite concerns by some (editorials) that to evaluate Push/Excel as a program would be to strip Jackson of his independence and contain the charisma of the movement which was innovative in benefiting the African American community. When initially asked by Joseph Califano, then Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), if the government (NIE) could fund the program, Jackson declined the offer clarifying that it was not a program. Califano then informed Jackson if Push/Excel was a program, HEW could write a proposal and grant funding for it to which Jackson agreed.

This offer to fund Push/Excel came from Hubert Humphrey through Califano after Humphrey saw Jackson in a television appearance making a push for social change through community involvement. Jackson's call for radical change in individual attitudes for improving the school and community attracted many supporters. Thus, NIE awarded grants to Push/Excel and later grants were offered to set up projects in several other cities. In 1978, more than twenty local
education agencies expressed an interest in supporting Push/Excel. However, with federal grants came guidelines along with the foreign ideologies of bureaucratic intruders. The results were a call for the evaluation of Push/Excel.

NIE decided to use the stakeholder approach in evaluating Push/Excel to ensure that the evaluation would be useful to Push/Excel stakeholders. The evaluation was to show how Push/Excel affected students, schools, and communities and how these groups influenced the evaluation. Federal and local stakeholders were involved including federal officials, national Push/Excel staff and sponsors, students, parents, school people, churches, funding sources, and others in the community. NIE believed that stakeholder involvement would prevent some of the earlier conflicts between evaluators and program staff. These conflicts resulted in undermining the credibility and usefulness of evaluation for decision makers. Panels representing stakeholder groups were set up and asked seven questions. The intention was to have questions added that were of concern to the panel. A belief was that stakeholder-based evaluation improves the implementation process and evaluation utility. However, this did not occur in the case of Push/Excel.

Following the government's intervention, two years after it began, Push/Excel was evaluated as a program and less than five years later it was struggling to survive. While the evaluation may not have been the total reason for the extinction of the program (in the spirit in which it began), it did hinder the program. The primary reason for the near demise of Push/Excel was that federal
and local stakeholders viewed social change differently. In addition, along with the money from the federal government came a bureaucratic conception of social change. The charismatic view of social change is to change by conversion. So, evaluators and bureaucrats notion of social change was more technical in nature and sought data such as activity-outcome, cause-effect, and by the means to an end reasoning.

On the other hand, Jackson and others were committed and personally involved in social change for the betterment of the individual, the community, and society at large. Bureaucrats tended to dampen the commitment, undermine the faith in the movement, and smother the spontaneity of the movement by expecting to get immediate feedback from Push/Excel efforts. Stakeholders had different values, different reasons for participating, and different views on what Push/Excel was, and what they wanted Push/Excel to accomplish. Government intervention caused a shift in values from individuals to statistics. Federal stakeholders overlooked or ignored the fact that Push/Excel was not a program, but instead a movement. In doing so, they ignored the purpose of Push/Excel which was to bring about social change. This oversight caused the near demise of a movement that was benefiting a disadvantaged community. Finally, it is hoped that this illustration has aided in helping evaluators in understanding and recognizing movements versus programs when conducting evaluations.
Stakeholder Analysis: Rhetoric and Reality

It must be remembered that during the evaluation of Push/Excel, stakeholder-based evaluation was not common. While concerns about evaluations were beginning to surface, it was still low on evaluators' priority list (Gold, 1983). In the 1970s, it was important for evaluators to begin to synthesis their experience and findings into diagnoses of why, after twenty years of stakeholder-based evaluations, so few had succeeded (Murphy, 1983). In considering stakeholder approaches to evaluation, evaluators had to learn how to integrate their findings with the decision making process so that evaluations could continue to make a significant impact.

Shadish et al. (1991) argue that Weiss, (1983) is correct in her analysis that one reason, among many, for the failure and demise of early social programs is that their goals were often unclear, diverse, and varied among stakeholders. Those who held diverse values and different interests, for example, had to be swayed to one side or the other. Furthermore, because it is difficult to formulate questions based on ambiguous program goals, the program under evaluation can reject evaluation results by stating that the evaluation measured something other than what the program was trying to do. It can be argued that many programs are in a "sorry state" (Shadish et al, p. 184), but who is to say that a program failed? Whose values decide? This illustration informs us that while evaluators and other stakeholders concur on methods and approaches, more and more scholars argue that unless the understanding of values are entered
into stakeholder-based evaluation, conflicts between policymakers and decision-making will continue.

Parsons & Jordan (1994) further argue that because all children are not included in the equal educational opportunity equation of reform, attempts at school reform actually result in educational discrimination. Angell (1994) argues that the "transcultural identities" of students need to be considered when considering school reform (p. 297). According to Parsons & Jordan, schools are attempting to eliminate inequalities in educational opportunity for minority children, for example, special education for students who have learning deficiencies and for those children who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) because they are from Non-English speaking (NES) households. Yet, schools are not meeting the goal of educational opportunity because they are overlooking those deaf preschool minority students from NES households. These students are being discriminated against.

Angell's (1994) notion of "transcultural identities" argues that school reform addressing "multicultural education", which is "all the efforts currently being made in response to the changing cultural complexity of the classroom," (p. 297) needs to be more inclusive of cultural identities. Teachers and students need to have more than just knowledge about other people. There is a need to go beyond having sympathy, which draws attention to one's own feelings (I feel sad for you), with people from different cultures. Students and teachers must become empathetic (ability to speak, or insert the other person's feelings into one's own)
to their needs and realities. Transcultural identities allow students to act out their identities, personally (who I am) and culturally (what makes me who I am). It helps them to see their connections to others through this process. In cultivating this identity, schools begin to expand students' knowledge about other parts of the world. This is the result of school reform.

While attempts at school reform have not ended, Angell (1994) expressed two concerns with the results of school reform. First, the argument is that current attempts at school reform which do not address this notion of transcultural identities reflect this country's ignorance (geographically speaking) and exposes how it is not prepared to work in the international and intercultural world that it now faces. Second, coming from a competitive culture, students are unable to be empathetic because (a) most students have difficulty in understanding that one's personal identity emerges out of one's culture and (b) their capacity for empathy is underdeveloped since most students have never had to be concerned with someone else. All in all, if these concerns are not addressed in school reform, that is not to say that reform is mere rhetoric, or has failed. Not all schools work the same. If the intent of school reform is to be more inclusive, and these attempts are made practical by some teachers and students, the intent is well taken.

**Summary**

The literature has informed us that to seek answers without recognizing the presence of values is to ignore what stakeholder-based evaluation attempts to
do—to take into account the interests, concerns, and voice of the wide range of players who are interested in a program. The emphasis of this approach is on the personal concerns of individuals which does not come with traditional evaluations. The question this section seeks to address is: "How do various state and local stakeholders influence state educational policy?" The very promise of stakeholder-based evaluation is its revolutionary potential to overthrow or overcome the conventionality of evaluation. Revolutionary in the sense that stakeholder-based evaluation is new; and it does seek to shift the focus of evaluation being only for those making decisions about a program. It replaces the theory of social scientists who use traditional methods of abstract causal propositions with a humanistic theory. Jackson and local stakeholders, for instance, valued conversion while policymakers valued immediate feedback and statistics.

While scholars throughout the literature support the stakeholder approach, more and more scholars (Campbell, 1991; Weiss, 1983; Weiss, 1991; Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1985; & Marshall & Wirt, 1989) are recognizing the importance that the role of values among stakeholders play when evaluating. Furthermore, stakeholder-based evaluation itself also raises value questions (Weiss, 1983; Cohen, 1983).

For example, who exactly are stakeholders, who defines which groups are or are not stakeholders? (Weiss, 1983; 1991) When deciding who and who are not stakeholders, whose values are being used? These value questions revisit
Marshall's (1985) notion of "assumptive worlds" where understanding the values of policymakers are important. If diverse views are sought (and this is what makes stakeholder-based evaluation unique), whose views are articulated? Stakeholder-based evaluation is correct in presuming that there are important differences and values among individuals or parties. Yet, in terms of the process of the policy argument (who gets what, how much), implementation (how program should work), and decision-making (who decides what is important), which stakeholders' views are articulated? Although this may cause concern for some, the impact of stakeholder-based evaluation cannot be ignored.

While values are important and should not be overlooked, the stakeholder-based evaluation approach has benefited in two ways. It has broken the monopoly that government has had on control in the planning and conduct of evaluation; and it confronts those who believe that evaluation should focus on policymakers. Furthermore, Marshall's (1985) notion of assumptive worlds only recognizes policymakers as those having values and overlooks or ignores those outside of policy-making. Like Patton (1986), Marshall assumes that policymakers are the only audience that count when examining educational evaluation research and policy. Still, with its innovation, even stakeholder-based evaluation information is not, and should not be, the major basis for decision making.

Of the literature offered to date on bridging the gap between stakeholders' values and perspectives, the researcher believes that the most important point in
stakeholder-based evaluation is Stake's (1991) notion of goal-free evaluation. Here, evaluators act as civil servants versus advocates, thus allowing what is to be evaluated to emerge from observing the program. In this way evaluation can be useful to specific people because it is performing a service. This notion of goal-free evaluation addresses Weiss' (1983; 1991) concerns about values in stakeholder-based evaluations. When evaluating "high profile" programs such as Venture Capital, this caveat is helpful because a goal-free approach to stakeholder-based evaluation allows program stakeholders to influence the purpose and conduct of evaluation. Rather than entering evaluation with preconceived notions of "success," particularly with the many purposes of evaluation (documenting events, recording change, aiding in decision-making, or seeking understanding), the caveat is to pay attention to what is happening in the program. Then, choose the value questions and criteria for evaluating.

When understanding the Venture Capital Program in relation to stakeholder-based evaluation, the premise of this program is to create a more educational system that goes beyond the restructuring of traditional methods of learning and target innovative areas of teaching and learning, assessment, and professional development that included the support of parents and community. This concept not only promotes equal educational opportunity, but allows equal educational opportunity to be put into practice through school reform.
School Reform

A Historical Perspective

While the notion to restructure or bring about reform in schools can be dated much earlier, this study begins with Parker & Parker (1995) literature on the periods from 1635 through the 1750s when more elite grammar schools were replaced by more democratic academies. Efforts at school reform were pushed by Benjamin Franklin. A printer's apprentice and chief innovator of the first academy in 1753 in Philadelphia, Franklin borrowed this concept of adopting a more practical curriculum and co-education (offering education to both boys and girls) from Britain.

Initially, United States schools followed the European tradition where schools served elite males with classical, then liberal arts which reflected western values. As immigration, industrialization, and urbanization increased the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the children in public schools, the values and the notion that only the elite should be educated came to an end. Following Franklin's appraisal of the British public schools, U.S. curriculum became more relevant for the middle-class and included co-education.

In 1821, Emma Willard petitioned the New York State's legislature for a college for women. In 1895, the Female Seminary, later renamed the Emma Willard School began. These efforts at reform broadened the boundaries of women's education and other women's colleges followed. Reform then moved to curriculum. Reform continued through the late 1800s and early 1900s with
pragmatism in education promoted by John Dewey. Concerned about the welfare of the majority, Dewey promoted pragmatism because he was more concerned with all children getting the more practical side of teaching. Dewey was more concerned with facts than theory. He wanted students to learn more from actually doing (trial and error). Many conservatives disagreed with Dewey believing that this philosophy gave students the option of only doing what felt good to them in place of choosing more idealistic standards. Consequently, this notion was short-lived. Still, other philosophies followed.

Dewey continued his efforts at reform with attempts at Progressive Education in 1896-1903. Dewey still wanted students to be independent, knowledgeable and cooperative citizens. Here, Dewey sought out more progressive pedagogy such as having child-centered learning, student discussions, and student reports based on field trips and library research. His philosophy was that getting students involved in their future would get them involved in society. Dewey wanted students to learn to support society and the government. One of his ideas for child-centered learning was to have movable furniture so students could work in groups. Though reform efforts were short-lived again, Dewey's ideas were supported by other liberals.

In 1918, the National Education Association (NEA) Cardinal Principles report urged the broad-based curriculum favored by Dewey. The current support had shifted from NEA's earlier attempts (1893) at keeping the status quo when only 10 percent of United States youth attended college. These attempts occurred
right at the time that the country was becoming increasingly more complex through industrialization, urbanization, and socio-economics inequalities.

Attempts to keep the status quo were reflected through NEA's committee of ten, including six college presidents, who recommended that the college-entrance high school curriculum include English, history, science, mathematics, and a foreign language. Some liberals felt that by neglecting the curriculum needs of the majority NEA was attempting to standardize college entrance exams to keep high school for the elite. Once again, school reform that included the values and curriculum needs of those who were not the elites proved slow to progress.

In the 1920s and 1930s, studies of attitudes in the United States by several sociologists (Parker & Parker, 1995), and again in the 1980s, report that there was a continuity of traditional values, socio-economic divisions, and radical antagonism. More importantly, the report reflects that there was more enthusiasm for school sports than for school learning (Parker & Parker, 1995). The study revealed that these attitudes to keep the status quo persisted and change came about slowly. Social problems such as divorce, drug abuse, pornography, and minority concerns mounted. As social issues persisted, though still neglected, other liberal scholars began to take a stand on these controversial issues.

Social reconstruction followed the Great Depression of the 1930s. During this period, democracy and capitalism were questioned. The intent was to help students confront social and political problems and offer solutions to these
problems. Social reconstructionists believed that in order to build a better future, one had to become active in social change. They urged those who supported Progressive Education to take a stand against these controversial issues. This era was short-lived.

During President Lyndon Johnson's (1964-1968) Great Society, social reconstruction surfaced in the form of programs such as the Job Corps, Head Start, the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, and other programs that attempted to serve the poor and the jobless. Unfortunately, this era waned with the costs of the Vietnam War. What followed was the kind of attitude in students that Dewy had foreseen and fought against. Many students would not work, support society (through economic and political means), or fight in the war. Students became anti-business, anti-government, and anti-war (Parker & Parker, 1995).

The 1959 National Academy of Sciences held conferences bringing together those interested in subject-matter (math, science) with professional educators. These two blamed each other for low student achievement. It was at one of these conferences that Jerome S. Bruner developed his conceptual learning theory that "Any subject can be taught to any child at any age if the material is logically organized and sequentially presented" (Parker & Parker, 1995, p. 281).

This theory led to new teaching methods and new textbook approaches in biology, chemistry, mathematics, and social studies. While this theory proved innovative, it was again discovered that only the middle class students were
benefiting. Those who really needed and could benefit from this new way of learning were those who never received those early learning experiences. Consequently, after a decade, the focus shifted. The rising costs of the Vietnam War and the 1973 oil crisis delayed other attempts at school reform. Still, other attempts followed.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Open Education (the open classroom) sparked enthusiasm throughout the nation (Parker & Parker, 1995). This notion focused on small group instruction, teacher discussions, and teacher camaraderie. It was called the open classroom because it attempted to set up space for teaching students wherever space was available (hallways, cafeterias) and teaching students. This notion found favor with teachers and some critics of education like Jonathan Kozol (Parker & Parker, 1995). Open Education benefited from federal anti-poverty funds. Then President John F. Kennedy created a task force on education and poverty. Teacher centers opened that produced materials for small group learning projects. With all the enthusiasm and potential; however teachers were not trained in the techniques needed. Once more, and due largely to the Vietnam War eating away at scarce school funds, another attempt at school reform failed.

Parker & Parker's (1995) and Parker's (1994) accounts of the history of school reform covers many periods. While other periods of reform are listed throughout the literature, the philosophies from these periods are of most importance to this research. Throughout the literature, attempts have been made
to bring about not only educational reform, but equal educational opportunity. These attempts at reform bring us into the 1980s and 1990s. In 1983, the report from *A Nation At Risk* stated that "Our nation is at risk because of a rising tide of mediocrity in education" (Parker & Parker, 1995, p. 282). Goodlad (Parker & Parker, 1995) notes that both reports, *A Nation At Risk* (1983) and *A Nation At Risk: Ten Year Retrospect* (1993) made a serious mistake. When blaming schools for the problems children faced, both reports neglected to report that fundamental changes had taken place in society.

Goodlad (Parker & Parker, 1995) argues that instead of blaming schools for the problems in education, politicians should have recognized and blamed the problems students faced in education on the changed conditions in society. Some students, for example, were malnourished and others spoke several languages from their home country. So, for some, the report of *A Nation At Risk* (1983; 1993) is misleading. Problems arise in school because of problems in society (Parker & Parker, 1995, McLaughlin, 1975) that go unaddressed. This reality that social problems need to be faced is what early social reconstructionists, progressive and pragmatic educators had been arguing all along. As in the past, a problem with school reform is the way in which educators, researchers, and policymakers measure the effects of schooling (Zajano & Mitchell, 1988). A remedy offered by these early scholars was to start with the bottom 50 percent of the population and offer massive early childhood education. One has to look beyond schools for reform. School reform requires
better home life, better health, more community support, and leaders willing to take risks (Goodlad, 1984; Kozol, 1967). Today, the Venture Capital Program offers attempts at reform through more community support and community leaders willing to take risks. It appears that clear goals and purposes of school reform is needed more than ever.

**Purposes of School Reform**

In attempts at determining the purposes, or goals, of school reform, this section points out how goals of school reform conflict among educators, researchers, and policymakers. Or, is it that the broader goals and purposes of education simply vary among educators and policymakers? Understanding this conflict in ideals and variations in goals is intrinsic to the ways in which educators operate, researchers study, and policymakers govern schools (Zajano & Mitchell, 1988). This understanding can begin to shed light on where school reform should begin, what it should accomplish, and where it should possibly end.

