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PREVIEW

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SITE-BASED MANAGEMENT
ACROSS TEXAS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

by

TERRY-ANN LOUISE RODRIGUEZ

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Educational Leadership and Administration

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

December 2000

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ACROSS TEXAS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

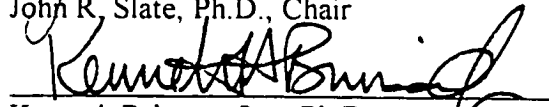
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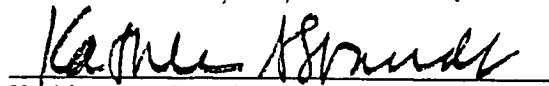
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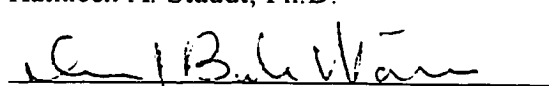
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe gratitude to many individuals for their support and guidance throughout my doctoral studies and in particular, this dissertation process. I dedicate this work to Ernie, my husband, and Stephen, Michael, Daina, and Adriana, my four beautiful children for their patience, understanding, incredible sacrifice, and unwavering confidence in my ability to complete the doctoral program. To my parents, Stephen and Alison Popham, I extend my deepest thanks for raising me to always want the best for myself in all aspects of my life. I hope I have made you proud.

I am indebted to Dr. John R. Slate, the chairperson of my committee, for his continuous guidance and support. His advice, patience, and faith in me will forever be greatly appreciated. I would like to thank the other committee members, Dr. Kenneth Brinson, Jr., Dr. Kathleen Staudt, and Dr. Dennis Bixler-Marquez for their helpful critique and insights along the way. In addition, I am grateful to Dr. Gary Brooks, for without his encouragement to enter the doctoral program, I may never have had the confidence to earn such a prestigious educational degree. My gratitude is also extended to the Texas Education Agency and the assistance of Dr. Marcel Kerr and Dr. Nancy Smith.

Finally, I must thank my colleagues from the third doctoral cohort for enriching my life and sharing their experiences with me. I will keep each one of you in my thoughts and prayers always. The friendships we have built will never be forgotten regardless of where our personal and professional lives take us. (October 31, 2000)

ABSTRACT

Terry-Ann Rodriguez The Implementation of Site-Based Management Across Texas: An Empirical Study. Doctor of Education dissertation, University of Texas at El Paso, 2000.

Because substantial emphasis has been placed upon the inclusion of all stakeholders (teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and business members) in school governance by the passage of Texas Senate Bill 1 of 1990, school administrators and personnel have had to learn how to implement site-based management at both district and campus levels.

This researcher analyzed data from the 73-item Integrated Planning and Decision Making Survey produced and administered by the Texas Education Agency in 1999. Surveys were randomly sent by the Texas Education Agency to approximately 3,000 respondents at both the district and campus levels. These respondents were members of district or campus-level planning and decision-making committees (also known as site-based decision-making committees/councils) in the 20 educational regions across Texas. In addition, 300 randomly selected teachers across Texas not serving on a planning and decision-making committee were asked to respond to the survey.

The focus of this study encompassed survey results regarding: (1) the degree to which site-based management has been implemented and supported across Texas, (2) the extent of agreement between administrators and teachers concerning the implementation of and support for site-based management, (3) differences in implementation of, and

support for, site-based management among educational regions across Texas, and (4) differences in implementation of and support for site-based management between border and non-border educational regions in Texas.

Based upon analyses of survey responses, this researcher suggested possible reasons for differences in implementation of and support for site-based management across educational regions in Texas. In addition, implications for future research are offered.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Americans have been rethinking and redesigning the way in which public schools should be most effectively operated through the process known as restructuring or systematic reform (Fiske, 1995). One of the most frequently used approaches to school reform is site-based management (SBM) (Mohrman, 1994). The major objective behind the site-based management approach is to move decision-making control from the central office of a school system to the local school level (i.e., at each school campus) (Short & Greer, 1997). Critical to the implementation of site-based management is the participation of school stakeholders (i.e., teachers, parents, administrators, staff, and community and business members) in the decision-making process. Site-based management is intended to address the need to include those people closest to the problems, issues, and situations in decision-making at the local school level (Goodman, 1994). “Although site-based management appears in many guises, at its core is the idea of participatory decision making at the school site” (David, Dec. 1995/Jan. 1996, p. 6).

The impetus behind SBM in Texas came from Senate Bill 1 (1990), in which school improvement committees were mandated at the district and campus levels. These school improvement committees are to consist of an administrator, teachers, parents, and community members so that all stakeholders are represented in school decision making. Elementary, middle, and high schools are required to have SBM committees of this

composition to be in compliance with the legislative mandate. Because of the increased local autonomy and accountability that is created through shared decision making, increased student achievement is cited as a positive outcome of SBM (TEA, 1992). However, limited research is available about the extent to which site-based management has been implemented and the extent to which differences may be present in its implementation.

