A Comparative Study of Middle Level Characteristics Suggested in the Literature and the Extent of Their Implementation in Selected Middle Level Schools in Illinois

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A Comparative Study Of Middle Level Characteristics Suggested In The Literature And The Extent Of Their Implementation In Selected Middle Level Schools In Illinois

by

Mary Ann Ross

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

November

1988
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To her mother and daughter she is especially grateful for their patience, their sacrifice, and their love. It is with love that she dedicates to them this dissertation.
VITA

Mary Ann Sirianni Ross was born in Chicago, Illinois, August 1, 1946.

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The author has one daughter, Gina Marie and resides in Barrington, Illinois.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

One of the most controversial issues of the last seventy years has been the type of educational program that should be offered to middle level students. Prior to the 1920's, education for these students was provided in a K-8 organization. Research at that time, however, presented new evidence concerning the physical and emotional characteristics of children going through puberty. It also showed that they should be segregated from elementary and high school pupils. Based upon the research of the developmental tasks of pre-adolescents and also upon pragmatic concerns such as finance, desegregation, and enrollment trends, junior highs began to flourish.

However, during the early 1960's objections to the junior high school on the basis of its subject matter orientation, its traditional styles of teaching, and its concentration on social activities that were viewed as being beyond the maturity level of the age group were highlighted as problems by many educators. Consequently, a new approach was proposed, the middle school. In 1969, Moss identified five arguments for the establishment of middle schools:

1. The earlier onset of puberty required that 6th graders be housed with 7th and 8th graders.
2. Middle schools were not tied to college preparatory requirements and could therefore, engage in greater
curriculum experimentation focusing on the needs of the 11-14 age group.

3. The development of middle school teacher certification would create a profession of teachers especially trained for dealing with pre-adolescents and early adolescents.

4. Eventually middle schools would offer a nongraded structure which would facilitate the transition from elementary to high school.

5. Middle schools would emphasize guidance. ¹

During the past 25 years there has been considerable debate as to which organizational structure would best serve the needs of these pre-adolescents. Research has not been conclusive in this regard and some researchers feel that "the name of a school matters very little when one judges whether or not it does what we want it to do."² "Names have gotten in the way and, as frequently happens, names have begun to mean more than the programs."³

Statement of the Problem

The problem examined in this dissertation is to determine what the characteristics (based on research) are for effective learning for middle level students. The intent is to ascertain the extent to which each of these characteristics is implemented and the extent to which each characteristic is desired in schools housing middle level students. It is further intended to determine if there are consistencies in the education of students between the ages of 10-14 which are independent of the organizational format of the buildings.

¹Theodore C. Moss, Middle School (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 18-19.


³Walter H. Yoder, Jr., "Middle School vs. Junior High Misses the Point," Educational Leadership 40:2 (November, 1982), 50.
There is growing concern in the educational communities that the foundation for middle level education is being challenged by the increased emphasis on academics, test scores, federal and state mandates, and budgetary concerns. If, through the survey conducted, it is found that there is a discrepancy between the current level of implementation of middle level characteristics as outlined in the research and the desire of the sampled principals to implement them, the reasons for not incorporating these characteristics will be explored by interviewing the principals that showed the greatest disparity between actual level of implementation and desired level of implementation.

Justification For the Study

If the middle school movement is to achieve its great potential, there is a need for support from all facets of the educational community. Before this can be accomplished there must be a clear understanding as to its purposes. Edward Meade highlighted this as a problem for the middle level movement. "Lacking a clear sense of identity, the middle grades have not been effective as the bridge between primary and secondary schooling, nor have they been responsive to the development of young adolescents during these critical years of their lives."  

This lack of meaningful identity in middle school education stems largely from an "inadequate conceptual base in the literature. Change in practice has been limited primarily to changes in school organization, and advocacy for a single model of school organization

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has dominated the literature."⁵ Dorman also states that "a conceptual context"⁶ is necessary for change to occur. Klingele stated that "innovation in the middle school has been confined largely to organizational changes and rhetoric because that is exactly what has been emphasized at the national, state, and local levels of education."⁷

If middle level programs which address the developmental needs of pre-adolescents are to improve, there is a need for studies that will provide educators and lawmakers with information regarding not only the theory of middle level education but also the practice of it. Lipsitz in stressing the operationality of middle level schools states:

A central weakness in most schools for young adolescents is a widespread failure to reconsider each school practice in terms of developmental needs in order either to incorporate responsibility for meeting them into the schools' academic and social goals or to keep them from being barriers to attaining these goals.

The purpose of this study is to provide educators in the field of middle level education with information relating to the current level of implementation of the essential elements of middle level education based on developmental needs thereby relating theory to actual practice. Identification of those elements common to both middle schools and junior high schools may help to determine if there are any significant differences between schools that are called middle

⁵ John Arnold, "Rhetoric and Reform In Middle Schools," Phi Delta Kappan 63 (March, 1982), 456.

⁶ Gayle Dorman, Improving Middle Grade Schools (Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence, 1987), 11.

⁷ William Klingele, "Middle Level Education: Do We Need It?" The Clearing House 58:8 (April, 1985), 335.

⁸ Joan Lipsitz, Successful Schools For Young Adolescents (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1984), 168.
schools and those that are called junior highs. It is essential that educators emphasize and agree upon instructional programs that address the developmental needs of pre-adolescents regardless of school names and grade organizations. If these types of programs are not being implemented as determined by the findings of this study, the further intent of this study is to determine "Why?" Since there is a need for middle level schools that incorporate programs based upon the developmental needs of pre-adolescents restraining factors that prohibit their implementation must be identified if they are to be overcome.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The major questions to be explored in this study are:

1. What are the essential characteristics of effective middle level education that relate to the developmental needs of pre-adolescents as delineated in the literature?

2. To what extent is each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools being implemented in Chicago-land suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" as perceived by the principals of the respective schools?

3. To what extent should each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools be implemented in Chicago-land suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" as perceived by the principals of the respective schools?

4. Is there a significant difference in the actual level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of
effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, the junior high schools, and "others"?

5. Is there a significant difference in the desired level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, the junior high schools, and "others"?

6. What reasons have been cited by the principals in the study for not implementing the characteristics of effective middle level schools?

Hypotheses

1. There is no difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools, or "others" with reference to the implementation of each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

2. There is no difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools, or "others" with reference to their desire to implement each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

Procedures for Analysis of Data

This study is concerned with examining the perceived present and desired implementation of eighteen characteristics of effective middle level education as researched from the literature on middle level
education. A survey instrument validated by William Munsell⁹ was administered to all 171 public junior high and middle school principals in the Cook, DuPage, and Lake Counties of Illinois to determine present and desired levels of implementation of the eighteen characteristics of effective middle level education. Schools were identified as junior high, middle school, or other based upon the principal’s perception of the school’s philosophic orientation.