First, many scholars and researchers (Kozol, in Parker & Parker, 1995; Parsons & Jordan, 1994; Angell, 1994) have been using the term "equal educational opportunity" in discussing, or expecting school reform. Using the 1954 *Brown Vs the Board of Education*, Parsons & Jordan (1994) legally define equal educational opportunity as including (a) equal access to education, (b) equal educational treatment, and (c) and/or equality of educational outcomes. When measuring the outcomes of equal education, they should measure those of student achievement. Equal educational treatment may require unequal
resources because different student populations have different educational needs (Parsons & Jordan, 1994; King, 1967; Salganick, 1994). Yet, are the attempts at reform that are taking place in the 1990s the same as the attempts at equal educational opportunity in the 1960s and before? Should school reform attempt, or is school reform attempting, to redress the ills (unequal educational opportunity due to economic, political, racial and social discrimination) of the past? While schools should provide equal educational opportunities, where do they begin? While the goal varies among parties, what is the over-riding goal of school reform? Can goals be reached simultaneously?

According to Castenell, Brooks, & Timm (1994), the goals of state superintendents for educational reform, for example, are climate building and curriculum development. Climate building is fostering those efforts of everyone involved in student achievement. Other researchers suggest that the goal of school reform is to equalize educational opportunity and attain excellence in student achievement (Parker, 1994; Parker & Parker, 1995). While the purposes and goals may vary, other researchers note that reform must include new ways of reaching students.

When making attempts at changing the past or inventing the future which school reform proposes, Angell (1994) argues that reform must begin to include more multi-education. Thus, it is in the classroom that the results of school reform will be reflected.
School Reform and Legislation

When addressing how state policy influences the systemic redesign of public education, this section examines the role of legislators and state departments of education. The role of state departments of education is to oversee the implementation of mandates as established by legislators. These roles may be better understood though the eyes and experience of Madsen (1994) as she tells the story of her involvement with a state department of education (state not given) in actually attempting to implement a new initiative, the Excellence in Education Act (EEA) that was passed in 1985. The legislative intent of EEA was to entice people into the teaching profession through scholarships, and once in the classroom provide them with beginning teacher assistance programs. The purpose of using this illustration is twofold: (1) to examine how state departments of education, as regulatory agents and agents of change, can institute or prevent efforts at school reform and (2) to discover the difficult positions that legislators are placed in when responding to their constituents and educators in the state. The latter is reflected in several ways:

(a) through the concern of district administrators and teachers who believe that local control is threatened by the mandated testing to measure performance on key skills,

(b) not only did they have to respond to criticism of EEA, but they also had to encourage schools in their legislative districts to participate in the program in order to improve education, and
(c) maintaining good public relations with the general public who felt that EEA was necessary for improving the quality of education.

It is because this department oversees implementation that understanding the role of policymakers is important to the push, or delay, of school reform. School data is provided by legislative liaisons of departments to legislators regarding the effects of their legislative proposal. This function serves two purposes: (a) it serves the legislatures' need to be involved and (b) it promotes the department's educational agenda. In order for departments to implement legislative policies, they must be responsive to the needs of schools. Furthermore, there must be a collegial environment among department personnel and the schools.

Advocates within departments (chief state school officer) are needed to promote new reform legislation. Madsen (1994) informs us that a shift over the past twenty years from local control to state departments has empowered the department's capacity in regulating educational policy. Along with the adoption of new educational reforms such as EEA by policymakers, there has been a tendency to centralize school governance.

EEA, for example, tended to centralize curricula mandates, state-administered testing programs, increased graduation requirements, and teacher certification, thereby serving to increase the department's authority. Consequently, departments and legislatures now have more control in monitoring classroom inputs, processes, and outcomes. Madsen (1994) describes the role of a state department in implementing that state's Excellence
in Education Act (EEA). While she does not view departments as unfavorable, a concern of Madsen's is how departments are plagued by problems of limited resources, illogical decision-making, and bureaucratic red tape.

This brief illustration of how state policy influences education seeks to restate the facts relevant to school reform and legislation rather than repeat the story as told by Madsen (1994). Madsen begins by informing us of the difficulties and frustrations that can occur when there is no clear direction, policy, interpretation, and guidelines for educational reform initiatives. She acknowledges that the limitations of her study are numerous and include the following:

1. the study did not begin as a specific methodological (quantitative or qualitative) approach, but more as a reflection of a professional autobiography,

2. the analysis and interpretation of the detail given can only be traced back to hearsay, old memos, correspondence, date books, and memory, and

3. the study takes place in one state agency and may not be representative of other state departments of education.

Credibility was established by exchanging stories and interpretations of stories with a professor who had been deeply involved in the inception of EEA, and who was doing similar research. This professor's data showed how the department developed regulations for programs and determined program placement. Madsen (1994) notes how this data was crucial to her understanding
of how the department functioned in the early stages of EEA legislation and how politics shaped the EEA policies. This shaping of policies by politics can be seen in trade-offs where legislators are appeased in order to get their vote in favor of portions of a bill, or on other bills. A reform under EEA, for example, was the career ladder program which established the tuition reimbursement program. Educators were reimbursed for taking courses to renew their certificate (legislation had been passed to discontinue lifetime teaching certificates). A provision allowing educators to take courses in economics, if they chose, was added to the reimbursement bill to appease a legislator and to encourage him to vote in favor of including this portion in the EEA bill (Madsen, 1994).

In examining the EEA, lessons can be learned and applied to the Venture Capital Program. First, we learned that, even with funding and support, educational reform will not just happen. If states are to mandate new reform legislation, policymakers must speak out for school improvement, insure that adequate resources are available, support new programs, and provide financial resources to those schools participating in reform.

Second, it appears that in the mid-1980s, as in earlier years (Parker & Parker, 1995, House, 1986, Parker, 1994), school reform was met with resistance by those who wanted to keep the status quo (Madsen, 1994). The status quo was to support local control of smaller rural districts which, in effect, was to support urban segregation. Is there resistance to school reform today? Who is resisting? Why are they resisting?
Next, Madsen (1994) notes that limited information is offered on state departments of education being held accountable in the role they play in school reform. During the mid-1980s, various areas of reform were examined among which were: teacher behaviors, administrative leadership, and student performance. Yet, few studies have critically examined state departments of education. The Department in question was never held accountable for how it implemented EEA in terms of how it briefed districts, allocated resources, and in the quality of its management of EEA.

Finally, if departments are unable to meet the demands of implementation, new school reform policies will prove worthless. While liaisons at the Ohio State Department of Education do monitor the Venture Capital Program, there are no policies in place that mandate implementation. Understanding how state policy influences the systemic overhaul of school reform is significant because the Venture Capital Program is a similar program in the sense that it, too, needs to be implemented to achieve student achievement through school improvement.

Summary

Madsen's (1994) study of program evaluation offers several recommendations in implementing educational reform legislation. First, state policy must be designed to foster the image of the department as a helper and not as an enforcer. Second, when new reforms are mandated, additional resources should be included to assist administrators. Lastly, when new educational policies are developed, administrators need to be well informed.
through in-service programs and state conferences. On the other side, administrators need to develop a better understanding of the state department of education and its role in mandating policy. Often, administrators act as gatekeepers of the flow of information about programs to the district. The Venture Capital program demands a different form of state involvement.

Individuals in departments of education in several states, for instance, have become known as brokers and gatekeepers because they judge the quality of educational research information (Hetrick & Van Horn, 1988). These groups differ in relation to their position to policymakers and their methods of operation. Research brokers translate the raw materials of social science research into the bits of information and advice that policymakers absorb. Brokers are typically outsiders to policy making, for instance, academics or think tanks. Gatekeepers review relevant research, evaluate policy proposals, and decide whether or not to pass this information on to their superiors (Hetrick & Van Horn, 1988). These individuals are usually insiders who are trusted friends or colleagues who work for principal policymakers. The Venture Capital Program suggests that state administrators and departments view themselves as partners who seek quality and excellence as a goal, not as adversaries who struggle for power.

Venture Capital is a reform of the 1990's. It strives for continuous improvement through systemic reform and professional development.
Due to the present climate of school reform, the pressure for higher accountability is significant and stakeholders are being very political. Thus, there is a need for stakeholder-based program evaluation.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative paradigm for two reasons. A qualitative approach enables the researcher to: (1) use flexibility and insight to build on the information received and (2) understand and capture the perceptions of other people without imposing the researchers own point of view (Patton, 1990). A comparison of stakeholders' perceptions demands a deep and rich understanding of political context especially when the topic involves a high profile policy issue.

Access

Access is the process of acquiring "consent to go where you want, observe what you want, talk to whomever you want, and obtain and read whatever documents you require, and do all of this for whatever period of time you need to satisfy your research purposes" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 33). Access requires full and unqualified consent from participants. For this study, full access was not required since the method of data collection was elite interviews.
Interview letters were sent requesting 15 to 30 minute time slots. However, the current State Superintendent of Public Instruction provided greater access to people at the department who were knowledgeable about the Venture Capital Program. Such policy "experts" were key in helping to understand the policy setting. They provided great experience in the setting, were willing to talk, and were especially insightful about the program (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

**Interviewed Participants**

The first set of data collected were from interviews. The researcher received the names of members¹⁰ of the House and Senate Education Committees from the House and Senate Clerks. Interview letters (Appendix C) were sent to all 30 members of the Education Committees (of which 17 responded) and five other key state educational leaders¹¹ requesting their participation in the research. The researcher interviewed 22 state educational leaders. Of the 22, two were telephone interviews; and one legislator mailed his response to the researcher. The interviews included 17 legislators, the two State Superintendents of Public Instruction, a representative of the Venture Capital Assessment Team (team), a representative from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), and a representative from the Education Commission of the States. In the process of interviewing, it was determined that three legislators were not familiar with Venture Capital.

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¹⁰ Hereafter referred to as state legislators. Responses refer to those legislators interviewed and are not to be compared to other reform initiatives.

¹¹ Hereafter referred to as influentials since they play a role in the policy and implementation of reform initiatives.
Since an intent of the study was to discover state legislators' perceptions on what constitutes effective indicators of success in relation to the Venture Capital Program, this unfamiliarity with the program was significant. Therefore, these responses were included. Overall, the study prompted several legislators, to make inquiries into the program.

The interviewed legislators served on the House and Senate Education Committees. They were chosen because of their oversight role of the Venture Capital Program. Eleven were Republicans and six were Democrats. Nine were in the House of Representatives and eight were in the Senate. Five represented urban areas, six represented suburban areas, and six represented rural areas. The two state superintendents and the ODE representative were chosen because of their roles in the initiation and implementation of the program. A representative of the Assessment Team was selected due to the team's role in program evaluation. The ECS representative was chosen for his role in tracking and monitoring innovative state legislation, such as Ohio's Venture Capital initiative. There was no legislative request for ECS to monitor the program (ECS, personal communication, February 24, 1997).

Document analysis occurred prior to and following interviews. Some documents, for example, were received from the former State Superintendent of Public Instruction prior to interviews. Other documents pertaining to Venture Capital were received from the Ohio Department of Education during interviews.
Document analysis serves several purposes. It yields excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational, clinical, or program records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys (Patton, 1990). For Venture Capital, document analysis was in the form of interoffice memos, newsletters, and booklets provided by the Ohio Department of Education. By corroborating the researcher's observations and interviews, documents make the findings more trustworthy (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Since program documents may be incomplete and inaccurate, they are subject to a variety of measurement errors (Patton, 1990). Still, documents provide a "behind-the-scenes" (p. 245) look at the program. This is significant because this "behind-the-scenes" view may not otherwise be directly observable and without the leads provided through the documents, the interviewer may not ask appropriate questions. Documents serve a dual purpose: 1) they are a basic source of information about program decisions and background, or activities and processes and 2) they can give the interviewer ideas about important questions to pursue when interviewing (Patton, 1990).

The interview letter included the interview guide (Appendix C) and a self-addressed stamped envelope. It described the proposed research and asked stakeholders to ascertain whether they would like to participate in the study. Stakeholders were also informed that if they agreed to the interview, they would be asked to rate (on a scale of 1-6) a list of indicators of success (Appendix A).
Not all legislators responded to the request. Of those who did not respond, five represented suburban areas, three represented rural areas, and six represented urban areas. Nine were Republicans and five were Democrats. Two were in the Ohio Senate and 12 were in the Ohio House of Representatives. During the request for interviews, one legislator in the House of Representatives was appointed a Senate seat and the researcher was not able to establish contact. Attempts were consistently made by telephone for participation; however after several weeks of calling offices, legislative aides informed the researcher that they were too busy or not interested in participating in the study.

Not all legislators were willing or available to participate in the study. Three legislative aides informed the researcher that legislators were too busy with meetings, the budget, and getting bills passed. During two telephone calls, the researcher spoke directly with legislators and was informed that they were not interested in the study.

Of those who responded, the researcher began immediately receiving phone calls from legislative aides to schedule interviews and there was no need for confirmation or follow-up letters. Following one interview, the researcher was informed that she was given the name of one legislator in the House of Representatives in error. Since this legislator served on the Education Committee in the 121st General Assembly, this interview was included. The Education Committee members serve in the 122nd General Assembly. During the course of interviews, several interview times were canceled by legislative
aides, but they were immediately rescheduled. Interview letters, phone calls, and all but two interviews were scheduled and completed within one month. Interviews began in late January 1997 and ended in early April 1997.

In order to maximize interview time, an introduction stating the intent of the interview was communicated in a cover letter (Appendix C) along with the interview guide (Appendix C). As much as possible, stakeholders were fully prepared to answer questions prior to each interview. A return date was specified and a deadline was given for those who expressed an interest in participating in the study and stakeholders were encouraged to select a time and date that was convenient for them. Bogdan & Biklen (1992) suggest that "they (researchers) decide how to distribute their time, who to interview, and what to explore in depth (p. 59). Responses to the request to interview began the week that interview letters were mailed. The researcher requested 15 to 30 minutes time slots. The researcher was aware of the stakeholders' busy schedules; however they were very friendly and talked with her until all questions were answered. Some interviews lasted 15 minutes, others lasted longer, but all scripted questions were answered. With permission of stakeholders, all interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Prior to each interview, while the recorder was running, stakeholders were once more asked their permission to record the interview.

An interview guide (Appendix C) was used. An interview guide is a list of questions to be explored in the course of the interview. This approach: a) allows
the researcher to obtain basically the same information by covering the same material and b) provides topics or subjects where she is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will clarify or highlight a particular subject. The researcher can be flexible and even establish a conversational style of interviewing by wording questions spontaneously, yet still focus on a particular subject (Patton, 1990). An advantage of this approach to interviewing is that it keeps the interactions focused while allowing individual perspectives and experiences to emerge (Patton, 1990). A weakness is that too much flexibility can yield different responses from different perspectives thus reducing the comparability of responses. The same questions were asked of all participants. The interview guide was also used as a checklist in making sure that all of the topics were covered during the interview.

Several sources were used to develop the interview guide. First, the guide was developed based on the literature on school reform. Second, the guide was developed based on the researcher's familiarity with indicators of success. Third, the guide was developed based on the research questions for the study. Fourth, questions were developed based on conversations with key state level policy informants. The real challenge in interviewing is probing, or knowing, when the respondent has more to say and knowing how to get him/her to say it. Probing also served the purpose of not allowing respondents to give an answer based on what they believe the researcher wants to hear during data collection. Additional questions, for example, were asked based on conversations with those
legislators who took a strong position (pro or con) about Venture Capital.

**Interview Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late Jan 1997</td>
<td>Sent out interview letter requesting individual interviews via in person or per telephone. Interviews began ranging from 15-30 minutes Note-taking began Transcription began</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1997</td>
<td>Interviews continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1997</td>
<td>Wrapped up interviews Transcribing completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-Aug 1997</td>
<td>Data Analysis Write Up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Observation**

Interviewing and observation are integrated since every "face-to-face interview also involves and requires observation" (Patton, 1990, p. 32). A framework is needed for managing the data collected during fieldwork and analyzing observations. The researcher used an observational data framework to describe body language as well as nonverbal signals (Patton, 1990). Probing was especially useful for short or vague answers. When asked how they felt Venture Capital was being implemented, for instance, those who stated they were not sure were asked to clarify what they meant. These observations play a significant role in research since this can prompt the researcher to ask further questions or to close out a particular topic.
When asking questions, attention was given to the order in which questions were asked (Glesne & Peshkin 1992). Some questions were asked first because they were fundamental to what would be asked later while some questions were asked at the end for wrapping up the interview.

A tape recorder with a counter was used to facilitate note-taking and designation (of the number) of a particular topic(s) of interest to the researcher and to participants for further clarification or research. This procedure saved time when doing analysis and follow-up by allowing immediate access to the particular portion of interest rather than listening to the whole tape.

Interviewing also gave the researcher the opportunity to gain insight into stakeholders' perspectives and concerns while building rapport and reciprocity (Lather, 1986). Interviewing "begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Kvale (1996) notes that "an interview is literally an inter-view, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (p. 2). Interviewing encourages one to structure the account of what many feel is important and introduce, to a large degree, their notion of what they feel is relevant, instead of relying on the researcher's notion of relevance (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This method of collecting data generated insight into stakeholders' perceptions and the indicators of success for school improvement that were important to them.
Direct Quotations were used as much as possible in an attempt to provide a framework for stakeholders to accurately and thoroughly respond to the research questions in a way that represented their point of view (Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1989). Therefore, the exact language and words of stakeholders were used in the presentation of findings in Chapter Four except where clarification was needed. During interviews, the researcher received clarification on stakeholders' words and asked permission to clarify grammar.