Knowing about the effectiveness of site-based management is even more critical for border regions. Due to the transient nature of many students to move back and forth frequently from one side of the border to the other and the often unequal education provided to minority, Spanish speaking students in the past, schools on the Texas side of the border must be able to make effective decisions at the local campus level that will enable the teachers and staff to serve these students in addition to the students who live permanently on the Texas side of the border. Sharp (1998) defined the Texas-Mexico border as the southwest region of the United States that follows a 1,254 mile path along the Rio Grande River from El Paso/ Ciudad Juarez to Brownsville/ Matamoros.

Theoretical Basis of the Study

Based on a critical theorist perspective of including a multiplicity of voices in decision-making, the implementation of site-based management should provide teachers and other stakeholders, who have not had as great a voice in decision-making in the past as have administrators, the opportunity to be given “a greater voice in the decisions that affect the school” (Carnegie Forum, 1986, p.24). In critical theory, a strong emphasis is

placed on shared leadership and teacher empowerment. “An important aspect of empowerment is that it provides opportunities for teachers [and other stakeholders] to participate actively, openly, and without fear in the process of shaping and molding the vision of the school and its culture through iterative discussion” (Owens, 1998, p. 216). Such empowerment brought about through organizational effectiveness, as stated by Mohrman, Wohlsetter, and Mohrman (1994) was positively associated with stakeholder participation. “SBM means that school management tasks are determined according to the characteristics and needs of the school itself, and therefore, the stakeholders have greater autonomy and responsibility for the use of resources to solve problems and carry out effective education activities, for the long-term development of the school” (Cheng, 1996, p.44).

Site-based management operates under decentralization, the development of internal human resources, and the wide participation of school members in the decision-making process, which closely accompanies the tenets of critical theory. Livingston, Slate, and Gibbs (1999) suggested that administrators agree that all stakeholders must be involved in decision-making if the school is to be successful and that teachers possess expertise that is needed to make important decisions about the school. In addition, Cheng (1996) noted that site-based management assumes a multiplicity of educational goals, a complex and changing educational environment, need for educational reforms, school effectiveness, and the pursuit of quality.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study involve assessing: (1) the extent to which site-based management has been implemented in schools across Texas; (2) the extent of agreement between administrators and teachers regarding the degree of implementation of site-based management; (3) whether differences are present in the implementation and support for site-based management among districts and schools from the 20 education regions in Texas; and (4) whether factors such as location of the regions effect implementation of and support for site-based management.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed:

- (1) What is the extent to which site-based management has been implemented and supported in Texas school districts and campuses?
- (2) What is the extent of agreement between principals and teachers regarding the degree of implementation and support for site-based management in Texas?
- (3) Are differences present among educational regions in Texas regarding the implementation of and support for site-based management?
- (4) Are differences present between border educational regions and non-border educational regions in Texas regarding the implementation of and support for site-based management?

Hypotheses

Null hypothesis one. Site-based management will not be reported as having been implemented in the schools.

Research hypothesis one. Site-based management will be reported as having been implemented in the schools.

Null hypothesis two. No differences in agreement will be present between administrators and teachers regarding the degree of site-based management implementation.

Research hypothesis two. Differences in agreement will be present between administrators and teachers regarding the degree of site-based management implementation.

Null hypothesis three. No differences in the implementation of and support for site-based management will be present between educational regions in Texas.

Research hypothesis three. Differences in the implementation of and support for site-based management will be present between educational regions in Texas.

Null hypothesis four. Factors of educational region location will not be related to the degree of implementation and support for site-based management.

Research hypothesis four. Factors of educational region location will be related to the degree of implementation and support for site-based management.

Significance of the Study

The educational significance of this study will be to advance the existing body of knowledge in educational leadership regarding site-based management. In particular, information is needed about the extent to which site-based management has been implemented into schools and about the extent to which teachers and administrators are in agreement regarding its implementation. Data are also needed regarding how site-based management has affected schools in border regions with a large number of Hispanic students. As few studies have been conducted in the area of site-based management, an empirical study, such as this one, is sorely needed. Findings obtained from this study may assist educational leaders in creating organizational effectiveness and enhancing student achievement at their local campus levels.

Definition of Terms

Administrators. Administrators in this study are certified principals of elementary, middle, and high school campuses and district-level personnel.

Agreement of the implementation of site-based management. Agreement of the implementation of site-based management refers to the degree to which teachers and administrators agree on the extent to which SBM is implemented in their district or at their campus.