The survey measured the principal’s perception of the present level of implementation as well as the desired level of implementation of characteristics that related to:

1. Continuous Progress
2. Variety of Instructional Strategies and Materials
3. Flexible Schedules
4. Social Experiences
5. Physical Experiences
6. Intramural Activities
7. Interdisciplinary Team Organization
8. Vertical Planning
9. Exploratory Studies
10. Guidance Services
11. Independent Study
12. Basic Skill Repair and Extension
13. Creative Experiences

⁹William R. Munsell, "The Extent to Which Identified Programmatic Characteristics of Middle Level Education are Implemented in the Middle Level Schools of Colorado" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 1984), 52-53.
14. Evaluation
15. Community Relations
16. Student Services
17. Auxiliary Staffing
18. Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed to Transes-
cents.

The data received from the questionnaires were coded. The responses were statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The dependent variables of the study were the principals' perceived level of implementation of each characteristic both actual and desired, while the independent variable was the type of school. Mean responses for each characteristic were calculated for principals in the three types of schools. Analysis of Variance (alpha = .5) was used to determine if there were significant differences in the perceived implementation among the three types of schools.

Principals who displayed the greatest disparity between their actual levels of implementation of the eighteen characteristics and their desired levels of implementation on the initial questionnaire and who were not first year principals were selected for a follow-up interview to investigate the reasons for their inability to implement the characteristics that they deemed important for effective middle level education. Questions for the interview were developed based upon a discrepancy analysis of the items on the initial questionnaire.
Limitations of the Study

The following limitations for this study have been identified.

1. This study was limited to Illinois public middle schools and junior high schools in suburban Cook, DuPage, and Lake Counties. The generalizability of the findings of the study to city and rural schools and schools in other locales is questionable.

2. The findings of the study only apply to the eighteen characteristics of middle level education that have been identified in this study and should not be generalized to other areas of middle level education.

3. Munsell questioned the inherent limitations of using a questionnaire in his study but noted that "the extent to which the restriction of choice for respondents impinges upon the findings of the study is uncertain ... a social desirability scale was incorporated into the instrument to assess the nature of the responses."\textsuperscript{10}

4. Although the measurement instrument was reviewed by authorities in the field and was field tested, there are no norms for the scores.

5. The identification of each school by type is based upon the principal's perception of the philosophic orientation of the school.

6. The results of the study are based upon the principal's perception of the actual level of implementation of the

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 14.
eighteen characteristics of effective middle level education and may not be a true indication of actual practice.

Overview of the Remainder of the Study

The remaining chapters of this study are organized in the following manner:

Chapter II presents a historical overview of both the junior high school and the middle school. Characteristics of effective middle level schools, as presented by middle level researchers, are reviewed as are the findings of the studies related to this study.

Chapter III describes the methodology used in the study. Details relating to the research design, instrumentation, sampling techniques, procedures, and statistical methods used in the study are described.

Chapter IV presents an analysis of the data collected in the survey and in the principal interviews and reports the answers to the research questions and the hypotheses.

Chapter V presents the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study, recommendations, and suggestions for further study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Organization of the Chapter

The review of the related literature is subdivided into six sections. The first section reviews the history and purposes of the junior high, the second section reviews the history and purposes of the middle school, the third section identifies the characteristics of effective middle level education as identified in the literature, the fourth section reviews the findings of studies relevant to the extent of implementation of middle level characteristics in middle level schools, and the fifth section is a summary of the chapter.

The Junior High School

The Emergence of the Junior High School

Prior to the turn of the twentieth century the primary function of grades seven and eight was to review the basic education provided in the first six grades. According to Harvard President Charles Eliot this approach, which was based on an 8-4 school organization, wasted time that schools could better spend preparing students for college. An NEA committee, the Committee of Ten, headed by Charles Eliot in 1898 made recommendations that college preparation start two years earlier

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with the secondary schools embracing grades 7 through 12. Eliot's committee felt that by extending the secondary school downward by two years a better college preparation could be realized. 12

In 1895, the Committee of Fifteen, established by NEA's Department of Superintendents, endorsed the idea of introducing secondary school subjects into the 7th and 8th grades. Although it preferred to maintain the traditional 8-4 grade pattern, the committee recognized the importance of offering certain secondary school subjects to 7th and 8th graders through departmentalized teaching. 13

The breakthrough of adding grades seven and eight to the secondary school called into play a number of other factors that influenced the final outcome of reorganization. Several groups objected to making secondary education exclusively college preparatory and wanted to offer vocational classes to minimize the potential of students dropping out of school.

In 1907 the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education was organized to represent the interests that wanted something other than college preparation. This group played an important role in the drafting and passage of the Smith Hughes Act, and there is little doubt as to the influence it exerted on the college-dominated committees working on the reorganization of secondary education. 14

13 Educational Research Service, Organization of Middle Grades, 51.
During the first two decades of the twentieth century several committees were formed to study the issue of college preparation and vocational training in the secondary schools. In 1918, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education of NEA issued the Cardinal Principals of Secondary Education which set forth a series of general guidelines for education and strongly urged the establishment of 6-6 systems, with the last six years further subdivided into a 3-3 pattern. "The junior high school, the commission suggested, should introduce departmentalized instruction, allow for elective course work, and provide an environment in which young adolescents could explore their interests and abilities." From these recommendations which included a separate junior high school and an instructional program that also introduced the fine and practical arts, evolved the blueprint for the present concept of a junior high.

Gruhn describes the purposes of the early junior high schools as twofold:

(1) To provide an educational program which was suited to the needs, interests, and abilities of boys and girls during early adolescence - pupils in grades 7, 8, and 9, and (2) to provide a satisfactory transition from the program of elementary to that of secondary education.

Researchers, however, found a wide range of motives regarding the development and functions of the junior high school and several researchers concluded that the initial motivation for the establishment

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15 Educational Research Service, Organization of Middle Grades, 51.

of the junior high schools were not always related to educational issues.

Alexander and Kealy wrote:

Unfortunately, the initial movement toward the junior high school was, in actuality, an attempt to alleviate the crowded conditions in existing school organizations caused by the post-World War I population boom.¹⁷

Loretan concurred:

The absorption of thousands of seventh and eighth-grade pupils from the 8B elementary school into the junior high schools enabled the Elementary Division to use the vacated settings from Kg-6 classes where they were needed desperately because the first impact of the great 1940 population wane was felt by the elementary schools ... for many years due chiefly to wars and depressions, few or no school buildings were built. ... ¹⁸

Brimm concluded:

"The major factor in each community's decision to form a junior high school, as it is today, was buildings. If the existing buildings were adequate, then the 6-3-3 plan found favor."¹⁹

To summarize, research indicates that the main goals for establishing junior high schools were multi-faceted. Included among these goals were:

1. to design programs to meet the individual differences among students;

2. to introduce college material earlier;

3. to relieve overcrowding in the schools;


¹⁹P. R. Brimm, "Middle School or Junior High?", 3.
4. to provide a smoother transition from elementary to high school;
5. to offer some vocational education classes for students not attending college;
6. to minimize the number of potential dropouts.