One-Shot Question. In the case where the interviewee(s) were unable to keep the appointment due to last minute meetings, etc., the researcher was prepared with Patton's (1990) advice to ask a single, one-shot question in order to salvage something of the interview. This one-shot question was the question to be asked if the researcher had only one shot at the interviewee. In this case, she asked, "If you had one thing to say regarding any evidence you require for making a decision on the value of Venture Capital, what would you say?" This question was asked of two legislators via phone during follow-up phone calls following the cover letter requesting interviews.

Surveyed Participants

The second set of data came from longitudinal research conducted in 1995-96 by the Venture Capital Assessment Team, initially assigned by the ODE to track the progress of Venture Capital schools indicators of success. The team collected data from 65 (12% of total venture schools, 561) randomly selected schools. Initially, the team randomly selected 45 of the first 307 schools. Other
schools were added to the list as they were approved and funded. Twenty more schools were randomly selected in 1995 and 1996 for a total of 65. Using an Assessment For Indicators (AFI) instrument, the team organized these schools' top ten indicators along the critique of type and quality. The instrument (Appendix A) was developed by the Assessment Team (Synergetic Development, 1996) to assess Venture Capital schools' indicators of success. Using the same instrument, the researcher classified school-based data (871 indicators) identified by the 65 schools. Of the 871 indicators, the researcher and a member of the Assessment Team chose the 12 most commonly cited (Appendix A) indicators.

Using these 12 indicators, the third set of data consisted of a survey (Appendix A) given to two groups of respondents for their assessment of importance on a scale of 1-6 (1 = not important at all; 6 = extremely important, essential). Survey data were collected in the following way:

First, indicators were mailed to those state-level stakeholders who were interviewed. Second, at a Teaching and Learning Conference in April 1997, 34 teachers were given the rating form by a Venture Capital Assessment Team member during the Planning Venture Capital Initiatives session.

Three legislators (one in the Senate and two in the House of Representatives) did not respond to the survey. Of the 22 mailed surveys to interviewed stakeholders, 19 were returned of which 14 were legislators. Survey data were examined along with interview data for any comparisons, or contrasts,
in perceptions of indicators between educators' and legislators' indicators for determining school and student success. Legislative surveys were also compared to their interview data.

**Analysis of Indicators**

In order to understand the data and to get familiar with indicators of success, the researcher compared her ratings of the school-based data (871 indicators) with that of the Team of experts ratings. Comparing the ratings also aided the researcher in better understanding and identifying indicators when talking with policymakers.

**Assessment For Indicators Instrument**

The types (5) and quality (6) of indicators pursued by Venture Capital schools are presented in Appendix A. The instrument corresponds with the eight critical elements of planning and implementation efforts that the venture initiative requires of schools (Appendix A).

Using the instrument, the researcher ranked indicators of success (total of 871) submitted by the 65 randomly selected venture schools. The conditions of the school (i.e. district wealth, family SES) that created the indicators were not considered. An objective was to determine what indicators of success were cited the most often by local educators.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that have been accumulated
to increase the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study, particularly in presenting what she has discovered to others. It involves working with and organizing data, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for new patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell others (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, 153).

Data analysis occurred "simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation, and narrative reporting writing [sic]" (Creswell, 1994, p. 153). The process of qualitative analysis was based on data reduction and interpretation. An extensive amount of information was taken and reduced to certain patterns, categories, and themes and then, interpreted. Data analysis involves "organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned" Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 127). It involves a process of working with the data to create explanations, posing hypothesis, developing theories, and linking your story to other stories. To do this, "data must be categorized, synthesized, patterns must be sought out, and data must be interpreted" (p. 127). Data analysis is to bring order, structure, and meaning to what has been collected (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Interpretation of data is the "defamiliarization" (Thomas, 1993, p. 45) process where researchers take what they have seen (heard) and translate it into something new. It is also a way of distancing ones self from the taken-for-granted aspect of what is seen (heard) while allowing the aspect of what has been seen (heard) to be more closely viewed. Defamiliarization is the process
of reframing the documents, anecdotes, impressions, observations, and symbolic representations of the culture into something new. In going through this process, "results are never final, but only partial and always subject to rethinking. If done well, intellectual reflections create new ways of thinking" (Thomas, 1993, p. 45).

After each interview, the researcher made notes from the taped conversation which she later used to do the actual coding and analysis of the data along with the typed transcript. Each interview was selectively transcribed.

Analytic Procedure

Data analysis does not refer to a stage in the research process. Instead, it is a continuous process that should begin as soon as the research begins (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Data were analyzed as they were collected and transcribed. The researcher began data analysis by reading the transcribed interviews and handwritten field notes several times in order to become familiar with the data. Then, she began to search for recurring words, themes, phrases, and patterns of thinking among participants' comments. Coding was used to analyze themes and patterns and was developed based on (1) interviewed stakeholders' perceptions of indicators of success, (2) survey data, and (3) comparisons and contradictions of perceptions that were found in the data.

Coding data involves searching through the data for regularity and patterns and writing down words and phrases to represent these themes and patterns. Words and phrases represented coding categories. Major codes represent specific topics and subcodes and where necessary, represent items related to
major topics. Student achievement, for instance, was a major topic and test scores was a related item. Codes (category abbreviations) were assigned to "units of data." This was usually paragraphs and sentences from the field notes and/or interview transcripts (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). To begin reflecting the emerging and evolving structure of the study, it is recommended that researchers use a code book to begin developing a coding scheme shortly after the research is underway (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Patton (1990) describes inductive analysis as a process where patterns, themes, and categories (assessment or skills) emerge from the data in terms of importance and allow the researcher to become aware of their existence. First, the researcher used the research questions based on theories of school reform presented in the literature. Second, guidance came from theories grounded in the data where data was analyzed from "another persons perspective" (Patton, 1990, p. 278). This approach begins with specific observation and builds toward general patterns. Throughout this research, a goal was to allow themes and patterns to emerge rather than presupposing in advance what the important dimensions would be.

The goal of letting themes and patterns emerge was met by allowing stakeholders to identify their own indicators of success rather than imposing on, or presenting, them a list of indicators developed in advance by the researcher. Inductive analysis allowed the researcher to be open to and to discover, whatever themes, or patterns, that emerged directly from the data.
Trustworthiness

Efforts to achieve trustworthiness required the researcher's continual alertness to her own bias and subjectivity (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). From the onset of the study, she made a conscious effort to achieve trustworthiness by attempting to report data as closely as possible to what respondents actually said. A purpose of achieving trustworthiness was to convince readers that the data are credible and worth reading. To ensure trustworthiness in this study, the researcher employed several strategies from Lincoln & Guba (1985).

1. Reflexive journal. From the onset, a journal was kept which included a daily schedule and the logistics, rationale, and methodological decisions for the study. Speculations were also kept about any insights that developed along the way.

2. Member checks. This is described as the "single most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 239). Since the researcher's goal was to understand the perspective of respondents, it was essential that she verify/clarify statements made during interviews. This process was continuously employed by providing respondents constant opportunities for feedback during data collection. After each interview, for example, respondents had a choice of listening to the tape or portions of the tape (this is where having a counter on the tape was handy) to clarify responses and to correct or delete what they did not mean to, or did not want to, say. They were also offered a copy of the transcript and/or a synopsis of the interview that would be written up for each interview if they chose. Member checks were conducted at the end of each personal
interview and after each telephone interview. All stakeholders chose to receive an executive summary at the end of the study.

3. Peer debriefer. This consists of the researcher's advisor and a committee. In playing devil's advocate, these debriefers provided "methodological guidance and served as an cathartic outlet" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 243). They helped the researcher to form and simplify working theories and themes by providing her with opportunities to try various methodological steps in the research design.

4. Field notes were kept in notebook form and comprised a field log of ideas, hunches, descriptions of people, events, settings, patterns that seemed to be emerging, and reflections. Notes were used to explore the researcher's own biases. These notes included ideas, impressions, clarify earlier interpretations, speculate about what's going on, and making flexible short and long term plans for the upcoming days. There are several kinds of field notes (Patton, 1990, Glesne and Peshkin, 1992): (1) Mental notes, 2) Jotting notes down during the interview, and (3) Full notes written throughout the day and, depending on the circumstances, after the observational period. The researcher kept jotted notes and full notes. When interviews were short, full notes were kept. When interviews were long, jotted notes were kept. Expansion on notes occurred in all cases.

Kleinman and Copp (1993) discuss what they refer to as notes-on-notes that help with credibility. These are notes that comprise Patton's (1990) and Glesne & Peshkin's (1992) notes, but include emotions. Each day, these notes were written up and expanded on in a summary of what took place that day. Further
analysis came from these notes-on-note versus the notes. When several legislators, for example, asked for the tape to be turned off before expressing their concern, or did not say certain things until the tape was turned off, the researcher became anxious. She did not think that she could write their words fast enough. The researcher made a mental as well as written note about the participants' opinions of Venture Capital. At the end of the day, the researcher expanded on this by making notes on these notes. Several legislators did express their concerns on tape. Pursuing a variety of sources and resources allowed her to build on the strengths of each type of data collection while minimizing the weaknesses of any single approach.

Treatment of Ethics

The researcher submitted the appropriate forms to the Human Subjects Committee. Once the cover letter was sent, the researcher made follow-up phone calls to introduce herself and to further explain the purpose of the research and its importance. This contact was also to provide any additional information, to schedule interviews and to answer any additional questions. Other strategies for ethics were to use anonymity to protect the identities of respondents from any harm that the data (including verbal) may generate.

Anonymity was used throughout interviews; however names of respondents are listed (Appendix C). The researcher provided stakeholders with the choice to be identified. The majority chose not to be named. The researcher complied. No names were used during interviews or on the transcripts of taped interviews.
Finally, all tapes, field notes, and other documents pertaining to the interviews were kept by the researcher and will be shared with no one.

The researcher employed the suggestions of Bogdan & Biklen (1992) related to ethics in fieldwork. First, she made it clear to stakeholders, in negotiating permission to do the study, the procedures that she would use in conducting the study and she abided by this agreement. Second, the researcher attempted to accurately report her findings while keeping confidentiality. The purpose of the research was also explained in the interview letter. Ethical considerations are particularly important in this study since policymakers are involved. The voice of policymakers is important to the public, as well as to fellow policymakers. If stakeholders had chosen to review transcripts of interviews and, for whatever reason, decided to delete portions of text from the original transcript and/or change the wording of some of their statements, the researcher would have used this edited version of the transcript. If participants would have discussed certain issues, but requested that certain details not be reported in the study, the researcher would have complied. In undertaking this study, the researcher did not seek out data to prove or disprove the success, or failure, of Venture Capital, but rather data were collected from state and local stakeholders to describe their perceptions on what they feel are important indicators of success for school reform.
Methodological Triangulation

In employing good research practices, the researcher was obligated to triangulate (Patton, 1990). Triangulation is the use of multiple methods to study a single project or program (Venture Capital). Thus, the researcher drew on a combination of techniques to collect data (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). She used three primary methods for triangulation purposes: (1) individual interviews, (2) document analysis, and (3) surveys. Document analysis was internal (legislative history of Venture Capital, interoffice memos) and external communications (Venture Capital Assessment Team data). Data were triangulated to ensure that as particular pieces of information came to light, steps would be taken to validate each against one other source (a second interview) and/or a second and/or third method (document analysis, survey). As a means of verifying and validating respondents comments, transcripts were to be given to stakeholders (member checks); however they chose to receive an executive summary. These practices were applied to the study to aid in the establishment of trustworthiness and validity of participant data. The researcher employed the "inclusion of more than one individual as a source of data" (Mathison, 1988, p. 14).

Patton (1990) suggests that "... as a final methodological rule the principle that multiple methods should be used in every investigation" (p. 187). Triangulation always improves the quality of data and the accuracy of ethnographic findings (Fetterman, 1989).
The theoretical ideas discussed above served as a general conceptual framework in guiding the initial data analysis. Within categories (student achievement, professional development, parental involvement) items were coded by hand. There were three major sources of coding used to analyze the themes, patterns, and comparisons that emerged: (a) the first source was developed based on document analysis, (b) the second source was developed based on interviews, and (c) the third source was developed based on surveys. Within these three sources, there was primarily a structural source of data based on the researcher's questions and a thematic source of data based on stakeholders' perceptions of indicators of success.

To insure what traditional researchers define as external and internal validity, reliability, and objectivity, the researcher uses Lincoln and Guba's (1985) notion of trustworthiness to insure, as much as possible, that the research is reliable. To present this research as unbiased, as accurate, and as credible as possible, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) strategies for trustworthiness were used: dependability (established by credibility), transferability (thick description), confirmability (audit trail), and credibility (member checks). This method of trustworthiness aided the researcher in displaying to readers that the research is valid, worth reading, credible, and that it is an accurate description of what respondents reflected.
Summary

In this study, the researcher sought to interpret what state education leaders and local educators define as indicators of success for the Venture Capital program. Data were collected through the use of interviews, document analysis, and surveys. These multiple methods were incorporated to "enhance the validity of research findings" (Mathison, 1988, p. 13). A systemic analyses of the data resulted in the coding of meaningful categories and the highlighting of emerging themes. These themes are the basis for the study findings that are described in detail in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The primary purpose of this study was to compare and contrast state and local perceptions about indicators of success for the Venture Capital Program (VCP). This study specifically addressed the following research questions:

1. What do state and local stakeholders consider important indicators of success for Venture Capital schools?
2. How do state educational leaders assess the legislative support for the Venture Capital Program?
3. What are state educational leaders' perceptions on how Venture Capital is being implemented?

For the purpose of this study, the researcher was specifically interested in state legislators' perceptions on what constitutes effective indicators of success for school improvement and comparing and contrasting those perceptions with
local educators. In the following pages, findings from interviews of stakeholders are given, followed by comparative survey data.

**QUESTION 1. What do state and local stakeholders consider important indicators of success for Venture Capital schools?**

Not all of the interviewed legislators were familiar with the Venture Capital Program, although most had a working knowledge\(^\text{13}\) of the program. One legislator noted, "I never heard of the term outside of business" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997). Legislative responses are delineated in Table 1 (Appendix B). For an aggregate response of interviewed legislators, see Table 2 (Appendix B).

While some legislators found test scores an easy indicator to identify, some argued that test scores as indicators can be artificial and too narrow. Some legislators, for instance, are unsure of just what test scores measure and so do not consider scores as measuring students' true potential. Additionally, some legislators believed that relying too heavily on test scores as measurements of students' ability could result in overlooking other abilities such as the ability to comprehend and reading at grade level. As shown, there was a considerable array of responses\(^\text{14}\). For the purpose of discussion, each subheading represents

\(^{12}\) Refers to the seventeen interviewed state legislators and five non-legislators. Non-legislators are referred to as influentials since they play a role in the policy and implementation of reform initiatives.

\(^{13}\) Prior to interviews, several legislators informed the researcher that they had gathered information on the program and/or either the researcher mailed legislators information which enabled them to discuss the program.

\(^{14}\) Responses represent those interviewed and are not compared to other reform initiatives.
INTERVIEWS

Higher Test Scores

Test scores was frequently cited as a primary indicator of success. While some of the interviewed legislators believe student achievement should be a primary aim, the means of defining and assessing achievement are not all clear. Similarly, legislators hold a variety of opinions about the nature, use, and relevance of student achievement indicators. This indicator appeared to fall within five response categories: (1) Yes, we like test scores as indicators; (2) No, we do not like test scores, but will tolerate them as the only efficient indicator available; (3) No, we do not like test scores; (4) We are not sure what scores are measuring; and (5) we question the purposes of test scores.

Some legislators liked test scores as an indicator of student success. The two legislative chairs felt that test scores were important. One felt that tests were "the ultimate indicator" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997) while the other suggested that it is not so much the results of the test, but "passing the test (statewide proficiency exam) for the first time" that serves as an indicator of success (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 12, 1997). Many students, for example, pass some sections of the exam (reading) and fail others (math). One legislative chair would like to see students pass all five parts (citizenship, math, writing, science, and

15 Common responses are those responses that were most frequently cited by stakeholders.
reading) the first time the exam is taken.

Liking test scores as indicators is not to say that scores are the only indicator for truly assessing student achievement. "The art of trying to assess how we're doing is something that's evolving. Now that we have an emphasis on the policy side of setting standards from the performance expectation, I think you're going to see a dialogue about what is a fair way of assessing our child's ability" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997).

Other legislators acknowledged that they do not like to use tests as indicators, but will tolerate them as the only efficient indicator available. Currently it is "all we have to determine students' progress" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997).

One influential did not like test scores as indicators of student success. One stakeholder concerned with what the emphasis on test scores say to students noted, "We're creating a whole set of kids in this country who think that all they have to do to be educated is to pass tests, but it's much, much more than that" (Assessment Team representative, personal communication, April 4, 1997).

When discussing the goal of Venture Capital, its commitment to student learning, and the role test scores play as an indicator, for instance, one State Superintendent of Public Instruction noted: "we're looking for a system built around students that translates into day-to-day learning. You won't see
proficiency tests as such here" (personal communication, February 27, 1997).