Border region. For this study, a border community will be defined as an Education Service Center region along the Texas-Mexico border. The Texas-Mexico

border is defined as the southwest region of the United States that runs 1,254 miles along the Rio Grande River from El Paso to Brownsville, Texas (Sharp, 1998).

Decentralization. Decentralization refers to the transformation of power from a district's central office administration to the local campus level (Mohrman, 1994; Reavis & Griffith, 1992).

Degree of implementation of site-based management. For this study, the degree of implementation of site-based management refers to the extent to which teachers and administrators are involved in the decision making at a given campus. The degree of implementation of site-based management will be measured by a 73-item survey administered by the Texas Education Agency to members of district-level and campus-level planning and decision-making committees, in addition to a representative sample of teachers who do not serve on a planning and decision-making committee.

Education service center. Twenty education service centers are present across Texas. Each service center provides services and support to districts and schools in a particular region in Texas. The number of districts and schools served through each region service center varies depending on population density.

Location. For the purposes of this study, location will be defined as the school districts' and campuses' Educational Service Center region in Texas.

School restructuring/School reform. School restructuring and school reform refer to a complete change in the culture, leadership, curriculum, organizational assumptions, instructional approach, and accountability of the school (Reavis & Griffith, 1992).

Site-based decision-making committee/council. Teachers, parents, administrators, and community and business members comprise the site-based decision-making committee, also known as site councils. The function of the committee is to make decisions or provide recommendations to school administration (Hatry, Morley, Ashford, & Wyatt, 1993). Decisions the committee should be involved in include campus planning, staffing patterns, staff development, curriculum planning, budget planning, and school organization (TEC, 1995).

Site-based management (SBM). For the purposes of this study, site-based management refers to the decision coming from Senate Bill 1 of 1990 to develop decision making committees on all campuses, (elementary, middle, and high schools) that consist of teachers, an administrator, parents, community, and business members. Site-based management involves all stakeholders when decisions are made on a campus with the ultimate desired outcome of higher student achievement (Schlechty, 1997).

Stakeholders. Stakeholders include teachers, parents, administrators, community members, and business members (Schlechty, 1997), are people with a specific interest in the school and the progress it makes. In addition, stakeholders share a common vision and mission for the school.

Teachers. Teachers participating in this study are those teachers who are certified by the State of Texas to teach in one or more content areas and are employed full time by a district in the study at one of the campuses participating in the study. The majority of teachers surveyed in this study are members of planning and decision-making

committees. In addition to these teachers, also surveyed were 300 teachers who do not serve on a planning and decision-making committee.

Texas Education Agency. The Texas Education Agency is a state agency that regulates what school districts and schools must do in the state of Texas to educate and meet the needs of all school-age students. Laws set by state legislation are carried out through the Texas Education Agency to all school districts and schools in Texas.

Delimitations of the Study

This study will be limited by examining site-based management in a researcher chosen single state. In addition, districts and schools who participated were randomly chosen by the Texas Education Agency, not by this researcher. Though other subjects surveyed could be focused upon for this study, this researcher will direct attention to teachers and administrators in the sample.

Limitations of the Study

External validity. A limitation to this study will be the sample size. A larger sample size is more likely to be representative of the population than a smaller size (Krathwohl, 1998). The sample for this study will be representative of district and campus-level planning and decision-making committees and teachers not serving on a district or campus-level planning and decision-making committee from all 20 educational regions in Texas. Thus, the generalizability of the results will be limited to only those school systems in the state of Texas. Furthermore, specific demographics, gender of the survey respondents, and campus level (i.e., elementary, middle, high) of the respondents

was not made known by the Texas Education Agency to maintain the anonymity of the participants.

Internal Validity. Findings of this study will be based upon responses provided by self reports on the part of district-level and campus-level planning and decision-making committee members and a representative sample of teachers not serving on a planning and decision-making committee on a 73-item survey administered by the Texas Education Agency (Texas Education Agency, 1999). Limitations to the survey may include changes in the content of the survey during its use since 1996, thus a comparison to previous survey results would be problematic. Respondents may interpret questions asked of them in a different manner from what the Texas Education Agency intended, which may cause their answers to be misinterpreted during analysis (Labaw, 1981). In addition, this survey was answered on a voluntary basis by district-level and campus-level planning and decision-making committee members and a representative sample of teachers not serving on a planning and decision-making committee, and therefore, not all subjects chosen may have been willing to participate. Varying levels of motivation to complete the survey may have limited the internal validity of this study. Thus, the potential problem is the variation of response sizes from district-level and campus-level committees across Texas. As Martella, Nelson, and Marchand-Martella (1999) pointed out, the probability of a correct rejection of a null hypothesis is more probable with a larger response size than with a smaller response size. Furthermore, the survey was published in English only; therefore, some possible respondents may have been excluded