Despite many of the pragmatic reasons for the development of the junior high, it is significant that recognition was given at that time to the needs of the pre-adolescents. Gruhn and Douglas confirmed that "the junior high school movement from the very beginning was dominated by a desire to develop a program of education which would effectively meet the needs, interests, and abilities of early adolescents."²⁰

Table 2-1
Growth in Numbers of Junior High Schools, 1910-1969

*Includes middle schools

Despite both the altruistic and pragmatic reasons for the development of the junior high school it was actually rather slow to catch on. Johnson reports:

In 1910, the date marking the beginning of the junior high school movement, at least 95% of all secondary schools housed grades 9-12. The other five percent were split between five and six-year high schools ... and, even by 1920, less than one-half of one percent of all secondary schools were classified as separate junior high schools.\(^{21}\)

Data cited by Howard and Stoubis are provided in Table 2-1 to illustrate the growth of junior high schools from 1910 - 1969. By 1970, the number of junior highs had increased to almost 6,000. Although the 1969 bar includes middle schools, there were only 2,000 middle schools in operation by 1971.\(^{22}\) Such information would seem to indicate that after 1920 there was a stronger movement to establish the junior high school.

In 1923, the NEA developed a list of functions that should characterize a junior high school. They reported that a junior high was not "a regrouping of some of the old elementary and high school grades ... a real junior high" had its own functions:

- a building of its own, housing grades seven, eight, and nine, or, at the least, two of these grades;
- a separate staff of teachers;
- recognition of individual differences among the students;
- reform of the program of studies traditionally offered these grades;
- elective courses to be chosen by the students under guidance;
- promotion by subject; and


In 1940, Gruhn and Douglas listed the functions of a junior high. They stated that the junior high school should provide "integration, exploration, guidance, differentiation, socialization, and articulation."24

In the 1950's Lounsbury conducted a study in which he asked junior high school principals and 57 educational leaders who were members of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development to rank order the functions of a junior high. The fifteen functions that received the highest ranking were:

1. To make possible a program more suited to the nature of early adolescents.
2. To provide experiences in sharing, the acceptance of responsibility, and self direction.
3. To discover the aptitudes, interests and capacities of individual pupils by testing, counseling and exploratory work.
4. To provide socializing experiences through social activities, group work, and other informal situations.
5. To enrich the program of the seventh and eighth grades by providing shops, laboratories, and other special features.
6. To continue common education and provide better for the integration of varying educational experiences.
7. To provide more adequately for guidance and counseling.
8. To make possible a gradual transition from elementary school conditions and practices to those of the high school.
9. To improve the holding power of the schools, reduce drop-outs.
10. To provide opportunities for seventh and eighth grade pupils to participate in extracurricular activities such as clubs, teams, etc.

11. To provide prevocational training, orientation, and exploration.
12. To reduce the retardation and failure of pupils.
13. To provide for the exploration of various subject and interest areas through short-term or try-out courses.
14. To make possible a gradual introduction of the elective system.
15. To provide special classes for retarded and or advanced pupils.  

In 1971, Gruhn and Douglas reported their updated list of the functions of a junior high school based on current research:

**Function I: Integration**

To provide learning experiences in which pupils may use the skills, attitudes, interests, ideals, and understandings previously acquired in such a way that they will become coordinated and integrated into effective and wholesome pupil behavior.

To provide for all pupils a broad, general, and common education in the basic knowledge and skills which will lead to wholesome, well-integrated behavior, attitudes, interests, ideals, and understandings.

To provide for effective correlation among the studies, learning activities, and extraclass activities of the total program of education.

**Function II: Exploration**

To lead pupils to discover and explore their specialized interests, aptitudes, and abilities as a basis for decisions regarding educational opportunities.

To lead pupils to discover and explore their specialized interests, aptitudes, and abilities as a basis for present and future vocational decisions.

To stimulate pupils and provide opportunities for them to develop a continually widening range of cultural, social, civic, avocational, and recreational interests.

To help pupils identify interests in school which will provide motivation for them to continue their formal education and to participate in educational activities that are appropriate for their individual growth and development.

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Function III: Guidance

To assist pupils to make intelligent decisions regarding present educational activities and opportunities and to prepare them to make future educational decisions.

To assist pupils to make intelligent decisions regarding present vocational opportunities and to prepare them to make future vocational decisions.

To assist pupils to make satisfactory mental, emotional, and social adjustments in their growth toward wholesome, well-adjusted personalities.

To stimulate and prepare pupils to participate as effectively as possible in learning activities so that they may reach the fullest development of their individual interests and talents.

Function IV: Differentiation

To provide differentiated educational facilities and opportunities suited to the varying backgrounds, interests, aptitudes, abilities, personalities, and needs of pupils, in order that each pupil may realize most economically and completely the ultimate aims of education.

To provide learning activities in all areas of the educational program which will be challenging, satisfying, and at a level of achievement appropriate for pupils of different backgrounds, interests, abilities, and needs.

Function V: Socialization

To provide increasingly for learning experiences which will prepare pupils to participate in and contribute to our present complex society and help them adjust to future developments in that society.

To provide learning experiences which will prepare pupils for effective and satisfying participation as responsible citizens in our democratic society, both at their present level of maturity and, later, as adult citizens.

To provide learning experiences which will prepare pupils for participation in an effective and mature manner in the activities of young adolescents and, later, as older adolescents and adults.

To help pupils appreciate, understand, and function effectively in a society in which there are individuals with different interests, abilities, backgrounds, and educational and vocational goals.
Function VI: Articulation

To provide a gradual transition from pre-adolescent education to an educational program suited to the needs and interests of adolescent boys and girls.

To help pupils acquire backgrounds and skills which will prepare them to participate effectively in the educational activities and program at their present school level and, later, in the upper secondary school, post-secondary schools, and adult life. 26

Their description of the functions of the junior high school has been accepted by most authorities as the definitive statement of its purposes. 27

Concerns Regarding the Junior High School

Despite the rapid growth of the junior high schools, educators have been quite concerned that the junior high schools have failed in their promise and functions. Pumerantz states: "a good deal of the professional literature suggests that the junior high school has not fulfilled its original purposes and functions." 28 Lounsbury and Marani in reporting the results of their Shadow Studies stated: "The distinctive qualities of program and attitude to be provided for the demands of young adolescents were only faintly visible" when observers visited 62 junior high schools. 29


29 Educational Research Service, Organization of the Middle Grades, 64.
In 1968 Alexander and others explained that "the junior high school has generally become a school more like the high school, better geared to the teenager than the 'in-between-ager'." Doda, George, and McEwin stated that "Young adolescents need more structure and security than the traditional junior high school plan can provide."

In 1969, Moss listed what he considered to be the four basic shortcomings of the junior high school which ultimately would lead to the use of the middle school concept:

- The junior high concept failed to achieve its main purposes of vocational education, concern for the individual student, and the economy of time;
- The junior high school developed into an imitation of the senior high school;
- Because of the college entrance requirements of the Carnegie units, the ninth grade remained oriented to the college-preparatory student; and
- In the large cities, the junior high school unwittingly fostered racial imbalance by its very nature.

Brodinsky reported that something went wrong with the junior high school. "It failed to provide the requirements for America's 'tweenagers'. The institution became just that - a junior or little high school, with watered down academic courses and junior varsity teams in sports." Brimm also criticized the junior high schools for mimicking the senior high school. "The very name, 'junior high

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32 C. Jay Hertzog, "The Middle School Today - Are Programs Up-to-Date?" *NASSP Bulletin* 68:472 (May, 1984), 108.

school' is pointed to as a serious obstacle in the development of a special program for the early adolescent. This name has encouraged the school to mimic the senior high school in activities as well as in curricular content."\(^{34}\) Klingele in evaluating the junior high school as an alternative in middle level education stated: "The traditional junior high school, as it remains in the shadow of the senior high school, is difficult to justify educationally. Although its original purpose is defensible, the realities of junior high schools do not warrant continuance."\(^{35}\)

Since most of the junior high schools failed to meet the aspirations of those who formulated them a reevaluation of the purpose and functions of middle level education led to the middle school movement in the mid 1960's.