For some stakeholders, there is the concern about and question of what test scores really measure. When it comes to measuring student success, or achievement, some stakeholders are questioning if test scores are really the determinant. Several stakeholders questioned what proficiency exams measured. The Education Committee of States representative noted, "If you're using a test and we all understand what it is measuring and that it, in fact, is going to give us the answer we need, I would be in favor (of tests)" (telephone interview, February 24, 1997). Several legislators believe that the true measure of success is that young people who complete twelve years of high school should be able to compete in the academic arena at the University level. Yet, "if tests are testing what they're supposed to be testing, whatever that is ..., there would be no need to spend so much money on remedial courses, such as math, at the University level. And these are the students passing the proficiency exam" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, January 30, 1997). Other legislators noted that there is a need for schools to define what they are seeking in terms of achievement. One legislator acknowledged that the term "achievement" is vague and that tests are too narrow and not sufficient for determining achievement. "Achievement needs to be defined, and then there are the societal problems of race and economics relative to achievement based on tests scores" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 27, 1997).
Finally, the purpose of test scores is also viewed differently by legislators. Several legislators questioned the emphasis on test scores and felt that exams should be based on the curriculum. One legislator stated, "I'm not sure if we're putting emphasis on tests as an indicator or if we're saying that test scores are the criteria for graduation. Tutoring programs should be set up to strengthen any skills and to address students' weaknesses" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, January 30, 1997).

It appears that legislators believe that working with students' strengths and weaknesses is significant for helping them to achieve. Schools, for example, need to look at why kids failed the exam and take corrective efforts to help them. "So, if we're applying education as I understand education, (you are tested on what you learn) and if we're applying testing on what the person is comprehending, then by the time those children get to the 9th grade exam we should know pretty much who isn't going to pass that exam before they take it" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, January 30, 1997). This legislator suggested that there be a way of monitoring failures beginning in the 4th grade in order to correct the deficiencies that keep children from passing those exams.

While state stakeholders vary on test scores as an essential indicator, there is a wide variety of opinions about the nature and use of test scores. There does not seem to be any significant connection between perspectives on testing and political party affiliations. Nor is there a distinct separation of opinion between
legislative leadership and viewpoints expressed by the Ohio Department of Education representatives on this indicator.

Legislators expect schools to be more proactive in identifying students' weaknesses. While the 9th grade proficiency exam may be appropriate, it was argued that the 4th and 6th grade exams should have been instituted prior to the 9th grade exam. This way, schools would have a better idea of what they need to work with in helping students to comprehend and in knowing what it is that kids do not comprehend.

So, for one legislator, the ultimate test of achievement might be how students do in the job market (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997). For another, it might be whether there is an increase in student achievement. While test scores may be important, "the end result is improved student performance, improved retention and completion of a high school diploma, more students finishing high school and finishing with higher levels of achievement" (former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, telephone interview, February 19, 1997).

The essential finding is that state stakeholders share a commitment to test scores as an indicator, but they realize that statewide assessment of student success is a very complicated and controversial activity. It seems that legislators realize that much more work needs to be done in the identification and implementation of reliable and meaningful student achievement indicators. There is a clear legislative interest in the improvement of student assessment systems.
Getting the Conditions Right For Learning

While responses in this area may not be reflected in the Table, this section is a synopsis of stakeholders’ perceptions on what they believed would lead to student achievement.

The overall notion here is that stakeholders want to see teachers stretch beyond the traditional way of doing things — teaching students and presenting materials. Legislators expect schools to create an environment that is conducive to learning. The kind of environment that both nurtures and motivates students. While most respondents were unable to articulate or describe ideas they would like to see, particularly in measurable terms, the notion was that students should be able to do things on their own. In teaching students to learn, a consensus among stakeholders was that all students can learn.

Legislators are concerned with the way in which schools conduct business, particularly when it comes to students. Legislators, for example, want to see schools do more to tap into students’ potential versus practicing social promotion (the practice of passing students to the next grade level based on their age). One legislator noted that social promotion is "not an indicator of success" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 20, 1997). Additionally, legislators felt that grade promotion should be measured by the ability to read. If students are taught and expected to read, they should be progressing to the next grade level. Yet, schools are passing students who are not reading at the appropriate grade level. State educational leaders are
expecting more of students. Students are expected to do more than pass an exam. They are expected to know more and to comprehend what is expected of them. One legislator suggested that much of students' failure is because students are not reading and comprehending. "Kids don't know what's expected of them" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997).

Overall, the concern is that if children were understanding what they are being taught, they would be passing the proficiency exam and there would be no social promotion. Because of social promotion "we have children in the seventh grade who can't read. Then those children who do fail a grade are more likely to drop out of school" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 20, 1997). Several legislators were concerned with students passing to the next grade level while not knowing what is expected of them or what they are expected to learn.

One suggestion for using indicators to promote student achievement is for educators to visit schools that are successful in their reform efforts. The literature refers to these as "good" schools. One respondent noted that very few educators have visited a good school where effective indicators are at work.

"The best way for schools to identify and determine indicators of success is to visit those outstanding schools that are in the top 5 percent in educational

16 Good schools reveal a number of characteristics and processes that are successfully improving learning for all students. Characteristics include, but are not limited to, vision and a focus on the individual learner. These characteristics do not guarantee a good school, but good schools will reflect many of them (Profile of good schools. (Benchmarks for successful educational ventures, Venture Capital Assessment Team, 1996).
performance” (Venture Capital Team representative, personal communication, April 4, 1997).

Good schools are places where students are learning how to do things on their own: go to the library, do research, write papers, do projects. The Venture Capital Assessment Team representative tells the story of being in a venture school where students were rehearsing for the proficiency exam. This story is significant because it embodies the kind of conventional teaching and learning that stakeholders are expecting schools, particularly their teachers, to move away from.

In the Team representative’s story, students were asked by the teacher to name the leader of the confederacy during the Civil War. The students knew the answer was Robert E. Lee because this is the answer accepted on the exam. This practice exam teaches students that Robert E. Lee was the leader of this war. Rather than teach students that Robert E. Lee was the sole leader of the Civil War, it would have been a more inclusive and an inductive learning experience if students were told to go to the library and bring back as many names of leaders of the Civil War as they could find. This would have been a way for students to learn and to understand what they are learning. Legislators are looking for something exciting to happen in schools. They believe that when schools are open and receptive to change, school reform does not have to be difficult to accomplish.
While stakeholders are expecting drastic changes within schools and expecting to see schools do more in helping students to reach higher levels of achievement, the attitude among stakeholders is that schools are not bad places. "I think schools are better than they've ever been, but they're not as good as they need to be" (Ohio Department Education (ODE) representative, personal communication, February 27, 1997). Still, schools must work hard at change. When it comes to student success, one State Superintendent of Public Instruction stated, "the goal is that you ought to be doing better" (personal communication, February 27, 1997).

Some legislators are concerned that students are not understanding what is expected of them and this lack of understanding is reflected in poor academic performance (Education Committee, House, personal interview, February 6, 1997). The challenge is for teachers, as much as possible, to get to know their students; to raise their expectations for students; and to raise students' understanding of those expectations (Education Committee, House, personal interview, February 21, 1997).

Another legislator questioned the grading system, particularly at the elementary level, but not for all schools. "Some parents want to see something as concrete as grades to see how their child is doing" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 11, 1997). He suggested that maybe schools should take a hard look at how and why they grade students. While parents want to see grades, "what is it, for instance, that students learn from the
"grading system?" He mentioned that an elementary venture school in his district moved away from grading at this level. "It's very difficult to give a kid a big red F and say you're a failure, which is what it symbolizes and that's essentially what it says. What kind of message are you sending that young person? We need to get in there and help him" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 11, 1997). Several legislators suggested that because students learn differently, schools must do more to get to know their students better so that students' learning style can become a part of their true assessment.

To better prepare students for academic success, more than one legislator suggested having an educational plan for each child. One influential suggested individualized instruction. One legislator suggested specialized programs that deal with a students' interest or deficiencies such as biology or math. "I think one way to improve achievement is by taking each child from where they are and working with that child" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 11, 1997).

It was also suggested that more must be done to teach students to learn on their own. Students have got to know how to use the information they receive and to be able to get information on their own. A consensus among stakeholders is that students' ability to perform on their own is significant. Legislators recognize that high performance is what is needed in today's technical and competitive society.
Attempts to pull away from traditional practices bring even more frustration to efforts at school reform. Although some legislators admit that they do not know what successful reform looks like, they do expect schools to know their own problems. Some legislators are looking at the bottom line. One legislator noted that, if the curriculum is teaching what schools claim that it is teaching, "Why is it that students are not prepared for the job market?" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, January 30, 1997). While he provided no evidence for his belief, he is not the only one that has this perception. For another legislator, the bottom line for quality reform is "to see if the school pays off later in the job market" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997). Overwhelmingly legislators are expecting schools to fix whatever is preventing students from reaching higher levels of achievement and higher graduation rates.

**Higher Graduation Rates**

While legislators are concerned with overall graduation rates, some are particularly concerned with the low graduation rate in rural and urban areas. Across political party lines, legislators expressed their concern with how students in non-suburban areas may not be benefiting from the opportunity provided by initiatives like Venture Capital. Concerns range from providing adequate facilities and computers to offering services to deal with the health and stability of students. Venture Capital could offer services such as nursing to provide nutrition for students and services to get parents involved in schools (Education
Committee, House, personal communication February 21, 1997; February 6, 1997; February 20, 1997). In providing avenues for student success, a belief among most legislators is that programs such as Venture Capital can benefit students; however a concern with some legislators is that the program is not beneficial to all students. Some legislators question why schools in rural areas, where students would really profit, are not benefiting from Venture Capital dollars. "In the poor communities across Ohio kids are not doing well and are unstable" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997). For this legislator, evidence of funding discrepancies can be seen when he visits the schools in his district—urban, rural, and suburban. One concerned legislator representing a suburban area stated, "When you have graduation rates below 80% in urban areas, that's not good. It's not good for the economy, it's not good for the other students in the schools. If programs like Venture Capital can be used to motivate students to learn and to keep them in school, that would be good" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 4, 1997). On the other side, "in the middle-class school system where there is a fairly high graduation rate, the next step is to help those who want to go on to college. Then there are those who apply in their junior year who may be able to get scholarships and financial assistance if their family isn't wealthy enough to pay college tuition costs" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February, 4, 1997).
Several legislators indicated that much of the low graduation rate in their school districts has to do with the socio-economic rather than emotional instability or inferiority of students. One legislator noted how difficult it is to discuss what needs to happen in his district in terms of student success when there are "students in inner-city schools, with a 50% dropout rate in one year, who are not provided with the appropriate educational opportunity because of their economic status" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 19, 1997). Low graduation rates may be dependent on "economic advantage or disadvantage such as food, shelter, and clothing" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 19, 1997). Another legislator suggested that higher graduation rates could be better understood by other indicators such as retention, reading at grade level, knowing the health of the student (background, drugs, violence, unstable home, transient), a balanced diet (eating properly), and by examining what students are not learning. "Dealing with the health of a student, in turn, improves the student's performance" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 21, 1997).

Other legislators argue that student success is more than higher graduation rates. Some students need the resources that can help to provide opportunities for graduation. One legislator noted in terms of student success and higher graduation rates in rural and urban areas, "you need those advanced laboratories for chemistry and biology to prepare kids for college, but how can you worry about student success when the buildings are old and don't have the
capability to be wired for computers, there are no libraries, classrooms are too large, and buildings are in shambles" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February, 6, 1997). Not all legislators agreed that there is any correlation in success and environment. According to one legislator, there is no correlation between a "deficient building and high success or good buildings and low success. The common element I find is one or more individuals who have developed a climate of learning" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 20, 1997).

Legislators across districts—rural, urban, suburban—want to see all students succeed. They view Venture Capital as a vehicle for encouraging teachers to motivate students. Throughout the interviews, legislators expressed their interest in seeing indicators that are not so easily measured such as motivation, enthusiasm, and comprehension. They want to see schools become places where students want to learn. Some legislators believe that over time, these indicators will lead to higher graduation rates. How venture schools achieve this is up to schools.

Legislators want to see more students staying in school and motivated to learn. The hope is that several Venture Capital schools, especially at the high school level, will develop and disseminate effective ways to motivate and to retain students.
Staff Development

Much of the training on new ideas come through staff development. One problem, however, is that there are a variety of perceptions surrounding issues of staff improvement. While non-legislators are clear on the role of staff development, legislators are at odds. Some stakeholders view staff development as a waste of money while others view it as a waste of time.

Staff development is "a collegial process between school faculty and principals that focuses on problem solving" (former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, telephone interview, February 19, 1997). Both State Superintendents of Public Instruction made it clear that the larger percent of Venture Capital funding would go towards staff development for enabling and empowering staff and teachers to effectively deal with the problems in their schools. One superintendent stated that schools need to have a say in what resources they want.

The former State Superintendent of Public Instruction stated that a requirement of Venture Capital is that the largest portion of funding would go toward staff development. He chose to have the bulk of venture funding go to professional development because of his frustration with faculty and principals having very little discretion over the resources they have. "Everything is determined externally and centrally. They may, for instance, be able to choose textbooks, but they are unable to choose whether to spend money for textbooks, or on technology" (telephone interview, February 19, 1997).
Schools must determine what works for them. "Up to now everyone has had their own answer about what schools ought to be doing. They've (schools) had prescriptions imposed on them, specific curriculum, a specific approach" (former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, telephone interview, February 19, 1997). Another requirement of Venture Capital is that schools must know their problems. Venture Capital is an initiative that has teachers and staff in mind when engaging in school reform. This initiative states that "the people closest to the students are the ones who can both identify and solve the problems" (former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, telephone interview, February 19, 1997).

When the researcher informed legislators and some influentials that the bulk of venture funding was to go to staff development and that schools must know their problem, most did not favor this support for staff development. Not all stakeholders hold the belief that the bulk of funding should be spent towards staff development. Those stakeholders who had concerns about staff development were not persuaded that the focus of Venture Capital should be on staff development. Some legislators, particularly, wanted to know that the money was getting to students in some form via textbooks, computers, etc. Those legislators who did not disagree with the support for staff development still wanted to know where in staff development (classroom conferences) the money was going.
One influential argued that this view of staff development, involving only teachers and staff, is too limited. "While it is true that there will be no reform without staff development, it is also true that 99% of staff development in this country is wasted and has nothing to do with school reform" (Assessment Team representative, personal communication, April 4, 1997). Legislators felt that schools should know their problems. As far as helping them to find out those problems, one legislator noted, "If we're spending money for a bunch of inservice stuff, then it probably shouldn't come under Venture Capital, it should come under something else" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 11, 1997). One legislator argued that staff development is "okay, if those in schools change the way they are doing business and are coming up with some new concepts" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 21, 1997). More than one legislator questioned the notion of whether staff development is providing teachers with the training and development needed to achieve effective school improvement.

Overwhelmingly, legislators and several influentials felt that staff development does little in the way of helping teachers to teach students. We claim to want changes that result in better student learning but "we're still teaching teachers to teach in a 50 minute block" (Assessment Team representative, personal communication, April 4, 1997).
One legislator argued that there "is nothing magical about a 180-day year. We could have 220 days and ten of those days could be used for serious staff development in this state" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 20, 1997).

Some legislators do not favor staff development because teachers say they want something new, yet they continue to hold to traditional practices. On the other hand, some stakeholders view staff development as significant. Some stakeholders do recognize that staff development provides opportunities for teachers to develop their potential and realize their power to teach. Teachers are a very important part of staff, but are very different. "Teachers, since they are closest to the student, need something very different from staff and those teachers who have been teaching for 30-40 years do need these kinds of in-service training programs" (ODE representative, personal communication, February 27, 1997). This influential reminds us that state-initiated staff development has only been around in the last 10-15 years. A problem in getting the most out of students may be that teachers need to be retrained. Some teachers, for example, have been in the classroom for over 20 years and are not familiar with new methods or technology; and they need to be trained themselves. Many teachers "have never used a computer" (ODE representative, personal communication, February 27, 1997). Teachers cannot be expected do better when they are not trained.
The bottom line for most stakeholders (legislators and influentials) is that staff development should be doing something new and different. One stakeholder suggested that staff development could be used "to focus on a given subject area, such as math, then define a very specific area that needs to be fixed" (Education Committee States representative, telephone interview, February 24, 1997). Staff development could be used to explore those areas that have not been explored before like introducing math earlier as well as finding out why students are not learning math. So, two influentials are concerned that developing new ideas from staff development may not be occurring as fast as they would like because teachers may not be prepared for new ideas and new ways of teaching.

One State Superintendent of Public Instruction noted, "I don't know if it's because teachers are not fully prepared in elementary school to move them (students) to the level of meeting or achieving state standards" (personal communication, February 27, 1997). Interestingly, when some legislators mentioned that teachers needed to be re-evaluated, or retrained, they still did not speak favorably of staff development.

As interviews continued, the researcher became aware of a difference in perception between interviewed state legislators and the ODE on the issue of staff development. The Ohio Department of Education are positive in their belief that staff development will serve to bring about changes in school improvement while it appears that most legislators and few influentials are not so optimistic.
They believe staff development is a waste of time, a waste of money, and needs to be better focused.