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**The Middle School**

**Emergence of the Middle School**

Growing reaction in the late 1950's against the tendency for the junior high school to mimic the high school program has been a major factor in the development of the middle school. According to Brimm, "the middle school movement is basically a reaction against the exist-

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\(^{34}\) R. P. Brimm, "Middle School or Junior High?" *NASSP Bulletin* 53:335 (March, 1969), 2.

\(^{35}\) William Klingele, "Middle Level Education: Do We Need It?" *The Clearing House* 58:8 (April, 1985), 335.
Lounsbury and Vars perceived the middle school movement as a "new opportunity, a new rallying point, a fresh start." Mauritz Johnson in stating "junior high schools can be eliminated or altered, but pupils of junior high school age will remain, and who will teach them and what they will be taught are the really significant questions" focused on the thrust of the middle school movement.

The middle school movement offered a new beginning. Alexander defined this new middle school as "a school providing a program planned for a range of older children, pre-adolescents, and early adolescents that builds upon the elementary school program for earlier childhood and in turn is built upon by the high school's program for adolescence." Alexander and George view the exemplary middle school "as one whose facility, organization, curriculum plan, student services, instruction, indeed every aspect is developed and utilized to serve the needs and characteristics of its unique population."

Kenneth Henson states that "the middle school has a clear set of purposes. Among these purposes is that of nurturing the emotional,  

36 P. R. Brimm, "Middle School or Junior High School?", 1.  
39 Alexander and Others, The Emergent Middle School, 5.  
social, and cognitive growth of students." As David Lee states: "Middle schools are child-centered, not subject centered." Yoder, however, views the middle school movement as psychological rather than philosophical. "The middle school movement has been said to represent a dramatic break from the past, but its goals are actually no different from those of the junior high ... We might just as logically call it the 'junior high movement' and reaffirm the principles of the junior high as enunciated 70 years ago."

Alexander argues the need for a middle school and establishes five concepts that should be included in a middle school program:

1. A strong bridge between the elementary and high school
2. A separate school focused on the unique needs of transcents (children between childhood and adolescence generally in the 10 to 14-year-old group)
3. A broad, flexible program encouraging development of lifelong learning skills and interests
4. A school encouraging experimentation and innovation
5. A school focused to serve these purposes not other primarily extraneous ones.

By 1970, the ASCD Working Group on the Emerging Adolescent Learner developed a list of ten characteristics that they felt were necessary for an effective middle school:

1. A unique program adapted to the needs of the pre- and early adolescent learner.

43 Yoder, "Middle School vs. Junior High Misses the Point," 50.
2. The widest possible range of intellectual, social and physical experiences.

3. Opportunities for exploration and development of fundamental skills needed by all while making allowances for individual learning patterns. It should maintain an atmosphere of basic respect for individual differences.

4. A climate that enables students to develop abilities, find facts, weigh evidence, draw conclusions, determine values, and that keeps their minds open to the new facts.

5. Staff members who recognize and understand the student’s needs, interests, backgrounds, motivations, goals, as well as stresses, strains, frustrations, and fears.

6. A smooth educational transition between the elementary school and the high school, while allowing for the physical and emotional changes taking place due to transescence.

7. An environment where the child, not the program is most important and where the opportunity to succeed is ensured for all students.

8. Guidance in the development of mental processes and attitudes needed for constructive citizenship and the development of lifelong competencies and appreciations needed for effective use of leisure.

9. Competent instructional personnel who will strive to understand the students whom they serve and develop professional competencies which are both unique and applicable to the transescent student.

10. Facilities and time which allow students and teachers an opportunity to achieve the goals of the program to their fullest capacity.

This new middle school, based on the aforementioned principles, was to be different from the junior high school in grade organization and the implementation of its programs. Moss stated the earlier onset of puberty required that sixth graders be housed with seventh and eighth graders. Instead of the 7-9 grade organization the middle school would have a 5-8 or 6-8 grade organization and in terms of


46 Moss, The Middle School, 18.
philosophy and alignment would be distinct from both the elementary and secondary school.

The new middle school would take note of the physical, emotional, and psychological changes of the pre-adolescents. New programs would be instituted to help the pre-adolescent deal with the problems and confusions they experience. Programs would be developed that specifically related to the developmental tasks of middle grade students. Thornburg cited these tasks as:

**Physical Development**
- Becoming aware of increased physical changes

**Intellectual development**
- Organizing knowledge and concepts into problem solving strategies
- Making the transition from concrete to abstract symbols (new task)

**Social Development**
- Learning new social and sex roles
- Identifying with stereotypical role models
- Developing friendships
- Gaining a sense of independence
- Developing a sense of responsibility.

In 1975, the Educational Research Service also emphasized the significance of addressing the developmental needs of the pre-adolescent into the total middle school program. They characterized the needs of the pre-adolescents as:

- Desire for independence—Students of this age want to be on their own, away from the strict supervision of adults. They are less reliant on adult opinion and less willing to follow adult guidance.
- Growth in importance of the peer group—Students tend to form cohesive groups and adhere to the norms of those

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groups. The peer group assumes the importance that adult approval held during an earlier stage of growth.

- Sexual, emotional, and social maturation— Profound physical and emotional changes occur as the students move from childhood into adulthood. During this transition, these students must learn the social roles expected of them, which often produces stress and anxiety.

- Intellectual maturation— Concurrent with their physical and emotional maturation, students in this age group also grow up intellectually. They develop the ability to deal with sophisticated concepts and ideas to add to the skills they learned in elementary school.

- Search for values and norms— Students tend to question the values and norms taught to them as youngsters. This questioning leads to the development of their own values, but in the process of finding their own sense of morality, they may clash with adults who hold a more secure set of values.

The importance of addressing the developmental needs of the pre-adolescent is also reinforced by Alexander and Others: "These changes that occur during the transition from childhood to adolescence should be reflected, we believe, in a transitional school program." 49

According to the literature it has been established that many school districts created middle schools for alternative reasons to the primary purpose of middle level education. Gatewood attributes the reorganization of the grades in the middle years to such practical reasons as "to eliminate overcrowded conditions in other schools, to utilize a new building, to move grade nine into high school, and to aid 'desegregation'". 50 Cuff also cites pragmatic reasons for the estab-

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50 Alexander and Others, The Emergent Middle School, 42.

lishment of middle schools citing enrollment increases, integration, and pressure from the high school to restore the four year high school. Bough reports similar findings: "The middle school serves a larger area than does the elementary school and the children can be bussed to the integrated school when they enter the fifth grade rather than the seventh grade. The adoption of the middle school means that the ninth grade would be restored to the senior high school."  

In a national survey in 1967 Alexander asked 110 middle school principals to identify the reasons behind the establishment of their schools. "58.2% cited the elimination of crowded conditions in other schools as the primary reason."  

Despite the concern of Curtis that the middle school will grow as did the junior high school with too much attention to pragmatic problems and too little attention to theoretical problems there was indeed a steady increase in their establishment.

Johnson reports that between 1970 and 1977 the number of middle schools more than doubled. By 1977, there were 4,180 middle schools as compared with the 7,434 junior high schools. Shockley, Holt, and

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54 Alexander and George, The Exemplary Middle School, 15.


56 Johnson, "Grade Organization," 106.
Meichtry report an increase in the number of middle schools in the United States in 1984 to 11,695. 57

Although the middle school was conceived as a new opportunity to correct the perceived failings of the junior high, research has indicated that the middle school like the junior high school was unable to achieve the goals that the educational theorists established for it. Gatewood and Dilg determined that "a significant gap between the main tenets of the theoretical middle school concept proposed by leading school authorities and actual educational practices in most middle schools" 58 existed.

Concerns Regarding the Middle School

Groden, like Gatewood and Dilg, reports that there are more examples of distortion between theoretical models of middle schools and the actual practices and shapes of middle schools currently in operation. 59 Clark and Valentine state that the change to a middle school is nothing more than a name change.

Many educators are concerned that programs frequently reflect little more than a name change (junior high to middle school) and a reshuffling of grade level organizations. As a consequence, many early adolescents are being exposed to 'junior editions'


58 Gatewood and Dilg, The Middle School We Need, 3.

59 Austin Groden, "Junior High vs. Middle School vs. Adolescents," NAASP Bulletin 60:396 (January, 1976), 111.
of high school regardless of the nomenclature used for the grade-level pattern of the school.\textsuperscript{60}

Alexander in his survey of 110 middle schools concluded that the stated aims of the schools in the sample are not generally reflected in the curriculum plan and the instructional organization. He found the programs were generally comparable to the junior high school programs.\textsuperscript{61} Baca, Howard, and Howard also reported that "the middle school may indeed be drifting toward the same practices in their student activity programs that have so frequently been criticized in the traditional junior high school."\textsuperscript{62}

Goldberg in reviewing both the California Report, "Caught in the Middle: Educational Reform for Young Adolescents in California Schools" and the Michigan study, "Transitions at Early Adolescence," stated that both reports "suggest that improvements in several areas are needed: a less rigid classroom structure, more independence for students, more sensitivity to adolescent needs on the part of teachers, and more opportunities for 'active' learning situations."\textsuperscript{63}

Lipsitz sees lack of vision regarding middle school programs as a problem. "Extracting school practices from an entire school culture and replicating them elsewhere may make a bad school mediocre. To

\textsuperscript{60}Donald Clark and Jerry Valentine, "Middle Level Educational Programs: Making the Ideal a Reality," \textit{Schools in the Middle; A Report on Trends and Practices} (June, 1981), 1.

\textsuperscript{61}Educational Research Service, \textit{Organization of the Middle Grades}, 93.

\textsuperscript{62}Luciano Baca, Joan Howard, and Alvin Howard, "Student Activity Programs in Junior High/Middle School," \textit{NASSP Bulletin} 59:535 (December, 1975), 100.

\textsuperscript{63}Kristen Goldberg, \textit{Education Week} (January 28, 1987), 8.
become a good middle grade school requires a change in vision about the possibilities of educating young adolescents."\(^{64}\) St. Clair reinforces the importance of controlling the culture in a middle school in order for it to be effective:

The fact remains that it is difficult if not impossible, to control culture. The latter is characterized by a complicated series of roles, norms, and values that take on an even more dynamic and unpredictable dimension in a middle level setting.\(^{65}\)

Johnston also reports that not enough attention has been directed toward defining the culture of a middle school:

Good literature abounds on the specific kinds of curriculum, instruction and organization that promotes student achievement and reasonable school adjustment. Less attention has been given to the cultural conditions that promote school effectiveness. This absence is probably due to the fact that changing a culture is relatively difficult.\(^{66}\)

Toepfer reports that the middle schools are experiencing difficulty in establishing a culture and vision for the future because of the impact of the National Reports. He states: "Even the best of these reports have not substantially sketched their recommendations with an image of, or vision for, the future."\(^{67}\) He further states:

The appearance of A Nation at Risk in April, 1983 set the mood of the nation to 'get tough and shape up education.' This mood has produced a set of national reports which focus on 'excel-

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\(^{64}\)Lipsitz, Successful Schools, 200.


\(^{66}\)J. Howard Johnston, "The Culture of Effective Middle Level Schools," Transescence XV (November, 1987), 12.

lence in education' with regard to intellectual growth and academic achievement alone. This infatuation to improve performance in these areas overlooks the need to address equally the critical affective, self-concept, and self-esteem needs of youth. The literature of the national reports has almost exclusively lost contact with concern with the wholeness of the developmental needs of children, middle level transescents, and adolescents.

Beane has also expressed concern that many of the state reform reports will adversely affect the middle school movement since many of the states "have passed new curriculum mandates that so heavily embrace academic accountability that educators see little time for affective issues in the middle grades." 69

Toepfer also addresses the impact of state reports: "In many states we currently are coping with public and legislative zeal to accelerate high school programs and goals into the middle level..." 70

The literature of the national and state reports has lost contact with concern for the developmental needs of pre-adolescents. St. Clair reports the criteria that the U. S. Department of Education uses to verify excellence:

1. Student performance on standard achievement tests
2. Student performance on minimum competency tests
3. Student success in high school
4. Daily student and teacher attendance rates and rates of student suspensions and other exclusions
5. Awards for outstanding school programs and teaching
6. Student awards in academic or vocational competitions

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68 C. F. Toepfer, Jr., "Middle Level Issues and Realities" (A paper presented at the NASE Middle Level Conference, Orlando FL, December 8, 1986), 4.


Using such criteria for school effectiveness that is solely based on academic performance can lead to narrow and minimalistic goals for middle schools. For middle schools to be effective there must also be a "willingness and ability to adapt all school practices to the individual differences in intellectual, biological, and social maturation of their students." 72

If the middle level movement is to continue to grow attention must be given to the developmental needs of pre-adolescents as they relate to middle level programs as well as the culture necessary for it to flourish.

We are in a time when the wave of academic reforms threatens to wash away the inroads that movement has made toward making middle level schools that are good for early adolescents ... We need now the kind of ingenuity and boldness of the movement's pioneers. We must do some restoration work on the vision. 73

The Essential Characteristics of Effective Middle Level Programs

Both the junior high school and the middle school movements were initiated to propose a middle level program that would address the developmental needs of pre-adolescents. As Alexander states:

Examination of the writings of early leaders in the junior high school movement and those in the later middle school one release much unanimity as to what the respective middle level schools should be, regardless of grades included and whether called


72 Lipsitz, Successful Schools, 167.

73 Beane, "Dance to the Music of Time:," 8.
junior high, intermediate, middle, upper elementary school, or just 'school in the middle'.

Trump in comparing the junior high school and the middle school makes a similar statement:

Today we recall the aims, the promises over the years, and the reality of schools that bridge the gap between the primary and secondary years of education. Most of these schools are called junior high schools although increasingly they have the name of middle and intermediate schools. Whatever the title, the programs of these schools tend to be more alike than different.