The goal of Venture Capital is to provide schools, particularly teachers, with opportunities to learn new ways of doing things, new ideas, and practices. The Ohio Department of Education understood that much of this training and development in new ideas come through staff development. With the help of staff development, schools are expected to take ownership and leadership in what it is they need to do for effective reform. With state legislators becoming more involved in school reform, legislators may take a stronger leadership role in what they expect from schools, particularly since they fund reform initiatives. It appears that it is important that all stakeholders understand the purpose of staff development. In this understanding, schools may be able to counter the attitude of some stakeholders that if schools do not meet the requirement of the Venture Capital initiative, the state should "take the money back" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 4; Assessment Team representative, personal communication, April 4, 1997).

Legislators want schools to move away from what does not work. Legislators want new ideas, but they have no specific ideas for schools. "We don't dictate. You figure out what it'll take" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 11, 1997). Legislators want to measure schools on what they do and the changes they are making. Not all legislators have specific indicators that they would use to measure student achievement in venture
schools. "I'd measure them (schools) on what they said they were going to do. So, as long as they perform what they said they are, I have no particular indicator as long as it's in the area of student achievement" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 21, 1997). Schools are expected to take leadership, to be creative and innovative. Schools are expected to come up with new ideas, to step outside of what they traditionally do. "Schools say they are making progress, being innovative, and that they are using certain models to move them toward successful reform. A lot of what you will find in venture schools is not seen in the traditional school. This is by the schools reporting. Also if we walk into one of these places the model had better be there" (current State Superintendent of Public Instruction, personal communication, February 27, 1997).

Legislators recognize that taking risks is what Venture Capital is about. "Venture Capital is to stir the pot, stimulate, and exercise different approaches. It allows for new ideas to come from within" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997). For legislators, while they have no specific examples, they want to see teachers experiment in the classroom, and take risks in teaching students. It appears that legislators expect that new ideas will serve to foster a change in the ways schools do business. What they are expecting is that improvement becomes a part of practice. Improvement is not a one time occurrence. Stakeholders realize that reform takes planning and is an ongoing effort. There is nothing that can be done one time that would solve our
problems. "This is more like compound interest where a series of improvements happens over time, one on top of another, which will eventually produce magnificent results" (former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, telephone interview, February 19, 1997).

**Parental Involvement**

Two legislators' notions of parental involvement are to have parents act as role models. Parents are viewed as supporters and as people who can help to keep order in the classroom often by their presence. Parents and grandparents can serve as role models to children. A legislative chair noted how children tend to "behave" for various reasons, wanting to be like their parents. They tend not to misbehave in front of parents. "More than this, parents and grandparents serve as academic support by way of mentors and tutors for children" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communications, February 12, 1997). Another legislative chair suggested having volunteers and tutors to help in preparing kids for passing to the next grade. Programs can be set up to encourage parental involvement.

Another legislator suggested that there needs to be ongoing academic parent empowerment programs where teachers share a direct in-service training with parents. Parents, for example, could serve as tutors for those students in the third grade who may be behind other students in reading. These students would remain with this parent throughout the year. "They would have a parent room and be provided monthly lesson plans from teachers for ongoing grades,
for example, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. Students would come to this room for tutoring in ongoing lessons throughout the month in order to keep up with other students" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 20, 1997). One legislator suggested having "specialized programs" where parents suggest themes such as math, science, reading, etc. that they feel best serve their child's needs (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 13, 1997). Parental involvement is viewed as an important indicator of success. Schools may have to seek out the involvement of parents.

In working with parents, some legislators are also hoping that reform from venture dollars will improve parents' poor attitudes. As one legislator noted, as well as wanting to see friendlier attitudes from "educators and administrators in dealing with parents, we (legislators) would like to see friendlier attitudes from parents to teachers and school staff" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 12, 1997). An expectation is that Venture Capital will be used to promote community and parental involvement. "Make schools a community center where parents and members of the community are welcome to come in and provide their expertise in given areas" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 21, 1997).

Another legislator argued that schools are expected to find reasons for getting parents involved in students' education and suggested that "there ought to be money for programs to get parents involved" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 27, 1997). For others, the bottom line
is "if we are trying to improve parental involvement, how is that going to relate to an increase or improvement in student achievement?" (ECS representative, telephone interview, February 24, 1997). In all reform the focus must remain on how students are benefiting.

If parents are involved, students should be benefiting from parents' skills in, for instance, math and reading. So, in terms of full benefit, some legislators question whether Venture Capital is getting the full benefit of parents. One legislator questioned, "Have we fully used our capital to develop models for parental involvement?" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 20, 1997). In building this climate of change, it appears that legislators view the role of the parent as an academic supporter as essential. In determining whether schools are getting the most out of venture dollars for parental involvement, schools may choose to involve parents in the decision making process. It appears that a question in terms of parental involvement could be how schools can best benefit from the use of parents in school improvement.

**Survey Findings**

Initially, surveys were mailed to interviewed legislators and given to local educators at a teachers conference. Each were asked to rate the twelve indicators of success and to return the survey to the researcher's address provided on the form.

Survey data came from longitudinal research conducted in 1995-96 by the Venture Capital Assessment Team, initially assigned by the Ohio Department of
Education to track the progress of Venture Capital schools' indicators of success.
The team collected data from 65 (12% of total venture schools, 561) randomly selected schools. Initially, the team randomly selected 45 of the first 307 schools. Other schools were added to the list as they were approved and funded. Twenty more schools were randomly selected in 1995 and 1996 for a total of 65. Using an Assessment For Indicators (AFI) instrument, the team organized these schools' top ten indicators along the critique of type and quality. The instrument (Appendix A) was developed by the Assessment Team (Synergetic Development, 1996) to assess Venture Capital schools' indicators of success. Using the same instrument, the researcher classified school-based data (871 indicators) identified by the 65 schools. Of the 871 indicators, the researcher and a member of the Assessment Team chose the 12 most commonly cited indicators.

Using these 12 indicators, the third set of data consisted of a survey (Appendix A) given to two groups of respondents for their assessment of importance on a scale of 1-6 (1 = not important at all; 6 = extremely important, essential). Survey data were collected in the following way:

First, surveys were mailed to those state-level stakeholders who were interviewed. Second, at a Teaching and Learning Conference in April 1997, 34 teachers were given the rating form by a Venture Capital Assessment Team member during the Planning Venture Capital Initiatives session.

Table 3 of survey findings (Appendix B) are from 14 of the 17 interviewed
state legislators and 34 local educators for a total of 48 surveys. Since the researcher was particularly interested in legislator’s perceptions of school reform indicators, only those surveys from interviewed state legislators are included rather than all stakeholders.

In order to facilitate comparisons, the researcher compared means of state legislators and local educators' ratings of indicators. Survey data in Table 3 (Appendix B) reflect the following gaps and comparisons in terms of the highest and least valued indicator(s) by local educators and state legislators. Legislators' values are used as a guide for comparisons.

In terms of the most valued indicator, both legislators (5.9) and local educators (5.5) tend to value parental involvement. The most highly valued indicator for local educators, however, was the attitude that all students can learn (5.7).

In terms of the least valued indicator, legislators (4.2) equally value students working in teams and in the community (4.2) the least while educators (4.2) value test scores the least.

From surveys, while data reflect that local and state educators highly value school and home relationships, in terms of students' ability to learn and parental involvement, it appears that neither local educators nor state legislators placed much value on those indicators that serve to attract innovation and those that serve to develop students' ability to learn on their own such as in the library reading, unassigned, and students working in teams, and working in the
community. While predictions may not be proof of significant differences in the value of school indicators, a trend can be seen making it possible for further research with larger samples.

**SUMMARY**

It appears that for the majority of legislators test scores are the most important indicator of success for measuring student achievement. While scores appear significant to student achievement, stakeholders recognize and realize that test scores are deficient in determining or measuring student success. Legislators are questioning what test scores truly measure. The general notion is that there is currently nothing else for measuring student performance. Questions are being raised by legislators about other ways of assessing student success.

In terms of getting the conditions right for learning, legislators are looking for a commitment to quality from schools. They are expecting schools to know their problems, how to solve those problems, and to transfer that knowledge to other schools and districts. The process for radical and effective change is up to schools. Legislators believe students possess the necessary attributes for learning. They want to see teachers make school more relevant to students by integrating students' interests and needs with what is going on in the classroom. Therefore, legislators are expecting to see some tangible change in teaching practices whether this change is difficult to measure early on such as enthusiasm and attitude, but may later be reflected in an increase in grades, higher attendance, retention, and graduation. In terms of staff development, if the
researcher had used the term teacher, or professional, development, the critical responses may, or may not, have been different. Overall, some legislators indicated that this study has prompted them to visit those Venture Capital schools in their district to see how they are progressing. This involvement from legislators broadens the current and limited view by some of staff development, consisting of teachers and staff. A broader view includes all stakeholders in attempts at school reform.

Legislators are concerned with the success of all students as well as students' ability to succeed. While they may recognize that graduation and test scores are the current measure for learning, legislators also recognize that what, and how, students learn is just as important. Venture Capital is also viewed as an avenue for schools, particularly their teachers, to find ways of identifying students who have different ways of learning and understanding.

For stakeholders, parental involvement plays a large role in identifying students' weaknesses and in helping to move students toward academic success. As suggested, success could also be having individualized or educational plans created for each child. Parents, as tutors, provide the resources for such plans.

**Question 2. How do state educational leaders assess the legislative support for Venture Capital?**

Table 4 (Appendix B) highlights where stakeholders believe the support for Venture Capital will come from. As indicated, the strongest belief is that support
will continue to come from legislators. Perceptions then shift to legislators' interest in other programs, the introduction of other programs, the need for venture schools to garner outside support, and not sure.

The Table reflects how state stakeholders perceive that support for Venture Capital will continue to come from the legislature. Some legislators noted that support for Venture Capital depends on other programs and legislative interests. Three legislators noted how they were interested in other programs such as charter schools and vouchers. Three legislators and three influentials noted that venture schools should seek outside support. Several influentials expressed that any state or federally funded programs should seek outside support since state or federal funds may be limited or expire.

Finally, three legislators and one influential noted that they were not sure where the support for Venture Capital will come from. These legislators were either not knowledgeable about the program to have an opinion or they felt that it was too early in the program to make a judgment. Two influentials noted how support for Venture Capital has always and should always come from the legislature.

When determining who will support Venture Capital, two legislators were quick to state that funding for Venture Capital is in the budget. This is why "I'm optimistic about the level of legislative support for the program" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997).
Most stakeholders believe support for Venture Capital will continue to come from legislators and from the state department. This support, however, is not without expectations. Legislators want something in return. Generally speaking, legislators let schools approach reform in their own way. "We provide the money for change and schools do what they do to get change" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 11, 1997). However, they are expecting to see something in return. One legislator noted, "Don't just ask for money" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 11, 1997).

Support "will continue to come from legislators as long as we can see that it's (funding) being used effectively" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 21, 1997). Most legislators want to know that schools are demonstrating the objectives of the grant and that they can transfer what they are doing to other schools and school districts. Another legislator noted, "legislators have got to be convinced that it works. Showing legislators how it (Venture Capital) has improved student aptitude or improved conditions for learning is one way of selling legislators on continuing the program" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 21, 1997).

Legislators also want to know that the money is reaching students. "I want to know that the money is getting into the classroom" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 11, 1997). Several legislators believe support will come from those legislators who have venture schools in their
district. "I think the support is going to come from those legislators first of all who have schools in their district" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997). "It (support) will probably come from those legislators from each party who believe that creativity is needed. A lot of urban-based officials who are willing to seek monies to come into their district to deal with large class sizes and other societal problems like female head of households and housing and hunger problems" (Education committee, Senate, personal communication, February 27, 1997). Funding could be used for programs to support parents, for example, who want to be involved in their child's education. Innovation programs such as the suggestion for specialized programs can also be started that would help students stay in school.

One legislator questioned the weakness of some venture schools self-assessment. "When I knew that you (researcher) were coming, I got some data from the Department of Education and looked at the measurements ... and it would appear that even Venture Capital schools are not measuring themselves very well, and I wonder why not. Maybe they don't want to be overly supportive of themselves in measuring" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, January 30, 1997).

Not everyone believed legislators were in support of Venture Capital. "I don't know that there's really anyone in the legislature who is a champion of

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17 The ODE rates venture schools on, and is expecting schools to move towards, a 6.0 scale. A high probability for institutional changes that support continued growth is based on a score of 4.6 or better. Venture schools assess themselves (Venture Capital Performance Review Report, ODE, 1996).
Venture Capital. I know there are some people who oppose it because they feel the money is being wasted" (ODE representative, personal communication, February 27, 1997). The feeling that money is being wasted is not isolated. "I'm not a strong supporter of Venture Capital. I go along with it. I don't know if we're gaining anything, but it seems to be an interest in doing that kind of thing in the established system. I just feel it's another tool to bring about urgency to do something" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 20, 1997).

Generally speaking, most stakeholders were supportive of Venture Capital though most legislators were not familiar with the program. "People (legislators) aren't as familiar with the program as you'd hoped" (ODE representative, personal communication, February 27, 1997). While most legislators were becoming familiar with Venture Capital, not all legislators have made up their mind about the program. "I don't have an opinion now. I'm real interested in listening to the testimony on it and taking a deeper look at it" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 4, 1997). Other legislators support it if it is meeting the Venture Capital requirement. "If schools are moving toward the goals and indicators of success they designed, certainly I will support it. If they're not, then I won't" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 4, 1997).

One influential suggested that the strongest advocates and supporters of Venture Capital may be those schools receiving funds. Some of the "best
spokespersons for the program are some of the teachers who have participated in the program" (ODE representative, personal communication, February 27, 1997). In speaking for Venture Capital, venture schools should be prepared to demonstrate how students are benefiting, particularly through teachers' efforts at school improvement. Legislators may learn better how students are benefiting from students themselves.

Another legislator suggested that students should share how successful the program is with legislators (Education Committee, personal interview, February 21, 1997). Young people showing support for the program would be beneficial, particularly with one legislator's admonishment that Venture Capital should be seeking ways to get young people to go into teaching, particularly in the areas of math and the sciences.

It appears that some stakeholders believe venture schools can be their strongest supporter or their worst enemy. If schools have met the requirements of the venture grant, and can demonstrate effective school reform that is transferable to other schools and districts, they have a better chance of receiving continued support and funding from state legislators. This is significant since competition comes into play when legislators have other interests and when other programs are introduced to legislators. The Venture Capital Program, for instance, was introduced by the former State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Most legislators liked and supported the idea, but several legislators now express their interest in other programs stating that Venture Capital may
have to compete with other programs that are being introduced everyday.

The drawing interest for some legislators of other programs such as vouchers and charter schools is the choice that these particular initiatives offered parents. Several legislators viewed choice as a voluntary relationship and programs that offered choice as the equalizer for educational opportunities. Choice is a relationship that "creates a sense of reciprocity. It allows a consistent message between the school and the family" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 4, 1997). Choice suggests that a particular school offers what some parents may want for their child. Furthermore, programs with choice "increase parental involvement because parents are forced to make a choice rather than complain about this particular teacher or school system" (Education Committee, House, February 4, 1997). If legislative interests shift to other initiatives, support for Venture Capital could be limited or end. The strong support of the Ohio Department of Education could influence legislators to continue their support for Venture Capital.

The Ohio Department of Education shows its support for and commitment to Venture Capital by not maintaining its traditional regulatory authority over venture schools. With the strong support of the Ohio Department of Education comes the freedom and encouragement for venture schools to be innovative in their efforts at school improvement. The two State Superintendents' of Public Instruction felt it was important for legislators to know this. While most legislators had a working knowledge of the program, they were very supportive of school reform initiatives
that pushed for school and student achievement. The Team member acknowledged how Ted Sanders, the former State Superintendent of Public Instruction and initiator of Venture Capital, was able to garner support for the program because of his dedication to school improvement. Sanders is still very supportive of the program. In terms of legislative support, some stakeholders felt that initiatives could be more effective if legislators, as funders, were more committed to reform. The Team representative admitted that in Sanders absence, "I was fearful that we'd lose support for the program" (Assessment Team representative, personal communication, April 4, 1997).

When asked where he believed support for Venture Capital would come from, the former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who is also very supportive of Venture Capital, noted, "it (support) does now and ought to continue to come from the state. It's important the state continues to invest even the modest amount of money into these schools. Legislators need to understand that schools will function in the context of its own community and their demands and their own parameters and even the most conservative legislator can buy into it. Venture Capital is a strategy from the state and an investment in terms of a small amount of risk capital" (telephone interview, February 19, 1997). Still, stakeholders are expecting venture schools to find other methods of funding. They perceive school improvement as requiring continual funding since improvement is a continual process.
This "doesn't mean Venture Capital should be the only source of funding for school reform" (current State Superintendent of Public Instruction, personal communication, February 27, 1997). There are other ways of garnering support for reform. One legislator suggested "gathering support from businesses and institutions of higher learning" (Education Committee, House, February 21, 1997). Businesses may begin to support schools more when they see more students entering college; and when they see improvement (changes in teaching practices, from teacher-centered to student-centered learning) in the schools themselves and in the surrounding community. Then venture schools might get businesses to match the state's funding. Schools should be documenting how the program is benefiting the school, students, and the community, and lobbying school board members, superintendents, school administration, and businesses for continued support. "That's another way of measuring success. If you've had it for five years then school districts should be picking up the cost or finding ways that schools and community can help in funding the ongoing program" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 21, 1997).

Although the argument is that legislators should continue to support Venture Capital, in order for reform to work everyone must support the program including communities, school boards, businesses, and school administration. In recognizing this, outside support is significant since "it's important that everyone understand what we're trying to do in schools, by bringing in new ideas and supporting those ideas" (former State Superintendent of Public Instruction,
telephone interview, February 19, 1997) and "the goal is not to continue funding people" (current State Superintendent of Public Instruction, personal communication, February 27, 1997). The idea is that after five years (end of venture funding) schools will continue with reform on their own. "We can then take that money and give it to some other school that has met the requirement. We've got another 100 schools proposed in the budget for the coming year. I think it's 100 in each biennial. Idealistically, we'd like to have every school become a venture school, but with 4,500 buildings you could imagine how long it would take" (current State Superintendent of Public Instruction, personal communication, February 27, 1997).

Some stakeholders understand that state initiatives for school improvement need other support, particularly in urban and rural areas. One legislator argued that the public should solicit legislators and the governor to be even more supportive of those urban schools with "overcrowded classrooms and dilapidated buildings which are not able to benefit from Venture Capital. We owe every youngster in the state an equal opportunity at an education" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997). One influential noted, "Venture Capital will always need a broad range of support" (Education Commission of States representative, telephone interview, February 24, 1997). A suggestion is to get local school foundations and private agencies to fund the venture schools when the funding ends. "The more sources of revenue that you have for this kind of program the more likely it's going to survive and find even
other supporters. As long as it's built on one issue, no matter how good the issue, it will not stand” (ECS representative, telephone interview, February 24, 1997). Other state-funded initiatives with great ideas have failed. Any initiative has got to be funded by more than one source if it wants to survive.

Efforts at reform are too encompassing a task to be solved by one sector. Everyone must be involved and committed to change that will undoubtedly result in student achievement. The Venture Capital initiative recognizes that effective and quality school improvement needs the support of all concerned parties.

SUMMARY

It appears that some stakeholders are expecting schools to seek other funding besides state funding, particularly since reform is viewed as efforts at continuous improvement. For continuous day-to-day improvement, schools will need other funding sources. Still, in garnering legislative support, several legislators suggested that schools should invite them out to see what schools are doing. The invitation to visit venture schools could result in more effective, or stronger, legislative support for school improvement.

There are differences in opinion, however, on what role legislators should play in getting involved in educational reform at the school level. One important role of reform is that of interpreting the roles of reformers.

18 Title 3 of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was a federally funded program.
Like varying perceptions on the role of staff development, it may be helpful if the role of state legislators in school reform is made clear to educators and to legislators themselves.

Questions have been raised and there is much to be answered if the goal of educational reform is to be realized. Raising and answering these questions can be beneficial to all stakeholders since no one factor (inadequate teachers, irresponsible parents, poor curriculum, unmotivated students, centralization, or lack of funding) is responsible for the deterioration of the public school system. The literature points out how we have learned nothing new from earlier waves of reform; and how recommendations from the past continue to fail, yet we continue to use them extensively (Sarason, 1990; Cuba, 1990). A very important question would be: can the system truly be changed from within or does it require changes, direction, and pressures from without? Additionally, like the concern raised by one influential (ECS), who would monitor such reform programs? Are we reinforcing the current system rather than changing it?

Meanwhile, several things have been made clear. First, legislators want to know where the money for reform is going. Second, venture schools should seek outside funding. Third, stakeholders are expecting changes that last.

**Question 3. What are state educational leaders' perceptions on how Venture Capital is being implemented?**

Table 5 (Appendix B) reflects how some stakeholders had serious questions about the Venture Capital program. Additionally, some legislators wanted to
know more about the program. Several legislators noted that they would visit the venture schools in their district. Other legislators were not sure how the program is being implemented. The reason for this uncertainty could be that they either had no knowledge of the program or it was too early in the program for them to make any judgments. Generally speaking, concerns with the program range from where the money is really going, the equity of the program, who is benefiting from the program, how the program is monitored, and whether the ways in which schools are being funded are constitutional.

When asked this question, it appeared that most legislators were not aware that one of the requirements for receiving venture funds was that schools had to know their problems and have plans in place to solve those problems. When the researcher informed legislators of this, most legislators still found problems in the way in which the program is being implemented. One legislator stated, "Some schools have too many problems, but they still need help" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 27, 1997). Several legislators noted that they see the disparities in economic opportunities. One legislator noted, "I see the inequities and different challenges that kids face. We're setting standards that schools couldn't possibly meet and that's not right. That causes further disadvantage for those in rural and some urban schools" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 19, 1997). Several legislators noted that the whole notion of Venture Capital was exciting and, they have seen venture schools doing some exciting things in their district.
Responses to this question varied. Responses may have varied due more to respondents perceptions and interpretation of the word implementation than to how the initiative is actually being implemented when responding to this question. The researcher came to realize that when asked how the program was being implemented, or put into practice, some legislators interpreted this as to whether the program was fairly distributed among schools.

Responses also suggest that there are variations in how legislators perceived the word implementation. This variance was seen during interviews. When asked how they felt Venture Capital was being implemented, legislative responses varied from the monitoring and the distribution of the program. Few legislators addressed how the program was actually being utilized. Based on these responses, following are possible variations in meaning that legislators may have interpreted throughout this particular question.

- **monitor:** to record or control a process
- **assess:** to evaluate
- **implement:** to put into practice
- **distribute:** to spread over an area; divide and give out

Some legislators want to know more about the program, while other legislators are not sure how they feel about the program. For some legislators, the process is exciting. "It's an exciting thing to see how the community, the teachers, the parents, the administration, and everyone is so involved in implementing reform. That's one of the objectives of Venture Capital—to get
people involved" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 13, 1997).

All in all, a recurring concern here is that legislators want to know that venture funding is not getting lost before it reaches the classroom in some way. The opinion of several legislators was that if the goal of school reform is to make schools better places for staff and students, and the attitude of educators is that all students can learn, the concern is that all students should be benefiting from the program.

Several legislators felt that the program was being implemented fairly. Other legislators were not as enthusiastic with the program. One legislator noted that he recognizes that there are "some inadequacies across the state as far as incomes and other factors that certainly affect education, so I would think that the first responsibility would be to try to make sure these kids had up-to-date methods of education" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 11, 1997). Another legislator stated that he wants to be sure that venture dollars are reaching the student in textbooks or other resources" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, January 30, 1997).

One legislator stated that she "would like some idea of where the majority of the funds are going. I'm sure it falls into various categories, science, teaching styles, ... just so I get a sense of where a majority of the schools are attacking the problem. This will give legislators an idea of where the emphasis needs to be placed. This is also telling us (legislators) how schools prioritize and where they
would spend it (funding) to improve achievement of students" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 21, 1997). Her response was after the researcher informed the legislator that most of venture funding was for staff development. This legislator wants to hear from schools on what staff development is doing to prepare teachers to teach students and how students are benefiting from staff development. She wants to know where in staff development the bulk of the money is being spent. This insistence to know may still be due to a difference in understanding, or perception of, staff development and teacher development. More than one legislator stated that they wanted to know where the money is going. One legislator noted, "I want to feel very confident that the money is going to children in some form or fashion" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, January 30, 1997). If the researcher had informed legislators that the bulk of money being used for staff development also ensured there would be teacher development, legislators' responses may have been very different.

It is this firsthand information that legislators seek in helping them to determine how the program is being implemented. During the interview, the researcher continued to inform legislators that the larger percentage of the venture grant was set aside for staff development. Legislators still wanted to know specifically if the money was reaching the students. Some legislators are concerned that venture funding is not equitable in its distribution.
A concern of some legislators with Venture Capital is whether it is being fair to all students in terms of providing educational opportunity. "If you find that the average student in the urban setting is less likely to get venture dollars, it's not equity being implemented [sic] and it ought to be changed" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 19, 1997). Some legislators question whether all students can benefit from an initiative that benefits one school over another. Concerns were raised even after these legislators were informed that the program did not favor a particular school, but a requirement was for schools to know their problems and have plans in place to resolve those problems. Several legislators still viewed the initiative as providing an educational opportunity for some students that other students were not privy to.

"If the whole reason for Venture Capital is to improve instruction, you can't just improve instruction in a good school setting where you don't have economic challenges. It (funding) ought to be changed to make certain that every child has an equal opportunity to Venture Capital dollars. The only way to do that is to have different criteria for different settings" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 19, 1997). When asked if he felt this would lower standards for the grant, "I don't think you lower standards, I think you look at the challenges they (students) have and develop a criteria that is different. If we're so concerned about what we're going to do in urban schools, Venture Capital is a way to do something" (Education Committee, Senate, personal
communication, February 19, 1997). For data on the disbursement of venture funding, see Venture Schools and Tables 5-6 in Appendix A & B.

Another legislator stated that the program is unfair in that it is "not providing remedial educational opportunities for all students" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, January 30, 1997). Some students are ahead of others academically because of economic advantages. Like several other legislators, this legislator would like to see some specialized programs for students to keep them in school. "Venture Capital shouldn't be myopic. A requirement should be to look at the school setting to see what's best for that school. We're eliminating it in the very places that it's needed" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 19, 1997). There is also the belief that the program is unfair in the way schools are funded.

When it comes to some schools being funded over others and the criteria for funding, one legislator noted that while he recognizes that "some educational priorities need to be set, I don't know if the way we're funding schools is constitutional" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 13, 1997). When asked if he felt Venture Capital wasn't constitutional, he only added that, "some schools shouldn't be funded over others" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 13, 1997). He is not alone in his belief. Another legislator argued, "If you take the ten big urban settings, the number of students, the number of venture grants those districts get on an annual basis, and take the rest of the population in Ohio, I would guess
that per child there are fewer Venture Capital grants being given to those in urban settings than in other areas" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 19, 1997). Another argued, "there's inequity in terms of the formula. That's why we're (state) in the Supreme Court being sued" by the district" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997). The state now has to develop new methods of funding its public schools.

One legislator had problems with this kind of questioning. "What are we (legislators) about? I fear their response (those who question equity) is simply measured by dollars and distribution of dollars. That's not what education is about. We should be mindful of what those dollars produce. Now, if the dollars don't make the education, we can all agree that there needs to be some basic level of funding to give adequacy" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 20, 1997). The former State Superintendent of Public Instruction also disagreed with the argument that Venture Capital is not being fairly distributed and points to the work of the Assessment Team.

In terms of being fairly distributed, the literature (Assessing Capital Gains, 1996) informs us that there are venture schools in all eight regions of Ohio (Appendix A). "All regions have had about equal proportions of applicants funded except the Central Region which submitted nearly 17% of the applications and received nearly 23% of the funding. The East and Northeast Regions have 17%.

19 In March 1997, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of plaintiffs declaring that Ohio's educational system is unconstitutionally inadequate and directed the Ohio General Assembly to propose a new system by March 20, 1998 (The Derolph Case in the document prepared by The Ohio Coalition of Equity & Adequacy of School Funding based on records of litigation in the Derolph Case).
each, Southwest with 13%, and the Northwest with 11%. The Southeast has nearly 8% of the venture schools; the West has 6.2%; and the South has 4.2%" (Assessing Capital Gains, 1996, p. 6). Data surrounding the disbursement of Venture Capital funds can be found on Tables 6-7 in Appendix B.

So, for those legislators who question the fairness of Venture Capital, "it's one of the fairest processes for selecting people to get the grants that they want" (Assessment Team representative, personal communication, April 4, 1997). On the other hand, in terms of success, "All in all it's been implemented in a way that would reduce the probability of successful reform" (Assessment Team representative, personal communication, April 4, 1997). A concern of the team representative is that premature funding has interfered with effective reform and this has raised arguments that too many schools were prematurely funded. "Schools should have been notified that they had promise, but should not have received funding and should have been required to do better planning" (personal communication, April 4, 1997).

More workshops could have been held in helping schools to identify and use indicators on how to reach students while moving schools toward successful and effective reform that will last. Still, there are more successes than failures. "We've identified, I think, 18 schools where the program is not progressing as we would like, but about 18 aren't bad out of 500+" (ODE representative, personal communication, February 24, 1997).
Just as legislative perceptions of staff development differ, it seems that their perceptions differ on implementation. These differing views and interpretations guide their support for Venture Capital. For those legislators concerned with equity, it appears that the initiative is fair in its funding of those schools who meet the grant requirements. Other concerns were still raised.

Some legislators question why all schools are not benefiting from the success of venture schools. Legislators want venture schools to share their programs with all schools. One legislator wants to see "school reform in a systemic way, not program by program" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 20, 1997). There is also the belief that only a few schools are benefiting from the program. If the belief is that teachers should be allowed to come together and "be creative and innovative in planning a program and there is consensus on that, that should be the public policy of the state. I'm opposed to one or two programs across the state" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 20, 1997).

One legislator suggested, "maybe we could have one pot of money versus something like the categorical funds" (Education Committee, House, personal communication, January 30, 1997). Then, all schools would get the money and could still develop their own program or use another one. Three legislators argued for radically changing the ways schools are funded, for example, moving to income taxes versus property taxes in funding schools.
These legislators also expressed strong support for programs that offer school choice, for instance, vouchers and charter schools.

In terms of monitoring, several stakeholders felt that the program was not really being monitored. One legislator argued, "I don't really see that it's being monitored by policymakers" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 20, 1997). However, not all legislators felt they should be involved at the policy level. One legislator asserted, "I don't get to the level of knowing what they (schools) should do. I don't think that's an appropriate level of detail for this level of public policy" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 20, 1997).

It is because so often legislators fund programs without getting involved with reform that one legislator noted, "It's a feel good mechanism that policymakers simply say okay that sounds good, let's do it. It doesn't do any good to put it out there unless policymakers examine it. If we're spending money called Venture Capital, why are we doing it if we don't go and find out how it's working? It's okay to fund a program, but as a policymaker I need to see first-hand how it's working" (Education Committee, Senate, personal communication, February 20, 1997). Monitoring is important to any process.

On the monitoring of Venture Capital, one influential noted, "the question is how much did the state allocate for ODE to monitor the program. I think the monitoring piece will be the key, otherwise, you'll reach the end of the road and you'll have to rely on sort of subjective information on whether this (the program)
helped (reform) or not” (ECS representative, telephone interview, February 24, 1997). In this study of state and local educators' perspectives on school quality indicators of success some legislators question the fairness of Venture Capital to which the Venture Capital Assessment Team data reflect otherwise. Several legislators question the constitutionality of how schools are being funded. Still, several legislators noted that they will visit venture schools in their district to learn more about how Venture Capital is working.

SUMMARY

Other than the few legislators who thought that Venture Capital was being implemented well, most legislators, for various reasons, questioned the program, and when asked about implementation, some legislators referred to the distribution, equity, and monitoring of the program. Some legislators were concerned with whether venture dollars would actually reach students. Finally, the question is raised as to just what role state legislators should play in school reform. How close to reform should legislators get in terms of monitoring, decision-making, etc.?

In undertaking and expecting effective and lasting change, several legislative assumptions emerged from the interviews. First, change must involve parents and community resources. Second, an honest attempt at motivating students demands that schools enter students' lives, as much as possible, in whatever ways they can. Third, schools must continue to help students to experience and see the relationship between their world and the world of school (personal,
educational, and social) so they can better make the transition between the two. However, surveys appear contradictory.
CHAPTER 5

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of state stakeholders and local educators\(^{20}\) on a new, high profile, and innovative state policy initiative—Venture Capital. Venture Capital seeks to support schools interested in significant reform. Schools that receive Venture Capital funding must go beyond conventional ways of doing things. Venture schools must stretch beyond merely adjusting the structure of schools, or rearranging the ways in which schools have traditionally existed. Venture schools are expected to take risks.

Previous state policy efforts at school reform have been hampered by a lack of consensus on what constitutes success. This study is unique because it compares and contrasts the perceptions of state legislators and local educators on what constitutes effective indicators of success for school improvement. Indicators can guide efforts at school reform by clarifying specific and observable

\(^{20}\) Refers to those 34 teachers at various venture schools who participated in the survey.
Indicators are tangible measurements that direct and guide the planning, assessment, and decision-making process for school reform.

In his vision for systemic reform, the former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ted Sanders, recognized that all parts of the educational system had to be brought into the restructuring process (Sarason, 1990). Persuaded by Bush's (1983) study of staff development and school reform, Sanders came to understand that schools tend to do a better job of reform when they know, are able to articulate, and take responsibility for their own problems. He believed that efforts at school improvement could not succeed unless teachers and staff were trained in how to develop the ideas, skills, and methods needed to develop and implement school improvement. Professional development, or staff development; therefore is viewed as a critical key to school improvement (Venture Capital in Ohio Schools, 1995). Venture Capital is the vehicle through which school staff can participate in professional development activities which will bring about staff and ultimately systemic change. An aim of Venture Capital is that the reform will merge state-level expectations with local-level innovation (formerly State Superintendent of Public Instruction, personal communication, February 27, 1995). As funders of the initiative, state legislators have a keen interest in the success of Venture Capital. A primary focus of this study was to determine how state legislators and local educators perceive Venture Capital school improvement efforts.
METHODOLOGY

The methods used to collect data for this study were interviews and surveys. Thirty-five letters were sent to state education leaders requesting interviews. Thirty letters were sent to the members\(^{21}\) on the House of Representatives and the Senate Education Committees and five letters were sent to non-legislators\(^{22}\). Seventeen of the Education Committee members and all five of the non-legislators responded and agreed to an interview. A legislative profile of those who did not respond and of the two Education Committees can be found in Appendix C. All interviews were audio-taped and transcription was done by the researcher. Prior to and at the onset of interviews, stakeholders granted the researcher permission to tape the interview.