The junior high versus middle school controversy has existed since the early days of the middle schools. "Claims and counterclaims have been made, but only recently has research been conducted to determine whether or not differences really exist. In truth, the only real difference between most junior highs and middle schools is in name and grade organization."76

Curtis states that semantics and lack of agreement concerning the meanings of various terms and phrases has created a major problem for middle level education.

A basic dichotomy has existed for decades between the philosophical statements of those educational theorists most concerned with early adolescence and the pragmatic administrators who are responsible for that education. This problem is compounded now by a multiplicity of terms such as middle school, intermediate school, and the junior high.

74Alexander, "Middle Level Schools as They Should and Could Be," 1.

75J. Lloyd Trump, "The School in the Middle: An Endangered Species?" (A speech presented to the 1977 NASSP Convention), 1.


Thornburg states that it is necessary to eliminate the middle school versus junior high school dichotomy and focus on the learner and teacher rather than on organization. Valentine states that educators need to put aside their "junior high" and "middle school" biases and start thinking middle level since their differences are primarily organizational and not philosophical.

Munsell states "in reviewing the literature relative to the middle school and junior high, one must not be swayed into the trap of perceiving the organizations as an 'either-or' situation. Both institutions have experienced successes as well as failures." Middle level schools whether they are junior high or middle schools need to be evaluated in terms of how well they implement characteristics that create effective middle level schools.

The middle school movement may well fare best when distinctions and competitions between upper or senior elementary schools, middle schools, intermediate schools, junior high schools, and six-year high schools, can be minimized, with greater sharing of resources and programs for the development and operation of exemplary schools for transescents, wherever housed.

During the past ten years, much of the research regarding middle level education has been concentrated on the characteristics that are necessary for effective middle level schools, and in general there has been increasing consensus as to these characteristics.

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81 Alexander and George, The Exemplary Middle School, 20.
In 1969, the Unified School District of Montebello, California in its *The Golden Age of Education* outlined the desirable characteristics of an intermediate school as:

1. Team Teaching
2. Non-Gradedness
3. Flexible Scheduling
4. Transition Pattern (from single disciplines to interdisciplinary approaches)
5. School Structure (school within a school possibility)
6. Measurable Objectives
7. Instructional Learning Center (Student)
8. Instructional Resource Center (Teacher)
9. Individualized Instruction
10. Exploration
11. Pupil Personnel Services Center
12. Innovation
13. Administrative Team

Enough consensus was developed by the mid-1970's for an ASCD Working Group on the Emerging Adolescent Learner to declare that the middle school should have the following ten characteristics:

1. A unique program adapted to the needs of the pre-and early adolescent learner.
2. The widest possible range of intellectual, social and physical experiences.
3. Opportunities for exploration and development of fundamental skills needed by all while making allowances for individual learning patterns. It should maintain an atmosphere of basic respect for individual differences.
4. A climate that enables students to develop abilities, find facts, weigh evidence, draw conclusions, determine values, and that keeps their minds open to the new facts.
5. Staff members who recognize and understand the student's needs, interests, backgrounds, motivations, goals, as well as stresses, strains, frustrations, and fears.
6. A smooth educational transition between the elementary school and the high school while allowing for the physical and emotional changes taking place due to transescence.
7. An environment where the child, not the program, is most

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82 Ibid., 16-17.
important and where the opportunity to succeed is ensured for all students.

8. Guidance in the development of mental processes and attitudes needed for constructive citizenship and the development of lifelong competencies and appreciations needed for effective use of leisure.

9. Competent instructional personnel who will strive to understand the students whom they serve and develop professional competencies which are both unique and applicable to the transescent student.

10. Facilities and time which allow students and teachers an opportunity to achieve the goals of the program to their fullest capabilities.

In Riegle's 1971 study, he identified eighteen middle level characteristics which included:

1. Continuous progress
2. Multi-material approach
3. Flexible schedules
4. Appropriate social experiences
5. Appropriate physical activities
6. Intramural activities
7. Team teaching
8. Planned gradualism
9. Exploratory and enrichment studies
10. Guidance services
11. Independent study
12. Basic skill repair and extension
13. Creative experiences
14. Security factor
15. Evaluation
16. Community relations
17. Student services
18. Auxiliary staffing.

In 1971, Moss also compiled a list of fifteen characteristics for effective middle schools. He determined these characteristics by observing numerous middle level schools:

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83Gatewood and Dilg, The Middle School We Need, 10.

84Jack D. Riegle, "A Study of Middle School Programs to Determine the Current Level of Implementation of Eighteen Basic Middle School Principles" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1971), 77-79.
1. Commitment to the age group 10-14 is evidenced by teachers and administrators.
2. A clearly defined statement of purposes for the middle school has been cooperatively developed.
3. Continual review of the middle school objectives and operation of the curriculum is carried out by teachers, administrators, and students.
4. The guidance program is a total school concern.
5. A block of time or core program is provided for at least two, but preferably for all, years of the middle school.
6. Flexibility is built into the middle school.
7. Personalized learning is a major part of the curriculum.
8. In-depth units are planned for varying ability levels in science, mathematics, the language arts, and social studies.
9. A strong health education program is a major feature of the middle school curriculum.
10. An evaluation program includes student and parent conferences, letters, and check lists.
11. The arts are given greater prominence in the curriculum.
12. Physical education activities are related to the developmental characteristics of middle school students.
13. A wide variety of interest electives, open to all students, are featured in the curriculum.
14. Modern language instruction is provided for all students.
15. Outdoor education programs are the concern of all teachers.

In 1973 Georgiady and Romano identified the following sixteen characteristics after an extensive review of the literature:

1. Is Continuous Progress Provided For?
2. Is a Multi-Material Approach Used?
3. Are Class Schedules Flexible?
4. Are Appropriate Experiences Provided For?
5. Is There an Appropriate Program of Physical Experiences and Intramural Activities?
6. Is Team Teaching Used?
7. Is Planned Gradualism Provided For?
8. Are Exploratory and Enrichment Studies Provided For?
9. Are There Adequate and Appropriate Guidance Services?
10. Is There Provision for Independent Study?
11. Is There Provision for Basic Skill Repair and Extension?
12. Are There Activities for Creative Experiences?
13. Is There Full Provision For Evaluation?
14. Does the Program Emphasize Community Relations?

15. Are There Adequate Provisions for Student Services?
16. Is There Sufficient Attention to Auxiliary Staffing?

In 1981, Brown researched characteristics of effective middle level schools and after having the list validated by fifteen experts in middle level education he presented the following list of characteristics:

1. Grade organization
2. Team teaching
3. Instructional planning
4. Student groupings
5. Flexible scheduling
6. Continuous progress
7. Individualized instruction
8. Independent study
9. Instructional materials
10. Basic skills
11. The exploratory strand
12. Creative experiences
13. Social development
14. Intramural sports
15. Focus on growth and development
16. Individualized guidance services
17. Home base program
18. Values clarification
19. Student evaluation
20. Transition from elementary to high school.