The study examined three sets of data: (1) state-level stakeholders interviews, (2) school-based data of 65 randomly selected schools collected by the Venture Capital Assessment Team, and (3) a survey\(^ {23}\) of state legislators and local educators' perceptions on indicators of success.

ESSENTIAL FINDINGS

Generally speaking, legislators supported the need for school improvement and Venture Capital's objective for systemic reform. However, there was considerable disagreement on which indicators of success should guide the performance of schools participating in the Venture Capital Program. Generally speaking, stakeholders valued a wide array of indicators. For purposes of comparison and contrast, the mode for

\(^{21}\) Hereafter referred to as state legislators.

\(^{22}\) Hereafter referred to as influentials since they play a role in the policy and implementation of school reform initiatives.

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identifying and discussing interview data is percentages. The mean is the mode for identifying and discussing survey data. The researcher chose a mean score of 5.0 or more as a determinant of the most highly valued indicators of success.

1) What do state educational leaders and local educators consider important indicators of success for Venture Capital schools?

FINDING #1. There is a High Consistency Between State and Local Perceptions on the Primacy of Home and School Relationships.

In survey responses, more legislators seem to value and support parental involvement (5.9) than during interviews (47%). In fact, when surveyed, parental involvement is valued the highest by legislators. It appears that schools that evoke and sustain parental involvement are highly valued by legislators, while innovative practices involving teaching, learning, and technology are only moderately valued. One explanation for the heavy valuing of parental involvement over innovative practices might be a growing recognition among legislators that the gap between home and school is growing in terms of mutual support and understanding.

Survey data from local educators also rank parental involvement high (5.5), however educators placed more value on attitudes about student capacity to learn (5.7). These are the only two indicators to receive the highest value from legislators and local educators. State legislators and local educators seem to share a belief that the home and school relationship is an essential indicator of Venture Capital performance.

23 Fourteen of the seventeen legislators responded to the mailed surveys, and 34 local educators were given the survey at a Teaching and Learning Conference by a Venture Capital Assessment Team member in April, 1997.
FINDING #2 There is a Significant Gap Between State and Local Perceptions on the Value of Test Scores.

While test scores are not valued highly, this indicator is mentioned for two reasons: (1) local educators rated the indicator last compared to fourth for legislators and (2) most interviewed state legislators suggested that other avenues for measuring student success should be explored. Survey data, in comparison with legislators when interviewed, reflect how legislators, more than educators, view the importance of test scores. It appears that when surveyed, legislators are consistent with their interviews.

Both surveys (4.9) and interviews (4.7%) reflect how a number of legislators felt test scores are important to student achievement. However, there is a wide variety of opinions about the nature and use of test scores. The majority of interviewed legislators had concerns with test scores as the primary measurement of student performance in terms of the purposes of test scores and what tests are truly measuring. From interviews, test scores as indicators ranged from yes, we like test scores to we question the purposes and uses of test scores. Instead, interviewed legislators found other indicators such as the ability to read, the ability to comprehend, and to learn on one's own just as important as test scores.

Survey data does not reflect a sharp contrast in perception among legislators (4.9) and local educators (4.2) on test scores. However, test scores is the fourth of the twelve indicators for legislators compared to the last for local educators. While this may not be a significant difference in terms of the mean, it is important when ratings of indicators are compared. One explanation for the difference in value could be that legislators are
oriented more toward accountability in their assessment or they did not understand the importance of educational indicators. Local educators, for example, being closer to the student, may be more discerning in their assessment. Perhaps in knowing students' character and potential and understanding the educational value of indicators, educators value other indicators more than they do test scores. There does not appear to be any significant connection between perceptions on test scores and political party affiliations.

FINDING #3 There is a Some Consistency of State and Local Perspectives on the Value of Staff Development. However it is Not Strong, Nor Are Legislators Highly Knowledgeable About Staff Development. Survey data appear consistent with legislative interviews on the value of staff development. When interviewed, several legislators (18%) approved of staff development. However, most expressed their concerns with and their disapproval of the bulk of venture funding for staff development. It appears that surveyed legislators (4.9) do not place much value on the indicator either. On the other hand, local educators (5.4) appear to support the idea that in order for teachers to develop skills and be prepared for innovative teaching and innovative techniques, teachers must participate in training, or staff development. Most legislators' reservations surrounding staff development was with venture schools use of professional development to continue focusing on conventional versus innovative practices. Still, educators, themselves, seem to value students' ability to learn (5.7) and parental involvement (5.5) more.
During interviews, several questions were raised about the value of staff
development and its uses. From interview data, for instance, it is suggested that staff
development can be used to focus on a problematic subject area such as math and
exploring ideas like introducing math earlier as well as finding out why students are not
learning math.

It appears that while state legislators have high hopes for student achievement, they
may not have been familiar with how the notion of staff development was being used for
teacher training by those at the Ohio Department of Education.

**FINDING # 4 There is Consistent, but Mild State and Local Support for Success
Indicators Relevant to Multiculturalism, Technology, and Authentic Learning**

From the interview data, one might conclude that state legislators seek
performance indicators about innovative strategies and practices. However, survey data
suggest that legislators are lukewarm about indicators pointing towards innovation
practices such as students learning on their own. These indicators are grouped
together since they reflect and serve to develop what state legislators are expecting
from students whom they feel would be prepared for a technical society. For this study,
authentic learning refers to those success indicators that offer true learning experiences
such as presentations, working in teams/community, and in the library reading
unassigned. While no interviewed legislator mentioned students having an appreciation
of other cultures, or the term multiculturalism, they were concerned about students’
ability to compete in the job market.
Oftentimes, successfully competing in the job market requires working in teams and understanding the various cultural differences among team members as well as having technical skills.

While most interviewed state legislators believed that all students could learn and that students needed to be prepared with technical skills, survey data inform us that neither state legislators nor local educators placed much value on these indicators. For instance, legislators (4.6) did not place much value on the use of technology with local educators (5.1) not placing much more value on the indicator. Additionally, legislators (4.3) placed the lowest value on students working in teams (4.2) and in the community (4.2) and local educators placed the lowest value (next to test scores) on appreciation of other cultures, or multiculturalism, (4.5) and students in the library reading, unassigned (4.5). Not placing high value on these indicators that help to aid in authentic learning is particularly interesting since (a) most state legislators were concerned that students are not understanding what is expected of them or what they are doing and (b) some researchers report that these indicators are valued among state and national indicators of student success (Pipho, 1979; 1982; Alexander, 1987; Tursman, 1981).

Finding #5 Local Educators Are Fairly Coherent On A Small Set of Success Indicators.

In reviewing the Venture Capital grant’s requirement for venture schools to list their ten most important indicators of success, twelve indicators were most frequently cited. Nine of the twelve indicators clearly focus on the quality of student performance and participation in school.
Finding #6. Most State Legislators Had Little Knowledge About, or Were Unaware of, the Venture Capital Program.

Following the cover letter requesting interviews and in speaking with legislators, most of the interviewed legislators had little knowledge about, or were unaware of, the Venture Capital program. Most had either gathered information, or the researcher had sent information, on the program prior to interviews. The gathered information provided legislators with a working knowledge and they were able to discuss the program. Given that the calendar of legislators is filled with many initiatives, appointments, and other activities, the use of a common language of indicators of success could benefit state legislators, educators, and other state stakeholders by bridging the gap in communication as well as in collaborating school improvement efforts.

2) How do state educational leaders assess the legislative support for the Venture Capital Program?

Stakeholders understand the need and rationale for reform efforts and strongly support any efforts at lasting changes in the quality of the educational system, especially changes that lead to student success. Overall, stakeholders believe that continued support for the program would come from the legislature as long as venture schools meet grant requirements of seeking innovative and effective school improvement that lead to student success. For two legislators, the bottom line is how students are able to compete in the job market in a highly competitive and technical society. The challenge for venture schools is to stretch beyond convention. Legislators made it clear that they would not support, nor reward, conventional practices.
3) **What are state educational leaders' perceptions on how Venture Capital is being implemented?**

There were differences in perceptions on how state stakeholders viewed the implementation of Venture Capital. While this is not to say that legislators lacked confidence in the program, most legislators felt very different about the way the program is being implemented from those in the Ohio Department of Education. Overall, for some legislators and two influentials, concerns and questions were raised regarding the lack of fairness and monitoring of the program. Other legislators were just curious about the program. The interview prompted some legislators to want to visit the venture schools in their district.

The Ohio Department of Education expressed confidence in the program. The Ohio Department of Education tends to focus program success on interpreted successes and failures of venture schools by attempts at something new while state legislators interpret more tangible and rigorous measurements, such as test scores. This finding suggests that one difference in perceptions on the purposes and role of Venture Capital is that Ohio Department of Education influentials are excited about the program. Most legislators do not share this excitement. Some legislators appeared to be cautious in giving the program their vote of confidence either because they were unsure of the direction the program is going (same efforts at reform) or they are really not knowledgeable about the program. Yet, like the Ohio Department of Education, several legislators found the program exciting.
This difference in knowledge regarding this high profile initiative also suggests a need to improve communications between the Ohio Department of Education and the state legislature.

**CONCLUSION/POINTS OF DISCUSSION**

Based upon the findings of this study, several conclusions can be drawn:

- First, Ohio legislators see a need for and strongly support renovating and revitalizing the public educational system, particularly in the ways in which knowledge is transferred from teacher to student. With legislators becoming more involved in educational change, they expect teachers to take ownership and leadership in the venture schools to generate new and innovative ways of reaching students. However, opinions differ on how to approach educational change. Most legislators had high hopes for student achievement, however, most had no real knowledge about educational indicators of success and how they were being used as reform measures. They also displayed little knowledge and understanding about the Venture Capital program.

- Second, legislative perceptions are lukewarm about staff development. While legislators favor innovation, most do not favor staff development. Still, legislators want schools to move away from what does not work. Though they have no specific ideas for schools, they want to see new ideas. They expect schools to figure out their problems and to fix them. Legislators made it clear that they would not continue to fund, nor reward, conventional practices. Most legislators viewed staff development as a waste of time and/or money. While they expect educators to
engage in innovative practices, most legislators raised concerns about the purposes and uses of staff development.

- Third, while most interviewed legislators want to see schools help students to make a better transition between students' world and the world of schools, when surveyed, legislators appear to contradict themselves. During interviews, legislators expressed their desire to see success indicators and those indicators that may not be measurable such as student enthusiasm that would later lead to higher test scores. However, when surveyed, legislators placed little value on such indicators.

- Fourth, while legislators had concerns and questions about Venture Capital, they recognize that an aim of Venture Capital is to serve a broader purpose than school improvement at individual schools. A goal is for venture schools to provide the framework for systemic reform. State legislators and the former and current State Superintendents of Public Instruction believe that effective reform that occurs in one school can occur in another school. The Venture Capital initiative is a comprehensive effort at elevating Ohio's efforts at educational reform. While the decisions are not yet in place on just how or which schools will be chosen as models for systemic reform, selection will be from among those venture schools that have demonstrated commitment to renewal, capacity for renewal, and need for renewal. School districts must also be ready for and receptive to change. The current State Superintendent of Public Instruction noted that 100 more schools will be funded in

24 An aim of Venture Capital is to have effective improvement from individual schools translate into systemic reform.
the next biennial. The Ohio Department of Education's plan for systemic reform is that when the first 307 venture schools funding ends in July 1997, approximately 200 of those schools will be selected to implement systemic reform. Schools for systemic reform will be selected from each round (there are five rounds: schools selected in FY92-93; FY93-94; FY94-95; FY95-96; and FY96-97) of schools as their funding ends. The idea is that with fewer schools there can be more funding. About 200+ schools, for example, will be funded approximately $150,000 - $200,000 for systemic reform (personal communication, February 27, 1997).

- Fifth, a shift in state interest and support for Venture Capital may be occurring which could be the result in the reduction in funding for the program. The current State Superintendent of Public Instruction requested 400 additional Venture Capital grants in the Ohio Department of Education budget. The Governor granted only 200. On the other hand, much of the reasoning behind the reduction could be related to uncertainty over the future of public school financing.

- Sixth, surveyed legislators were consistent with interviews that test scores are important, however there needs to be other methods for measuring student success. Legislators and local educators have mixed feelings about test scores. There is a need for both legislators and educators to consider and seek different ways of measuring student achievement.

- Seventh, there are differences in opinion on what role legislators should play in getting involved in educational reform at the school level. One important role of reform is that of interpreting the roles of reformers. Like varying perceptions on the
role of staff development, it may be helpful if the role of state legislators in school reform is made clear to educators and to legislators themselves. Clear roles are significant given that one Education chair (Education Committee, House, personal communication, February 6, 1997) acknowledged during interviews that legislators are getting more involved on the policy side of school reform. Will this create a conflict of interest between educators and legislators? If so, whose interests will rule? If legislators, for instance, want to see less money spent on staff development, will venture schools agree? Since the former superintendent's intent was for staff development to receive the most funding and given the concerns from legislators surrounding staff development, will the current superintendent agree with the former superintendent or will he agree with legislators? If needed, who will serve as advocate over conflict resolution?

What role in reform, if any, then, do educators want legislators to play? What role do legislators want to play? Who will define these roles? As pointed out in the literature, however, strong support must come from those who fund reform initiatives (state legislators) and those who implement and monitor school reform (state department), Madsen (1994). When new educational reforms are introduced, efforts to collaborate must be made so that educators, the ODE, and state legislators can all have input to ensure, as much as possible, effective reform. Teamwork can help to move public policy (theory) to the appropriate and effective action (practice).
It is important then that the roles in reform are clear and that expectations are set forth by all parties.

- Eighth, interviewed legislators' concerns and questions regarding the equity of venture funding appear unfounded. According to the Venture Capital Assessment Team data (Appendix A & B), there are venture schools in all eight regions of Ohio.

- Ninth, legislative interviews and survey data (Appendix B) inform us that the overwhelming importance of parental involvement is being overlooked. The study informs us that legislators highly value parental involvement. Venture schools may want to re-evaluate their use of this highly valued indicator.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND RESEARCH**

Using indicators of success in attempts at school improvement can serve to bring schools closer to efficient improvement as outlined in the elements of good planning as well as bridge the communication gap between state stakeholders and local educators by empowering them with a common language for reform efforts.

Finding other avenues for measuring student achievement is worth pursuing in both the academic and policy arena. Other avenues of measurement could serve to tap into the potential of all students versus continuing to eliminate, or neglect, those students who may academically succeed despite poorer performance. Other avenues of measuring achievement may serve to address one legislator's concern that the poor performance of those students who are not reading at grade level, for example, could be directed into other areas. Students would gain confidence in themselves and in their ability such as concentrating on their reading versus taking the proficiency exam when
they are not prepared due to their grade level. The use of indicators of success can serve to accomplish this goal. Some venture schools, for example, are creating student profiles which reflect students' performance including writing, presentations, and other performance areas. In this way, both teacher and student get a sense of, and can build on, a students' strengths and weaknesses. This portfolio follows a student to graduation and is used along with test scores.

Finally, more research and/or policy on parental involvement is worth pursuing. Follow-up studies, or surveys, of venture schools on parental involvement activities and indicators could yield information on the best way for venture schools to benefit from this indicator as well as informing legislators how venture schools are best utilizing venture dollars in this area. Given that parental involvement, attitude that students can learn, and learning styles (teacher to student centered) are rated as essential by legislators and local educators, venture schools and students could benefit more by strengthening the relation between home and school relations.
SOME ELEMENTS OF PLANNING THAT RELATE TO SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

School-based planning and implementation must focus upon making a permanent improvement—not just a successful project—and must ensure an improved educational practice is in place five years after the grant ends. To help with institutionalization, Ohio's guidelines for Venture Capital grants included "elements of good planning." Based upon research and experience with school improvement, the elements improve the probability that a planned effort will survive predictable exigencies and produce better practices and results in a school. They have a necessary but not sufficient relationship to genuine school improvement: all can be present and change may not occur, but, if any are absent, change will not occur. The elements include:

- **Focus on Learning** - the initiative is aimed to produce specified *student performances* rather than merely changing school practices or activities.

- **Focus on All Students' Learning** - the initiative specifies that *all* students are to learn to produce the desired performance, and staff demonstrates determination to see that *all* do.

- **Expanded Role for Teachers** - teachers (and all other personnel) engage in essential roles beyond the traditional confines of classroom and instruction.

- **Community Involvement** - key community groups and other community members, including parents and key school district decision-makers, are intrinsically involved in planning and implementing the school program.

- **Integrated Implementation Strategies** - the initiative and all other planning and specially-funded programs focus toward a comprehensive vision for the school, are embedded in the daily life of the school, aim to substitute more effective practices for less effective ones, and are not separate projects.

- **Systemic Planning and Action** - the initiative is focused toward clear objectives and its progress is monitored regularly. The resultant data are used in a timely manner to guide decisions and action for continuous improvement.

- **Changing Policies and Procedures to Promote Learning** - school policies and practices are regularly monitored; those that impede learning for any student are modified or eliminated.

- **Leveraging Resources** - the school staff combines all resources—knowledge, finances, material, personnel, space, time, and services—to pursue a coherent vision for the school and maximize students' learning. All outside funds are focused on one plan; time is used efficiently and differently from ordinary schools, and people perform broader roles.