In 1981, Wiles and Bondi suggested that a middle school program should include the following elements:

1. Provisions for personal guidance
2. Intramurals
3. Lifetime sports
4. Health studies
5. Special interests
6. Developmental grouping
7. Programs for students with special needs
8. Alternative programs
9. Basic studies

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86 Nicholas P. Georgiady and Louis Romano, "Do You Have a Middle School?" Educational Leadership, 31:3 (December, 1973), 238-241.

In 1981 Alexander and George developed from their research and observations the characteristics of an exemplary middle school. They state that their list includes most points from other researchers' lists since "there is now near consensus on the desirable characteristics of middle schools."^89

1. A statement of philosophy and school goals that is based on knowledge of the educational needs of boys and girls of middle school age and is used in school program planning and evaluation.

2. A system for school planning and evaluation which is specifically designed for the middle school level and which involves all concerned in the school community.

3. A curriculum plan for the middle school population that provides for their continuous progress, basic learning skills, use of organized knowledge, personal development activities, and other curriculum goals as locally determined.

4. A program of guidance which assures the availability of help for each student from a faculty member well-known to the student.

5. An interdisciplinary teacher organization which provides for team planning, teaching, and evaluation, and for appropriate interdisciplinary units.

6. Use of methods of student grouping for instruction which facilitate multiage and other instructional arrangements to maximize continuous progress.

7. Block scheduling and other time arrangements to facilitate flexible and efficient use of time.

8. Planning and use of physical facilities to provide the flexible and varied program required for middle schoolers.

9. Instruction which utilizes a balanced variety of effective strategies and techniques to achieve continuous progress of each learner toward appropriate instructional objectives.

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^89 Alexander and George, *The Exemplary Middle School*, 18.
10. Appropriate roles for the various individuals and groups required for continued and dynamic leadership in the middle school, with a continuing program of staff development and renewal focused on the unique problems of middle school personnel.

11. A plan for evaluation of student progress and of the school itself to assure the achievement of the goals of the school.

12. Participation with other schools and with community groups in the continuing study of the middle school population and of society as a whole, to be responsive to changing needs and conditions of the future.

The National Middle School Association in 1982 listed what they considered to be the ten essential elements of a "true" middle level school:

1. Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed to Transcendents
2. A Balanced Curriculum Based on Transcendent Needs
3. A Range of Organizational Arrangements
4. Varied Instructional Strategies
5. A Full Exploratory Program
6. Comprehensive Advising and Counseling
7. Continuous Progress for Students
8. Evaluation Procedures Compatible with the Nature of Transcendents
9. Cooperative Planning

In Munsell's 1984 study he validated the following list of characteristics by a panel of recognized experts in the field of middle level education:

1. continuous progress
2. variety of instructional strategies and materials
3. flexible scheduling of time and groups
4. appropriate social experiences
5. appropriate physical experiences
6. intramural activities
7. interdisciplinary team organization
8. vertical planning
9. exploratory studies

90 Ibid., 18-19.

91 National Middle School Association, This We Believe (Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association, 1982), 10-15.
10. guidance services
11. independent study
12. basic skill repair and extension
13. creative experiences
14. student evaluation practices
15. community relations programs
16. student services
17. auxiliary staffing
18. a staff of educators knowledgeable about and committed to transiscents.

The NASSP's Council on Middle Level Education in 1985 addressed the essential elements of middle level education in *An Agenda for Excellence at the Middle Level*:

1. Core Values
2. Culture and Climate
3. Student Development
4. Curriculum
5. Learning and Instruction
6. School Organization
7. Technology
8. Teachers
9. Transition
10. Principals
11. Connections

Within the descriptions of each of the twelve characteristics, reference is specifically made to the characteristics presented by the aforementioned researchers. It is significant to note that there is considerable overlap with reference to most of the characteristics.

In 1985, Garvin listed six common denominators for effective middle level schools based on his research as a site visitor to 22 middle level schools who participated in the Secondary Schools Recogni-

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tion Program sponsored by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Like the recommendations of the NASSP's Council on Middle Level Education, his generalized characteristics encompass many of the recommendations of the previously cited researchers:

1. A clearly defined and articulated mission.
2. Effective leadership
3. Student centered teachers
4. Strong parent involvement
5. Ongoing goal development and evaluation
6. Quality of life.

Binko in his 1986 study identified 24 characteristics of effective middle level schools:

**School Climate**
- Encourage Creative Ideas by Students
- Teachers Assume Role of Counselors
- Learning Activities Tailored to the Physical Needs of Adolescents
- Learning Activities Tailored to the Emotional Needs of Adolescents
- Development of Moral Values
- Encourage Innovative Ideas by Teachers

**Curriculum**
- Opportunities for Gifted Students
- Curriculum Emphasizing Exploratory Study
- Provisions for Special Interest Groups
- Emphasis on Basic Academic Skills
- Emphasis on Personal Interests
- Differentiate Objectives According to Ability

**Teaching Methods**
- Emphasis on Inquiry, Problem Solving, and Higher Level Cognitive Skills
- Opportunities to Work in Laboratory Settings
- Emphasis on Multi-Media Approach
- Balance Between Small and Large Group Instruction
- Differentiate Methods According to Ability
- Progress According to Student Ability

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Organization

Written Statement of School Philosophy
Emphasis on Close Working Relationships Between Teachers and Counselors
Utilize Interdisciplinary Team Teaching
Utilize Single Discipline Team Teaching
Utilize Non-Graded Approach
Provide an Adequate Transition Between Elementary and High School

In 1987, Dorman developed the Middle Grades Assessment Program whereby middle-grade educators apply what is known about early adolescence and effective schools by assessing their schools on the following characteristics:

- Is the school safe?
- Is the school academically effective?
- Is the school responsive to young adolescents' developmental needs for:
  . diversity?
  . competence and achievement?
  . structure and clear limits?
  . meaningful participation in their school and community?
  . self-exploration and self-definition?
  . positive social interaction with both peers and adults?
  . physical activity?

It is significant to note the overlap in the list of characteristics proposed by the researchers during the two decades for effective middle level education. The main focus of middle level educators during this time span has concentrated on characteristics that are necessary for the effective education of pre-adolescents irrespective of the organizational structure. As Alexander states:

Much as education in the middle school needs support, for it to be classified as either elementary or secondary education really denies its basic premise of serving children between childhood and


96 Dorman, Improving Middle-Grade Schools, 7-8.
adolescence, and therefore between elementary and high school ... rather than leave the resolution of our dilemmas to a struggle between the somewhat dubious power of the middle and junior high school groups, which overlap almost as much as they compete, I would urge that the forces not only combine but seek still additional power.97

Yoder agrees that the focus should not be on whether a school is classified as a middle school or a junior high:

We don't need a "middle school" any more than we need a "junior high," ... The principles of a sound education, regardless of whose principles they are, can be incorporated in a middle school or a junior high ... It is important that programs be more important than names and that commitment be made to programs ...58

As Gatewood states "the only real difference between most junior highs and middle schools is in name and grade organization."99 The junior high versus middle school controversy has existed since the early days of the middle school. During the past two decades research has been conducted indicting that there is relatively little difference between middle schools and junior high schools with respect to the implementation of the characteristics previously cited.