Indicators of Success

The application process and the selection process that followed stressed an expectation for clear, tangible indicators of success as the focal point for planning, assessment, and problem-solving as well as focuses for engaging staffs and communities in the effort. Indicators of success are defined as "what we expect to see if we are successful" and they are to be the stimuli and guides for continuous trial, assessment, and improvement as the school staff and community work to make those indicators visible in the school. At least some indicators were to state what students would be doing to demonstrate greater learning. Focussing assessment upon indicators of success emphasizes the importance of local planning and expresses the common-sense idea that more will happen if school staffs have a clear vision of what they are trying to achieve.

The development of indicators serves several purposes that drive successful improvement in schools:

a. They clarify goals in specific, understandable, and observable terms rather than vague jargon.
b. They identify and bring to the surface specific points of disagreement and prevent useless conflict over slogans or meaningless terms.
c. They guide action toward mutually accepted and well-understood targets.
d. They enable staff to recognize and see success and progress; hence are self-rewarding.
e. They facilitate evaluation and corrective problem-solving.
f. They empower participants with clear, tangible, and rational examples to win support for their efforts and to persuade detractors.
g. The process for developing them fosters ownership among participants.

The focus on indicators was designed to develop more powerful capacity for improvement at both state and local levels, for breaking the debilitating dependence upon jargon and meaningless phraseology in educational planning, to demystify the change process, to bring non-educators into the process, to reinforce the determination to stimulate genuine change, and to integrate assessment as an essential part of effective change. Indicators can demonstrate that ritualistic "objectives" can give way to more effective planning.

Plain City, OH
Venture Schools were asked to describe indicators of Success that would clarify their goals, be useful for collecting data on progress, and guide their decision-making. Indicators state "What we expect to see if we are successful." They are to be comparable with what the legislature hopes will result from the Venture Capital program.

Over 5000 indicators have been developed in the 561 schools presently funded through Venture Capital. The indicators listed below have been selected as typical of those developed at the local sites. This instrument is to find out how important key legislators think each of them is.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please use the rating scale below to rate each of the indicators to show how important you think that indicator is as a measure of genuine school improvement. Use this scale:

Rating Scale
1 = not important at all
2 = somewhat important
3 = little importance
4 = very important
5 = extremely important, essential

Rating | Indicator
--- | ---
1 | Increased attitude among teachers that all students can learn.
2 | Change from teacher-centered to student-centered teaching methods.
3 | Teaching methods will reflect heightened understanding and appreciation of other cultures.
4 | Increase in the use of technology.
5 | Increased participation in staff development.
6 | Increased number of students working in teams.
7 | Increase in numbers of students involved in the community.
8 | Higher test scores.
9 | Increase in parental involvement in the school.
10 | Students will deliver well-prepared presentations and their fellow students will take notes or in other ways display interest in what is presented.
11 | Students will be in the library reading unassigned materials to satisfy some personal curiosity or to complete a personally-developed project.
12 | Students will demonstrate research skills by collecting and analyzing data and expressing reasonable solutions to significant problems.

Return to: Marjorie Davis, 465 Broadmeadow Blvd. Apt. 310, Columbus, Ohio 43214
3. Applications Funded and Non-funded in Seven Socio-economic Categories.

Table 3 shows the numbers and percentages of Venture Schools and non-funded applications in each of the seven socio-economic categories established by the Department of Education to reflect the economic base and socio-economic status of each school district. Though schools may differ from their parent district's socio-economic status, this categorization is the best available estimate of the school's status. It is a rough but usable indicator of whether the Venture Schools are located in rural, suburban or urban areas; have agricultural, manufacturing or other economic bases; and are at certain income levels. Though the designation is not usable for an individual school, it may be used reliably for groups of schools. For example, Category 5 most likely contains most of the "inner city" schools, though not all of those in the category will be inner city.

The table shows that the largest proportion (23%) of all Venture Schools presently funded is in Category 5 with low agricultural dependence, low income, high ADC, and average commercial valuation. The next largest proportion is in Categories 3 (21%) and 1 (19%), representing middle-class bedroom suburbs and farming communities with average income but low valuation. A smaller proportion of schools in Category 2 was funded in the second cohort, partly because a somewhat smaller proportion of schools in that category submitted proposals. A larger proportion of schools in Category 4 was funded in the second cohort through a smaller proportion of those schools submitted proposals. In most cases the proportions remained fairly stable in all comparisons. The largest number of proposals originated from schools in Categories 1 (391), 5 (356), and 3 (355). The smallest number came from Categories 6 (101) and 2 (107).

4. Applications Funded and Non-funded to Adopt Selected Improvement Models.

Table 4 shows how many and what proportion of the Venture Schools and the non-funded applications had selected one of ten "models" for improvement that the state had listed in Ohio's Commitment to School Renewal and how many chose to develop their own. The largest proportion of Venture Schools (29.4%) claim to be following the Effective Schools model. The next largest proportion (20.8%) proposed to create their own model. The other models mentioned in Ohio's Commitment to School Renewal (1993) were each proposed by fewer than 10% of the funded schools. School contact persons are currently replying to a questionnaire that will show how many still adhere to the models they proposed.

III. THESE ARE THE VENTURE SCHOOLS

1. Grade Levels Served by Venture Schools and Non-funded Applications.

Table 1 shows how many and what proportion of the Venture Schools were elementary schools, middle or junior high schools, and high schools in each of the cohorts funded to date and for the total number of schools. It also shows those proportions and numbers for applications that were not funded in each cohort. Cohort 1 is all schools funded during the school year 1994-95 (Rounds 1 and 2 of the selection). Cohort 2 is the schools funded in school year 1995-96 (Round 3).

The funding breakdown among grade levels was as follows: Elementary - 267 (27.2%) of 982 applications; Vocational/Career/Senior High - 107 (26.1%) of 410; Middle or Junior High - 74 (23%) of 322; Other (Vocational/Technical) 4 (28.6%) of 14. Approximately equal proportions of the applications were funded at each level.

2. Applications Funded and Non-funded In Each Region for Each Round of Venture Capital.

Table 2 shows what proportion of the funded and non-funded applications from each cohort of Venture Schools is located in each of the eight regions served by the RPDCs operating at the time data were collected. The largest proportion of funded schools (22.6%) are located in the Central Region. The East and Northeast Regions have 17% each, followed by the Southwest with 13% and the Northwest with 11%. The Southeast has nearly 8% of the Venture Schools; the West has 6.2%, and the South has 4.2%.

All regions have had about equal proportions of applicants funded except the Central Region which submitted nearly 17% of the applications and received nearly 23% of the funding. East and West Regions increased their proportion of funded applications in the second cohort by about 2% while Southeast and Southwest had smaller proportions of the funded applications. Generally, those differences were in proportion to submitting a larger or smaller proportion of applications. Central Region submitted a greater proportion of applications for the second cohort but had about the same proportion of funded efforts as in the first.
7. How clear is the indicator?
   1. very unclear
   2. unclear
   3. have to read a lot into it
   4. gives some sense of what to see
   5. clear
   6. very clear

8. How easily can this indicator be counted to supply data for assessing progress?
   1. not possible
   2. with great difficulty
   3. with difficulty
   4. somewhat easily
   5. easily
   6. very easily

9. How significant is the change described in this indicator?
   1. no real change
   2. not significant, change is small
   3. not significant, most schools already there
   4. some significance, still short of necessity
   5. significant, makes a difference
   6. very significant, real change

10. How well can this indicator guide local teams to make decisions?
    1. not at all
    2. not well, direction not clear
    3. maybe, could be clearer
    4. seems to be getting there
    5. well, could help identify direction
    6. very well, points direction clearly

11. What is your overall judgement of the quality of the indicator?
    1. useless
    2. weak
    3. barely adequate
    4. adequate for promoting some progress
    5. strong, points to real progress
    6. very strong, points to greatness

OTHER OPTION: Substitute items from Part II for items 6-11 from this form. Advantage: compares exactly with self-reports from schools. Disadvantage: does not give as complete information for each indicator.
VENTURE CAPITAL GRANT
ASSESSMENT FOR INDICATORS

Please see the preceding page for instructions.

Be sure the INDICATOR NUMBER (in order listed on the school's list) is recorded on the scan form in the proper box.

I. Category of change: What category of change is described by the indicator? (Mark only column "a" for each category that applies to the indicator you are rating). NOTE: Some of the rows may be blank if the indicator does not fit that category, but there should be a mark in at least one of the first five rows.

1. structure - The framework within which education takes place (i.e., tables of organization, schedules, grade levels).
   a = fits category    blank = does not fit category

2. process - The way in which the business of education is conducted (i.e., decision-making, problem-solving, instructions).
   a = fits category    blank = does not fit category

3. roles - The daily practice, activities, and duties of individuals involved in the educational practice (i.e., teachers working with other adults, students engaged in curriculum decisions, parents involved in decision-making).
   a = fits category    blank = does not fit category

4. student achievement - What students know or are able to do (i.e., test scores, student performances, student exhibition).
   a = fits category    blank = does not fit category

5. instrumental means - The behaviors and practices which support/help the educational process (i.e., student attendance, discipline, parental support, teacher/student satisfaction).
   a = fits category    blank = does not fit category

II. NOTE TO THE RATER: AS YOU RESPOND TO #6 THROUGH #11 THINK OF ALL THE SCHOOLS YOU HAVE KNOWN AND HOW THIS INDICATOR WOULD AFFECT MOST OF THOSE SCHOOLS. DO NOT TRY TO JUDGE CONDITIONS AT THE SCHOOL THAT CREATED THE INDICATOR.

6. Ease of Implementation: How easy is it to institutionalize the proposed indicator?
   1. impossible
   2. very difficult
   3. takes some effort but can be done
   4. easy
   5. very easy
   6. already in place
VI. INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
Maximum Length: three pages

Venture Capital not only expects but requires clear, tangible indicators of success that in turn direct the planning, assessment, and decision making process for school renewal. Indicators of success are defined as "what we expect to see if we are successful," and they are to be the stimuli and guide for the continuous improvement of the school.

Please list a maximum of ten indicators that will lead the school to significant improvements in students' learning. The following serves as a guide for assisting to develop indicators of success. Include student, teacher, and school indicators.

A. What knowledge, demonstrations of abilities, and habits of learning are you expecting from your learners (that are different or advanced from your current expectations) by the end of the five-year grant period?

B. What improved or new capabilities are you expecting from educators (that would be required if the above learner expectations are to be realized) by the end of the five-year grant period?

C. How will you determine (quantitatively or qualitatively) if the desired learner expectations (a. above) and educator capabilities (b. above) will have been accomplished?


Application must be received at the Ohio Department of Education by 4:45 P.M., February 29, 1996. RECEIPT MAIL IS REQUIRED FOR ALL APPLICATIONS THAT ARE NOT HAND DELIVERED. NO FACSIMILE (FAX) ACCEPTED.

PLEASE SUBMIT ORIGINAL AND FOUR COPIES TO
Venture Capital Grants
Ohio Department of Education
65 South Front Street, Room 1009
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4183
**DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

To the Reader: If you have any personal or professional connection or interest in the proposed activity or in the applicant's school or district, please remove yourself from the rating. Affirm that you have no conflicting interest by signing the statement below:

I affirm that I have no connection with or personal or professional interest in the school, district or individual that has prepared this proposal nor any economic interest in any of the processes it proposes.

Signed ___________________________ Date ____________________________

Assessing Capital Gains, 1995
## DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

If you have any personal or professional connection
the proposed activity or in the applicant's school or
remove yourself from the rating. Affirm that you have
interest by signing the statement below:

that I have no connection with or personal or
main interest in the school, district or individual
prepared this proposal nor any economic interest
the processes it proposes.

Date.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher test scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sure students comprehend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher graduation rates, particularly rural and urban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking leadership/ownership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in school culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform that lasts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>N= 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Indicators of success and percentages of interviewed state legislators who consider them important for school reform, particularly in relation to Venture Capital.
Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Com. Chair</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>higher test scores</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher graduation rates</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>higher graduation in rural/urban areas</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>making sure students comprehend</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working collaboratively</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff development</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parental involvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>funding methods</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change in school culture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Indicators of success and aggregate responses of interviewed state legislators who consider them important for school reform, particularly in relation to Venture Capital.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>Legislators Mean</th>
<th>Local Educators Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Parental involvement</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attitude that all students can learn</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teacher-centered to student-centered</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Higher test scores</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Staff development</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Demonstrate research skills</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. In library reading, unassigned</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Use of technology</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Deliver well-prepared presentations</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Appreciation of other cultures</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Students working in teams</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Students working in the community</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Mean rating and standard deviation of importance assigned to twelve selected indicators of success by surveyed legislators and local educators.

6 = very important, essential
5 = very important
4 = somewhat important
3 = little importance
2 = very little importance
1 = not important at all
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=8</td>
<td>N=9</td>
<td>N=6</td>
<td>N-11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Responses**

- Continued legislative support: 35%
- Depends on other programs/interests: 18%
- Not sure about future support: 18%

N=17

Table 4. Percentages of interviewed state legislators on belief about legislative support for Venture Capital.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=8</td>
<td>N=9</td>
<td>N=6</td>
<td>N=11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses

| Serious questions about implementation | 41% |
| Want to know more                      | 41% |

N=17

Table 5. Percentages of interviewed state legislators on how they believe Venture Capital is being implemented.
Table 6. Percentages of State Total Applications Funded and Non-Funded in Each Region for Each Cohort of Venture Capital.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>First Cohort</th>
<th></th>
<th>Second Cohort</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funded</td>
<td>Non-Funded</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Funded</td>
<td>Non-Funded</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a = Schools funded in Round 1 & 2, during 1994-1995 school year.
b = Schools funded in Round 3, at the beginning of 1995-1996 school year.
c = The regions shown here are the eight as they existed in 1995. In 1996, the number was expanded to 12.
Table 7. Numbers and Percentages of State Totals of Venture Capital Applications Submitted, Funded, Non-Funded by Schools Representing the Seven Socio-Economic Categories.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEWS
January 21, 1997

The Honorable Michael Fox, Chair
House of Representatives
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43286

Dear Representative Fox:

My name is Marjorie Davis. I am a doctoral candidate at The Ohio State University working with my advisor Dr. Brad Mitchell on a study about the school Venture Capital Program. My dissertation is titled: A Stakeholder Analysis of Quality in School Reform: Ohio’s Venture Capital Program.

As you are aware, the Venture Capital Program is scheduled for legislative review. The purpose of the study is to highlight what indicators of success should be used to assess the performance of the Venture Capital Initiative. Indicators of success are defined as what you would see if schools are successful.

I would like to interview you for approximately 15 to 30 minutes. The interview will focus on two areas:

1) What are the aims of the Venture Capital Program?
2) How should we judge the success of the Venture Capital Program?

Interviews will be transcribed verbatim and forwarded to you for clarification. Follow-up interviews may be needed for exploring further questions. A final report of the study will also be available to you. Enclosed is a list of the interview questions.

I would appreciate an interview as soon as possible, if your schedule permits. I will contact your office next week to schedule a convenient time.

I can be reached at (614) 292-6060. My advisor, Dr. Brad Mitchell, can be reached at (614) 292-7700. Thank you for your consideration in this study.

Cordially,

Marjorie Davis
Ph.D. Candidate
The Ohio State University
1) What do you consider important indicators of success for school reform, particularly in relation to Venture Capital?

2) Where do you see the legislative support for Venture Capital coming from?

3) What is your opinion, if any, on how Venture Capital is being implemented?
PARTICIPANTS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1) John Bender (D) non-leadership
2) Dan Brady (R) non-leadership
3) Jamie Callender (R) non-leadership
4) Michael Fox (R) Chair
5) Richard Harris (R) Assistant Majority Whip
6) C. J. Prentiss (D) Ranking Minority
7) Tom Roberts (D) Assistant Minority Whip
8) Dennis Stapleton (R) non-leadership
9) Charleta Tavares (D) Minority Whip

SENATE

10) Robert Cupp (R) Majority Leader
11) Robert Gardner (R) non-leadership, ex-teacher
12) Leigh Herington (D) Assistant Minority Whip
13) Jeff Johnson (D) Minority Whip
14) Merle Kearns (R) Chair
15) Scott Nein (R) Vice Chair
16) Richard Schafarth (R) non-leadership
17) H. Cooper Snyder (R) non-leadership
18) Dr. Ted Sanders Former State Superintendent Public Instruction
19) Paul Marshall Ohio Department of Education
20) Chris Pipho Education Commission of States
21) Bill Wayson Venture Capital Assessment Team
22) Dr. John Goff State Superintendent Public Instruction
## PROFILE OF HOUSE AND SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEES (30)

### HOUSE (21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
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### SENATE (9)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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PROFILE OF OHIO STATE LEGISLATURE

Ohio House of Representatives (99)

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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>39</td>
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Ohio Senate (33)

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SCHOOL TYPES AS DEFINED BY THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

0 = Island Districts and College Corner
1 = Small Rural, Low SES
2 = Rural, Moderate SES
3 = Small Town, Moderate SES
4 = Urban/Non-rural, Low SES
5 = Urban/Non-rural, High SES
6 = Major Urban
7 = Urban, Moderate SES
8 = Very High SES

ODE, 1995

For the purpose of this study, districts four and five are labeled as suburban.
LIST OF REFERENCES


183


Ohio Department of Education. (1994). Removing the barriers: Unleashing Ohio's learning power.