Most of the research on the topic reports that middle schools tend to have the same high school-type program of studies, departmental organization, Carnegie units, interscholastic athletics, and early socialization activities that have long characterized and plagued junior highs. Based upon these findings, it should come as no surprise that several studies have found a significant gap between the main tenets of the theoretical middle school concept proposed by leading middle school authorities and actual educational practices in most middle schools.100

97William Alexander, "What Has Happened to the Middle School?" NASSP Bulletin 55:355 (May, 1971), 139-140.
98Yoder, "Middle School vs. Junior High Misses the Point," 50.
100Ibid.
Valentine in his 1982 National Study of Schools in the Middle also reports that there is considerable difference between what exists in middle level schools and what is discussed in the literature.  

**Review of Related Studies**

A review of related research studies indicates that middle level schools regardless of identification as junior high or middle school are not effectively implementing the characteristics that have been identified in the literature as essential for middle level education. Most of the studies found a significant discrepancy between what was described by the experts and what was actually implemented in middle level schools.

In Gatewood's 1970 study he found that middle schools and junior highs were more alike than different. He reported that there was no significant difference in regard to flexible scheduling, use of core classes, and instructional strategies. Both schools basically had the same type of organization and structure.

One of the earliest studies comparing effective characteristics and those actually implemented was conducted by Riegle in 1971. The criteria that he developed for measuring the implementation of characteristics has been used by several other researchers. Riegle surveyed 136 Michigan middle schools and four schools that were considered

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exemplary. He reported that "the rapid increase in the number of
schools labeled as middle schools has not been accompanied by a high
degree of application of those principles considered by authorities in
the field to be basic to middle school education." He further
stated:

while several middle schools in Michigan scored as well as
the schools in the national sample of exemplary schools, the middle
schools in Michigan as a group were making less application of the
18 basic principles included in this study than were the exemplary
schools, when considered as a group.

In a 1972 study by Butera he reported findings similar to Riegle.
After surveying 229 schools in New Jersey he found that most of the
middle schools were not implementing a high number of middle school
characteristics. 105

Billings in his 1973 study concluded that middle schools in
Texas did not implement middle school characteristics after surveying
115 principals. He concluded that the name middle school did not
correlate with the implementation of middle school characteristics. 106

In 1973 Franklin interviewed the principals of 31 middle schools
in the state of Virginia. The principals indicated that team teaching,
exploration, intramural activities, multi-material approach, and crea-
tive activities were being implemented. However, the practices of

103 Riegle, "A Study of Middle School Programs," 67.
104 Ibid.
105 Thomas Butera, "A Study of Middle Schools in the State of New
Jersey" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1972), 168-170.
106 Ronald Billings, "A Computer Based Analysis of the Implementa-
tion of Selected Criteria in Texas Middle Schools" (Ph.D. diss., Uni-
versity of Houston, 1973), 170-171.
independent study, individualized instruction, guidance, flexible scheduling, socialization, gradualism, and evaluation were not generally implemented. The principals cited lack of specially trained teachers, lack of staff time, and lack of money for the failure to implement all of the characteristics for effective middle level education.  

Raymer in his 1974 study compared the level of implementation of Riegle's eighteen characteristics of effective middle level schools in 6th through 8th grade schools with 5th through 8th grade schools. Raymer found that the 6th through 8th grade schools implemented Riegle's characteristics to a greater degree than did the 5th through 8th grade schools. However, like Butera, Billings, and Franklin he found that both groups of schools were not effectively implementing all of the characteristics.  

Also in 1974 Bloom compared the implementation of middle school characteristics in Wisconsin's middle schools and junior highs. She reported that the level of implementation was similar in both types of schools especially with reference to teaching techniques and team teaching.  

In 1975, Rosenau in his study concluded that middle schools are implementing the characteristics of effective middle level schools.


108 Joe Raymer, "A Study to Identify Middle Schools and Determine the Current Level of Implementation of Eighteen Basic Middle School Characteristics in Selected United States and Michigan Schools" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1974), 78-79.

109 Judith Bloom, "The Implementation of the Middle School Concept in Wisconsin Schools for Pre- and Early Adolescents" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1974), 58-61.
Because a large number of middle schools incorporated practices which are substantially in agreement with recommendations in the literature, it is apparent that practices in middle schools are in accord with the practices identified in the literature written by middle school authorities.  

In 1978, Brown sent a questionnaire to 121 middle schools to determine the extent to which South Carolina schools implemented the characteristics of effective middle level schools. Like Rosenau he reported that a majority of the schools were implementing middle school practices. He did report, however, that there was a lack of implementation of practices such as team teaching, flexible scheduling, individualized instruction, and independent study.

Bohlinger in 1981 reported that both 6-8 and 5-8 schools in Ohio did not implement the eighteen middle level characteristics as outlined by Riegle. He further reported that there was no significant difference with regard to the implementation of characteristics based on the grade organization of the school.

Munsell in his 1984 comparative study of junior high schools and middle schools reported that the middle schools involved in the study have not implemented the identified characteristics of middle level education to an extent that would suggest that they offer a program that is distinct from the educational program of the junior high


school. He, however, reported that middle schools and junior highs do differ significantly in the implementation of those characteristics of middle level education recommended in the literature that are associated with flexible scheduling of student time and groups, provisions for independent study, interdisciplinary team organization, vertical planning, and provisions for intramural activities. Munsell concluded "that the middle schools have failed in their attempt at improving preceding programs for middle level education."\(^{113}\)

In 1985 George and Oldaker conducted a national survey to determine the effectiveness of schools identified as exemplary middle level schools. The results of their study indicated that highly successful middle level schools have very similar programs which tend to conform to the recommendations in the literature of middle level education. They reported that these schools have programs that are distinctly different from those common to elementary and high schools, and when implemented in this way "the results are dramatically positive in terms of academic achievement, student behavior, school learning climate, faculty morale, and staff development."\(^{114}\)

Binko and Lawlor in their 1986 study of 75 middle schools reported that teachers and administrators rated the following practices most evident in their schools:

- emphasis on basic skills, differentiation of teaching methods according to student abilities, utilization of media, differen-

\(^{113}\)Munsell, "The Extent To Which Programmatic Characteristics," 136-137.

tiation of subject area objectives according to ability, and encourag­ing creative ideas by students. Those practices rated as least evident in the schools included interdisciplinary team-teaching, single discipline team teaching, teacher functioning in role of counselor, provisions for mini-courses, and use of non-graded organization. They concluded that the findings of the study make it clear that middle school practices need attention.115

Summary

The junior high school was initiated as a result of the recommendations of several committees at the beginning of this century to address the needs and interests of the pre-adolescents in an attempt to recognize individual differences in the students with relation to curriculum offerings, to minimize the number of dropouts, to provide exploratory and vocational opportunities, and to establish a separate 7-9 educational organization between the elementary and high schools. Research has indicated, however, that the growth of the junior highs was predicated on reasons that were more pragmatic such as relieving overcrowding in other buildings, integration of students, and cost efficiency.

Since most of the junior highs failed to meet the aspirations of those who formulated them a reevaluation of the purpose and functions of middle level education led to the middle school movement in the sixties. The middle school was proposed as an alternative to better serve the developmental needs of the pre-adolescent. Instead of the 7-9 grade organization, the middle school would have a 5-8 or 6-8 grade organization and in terms of philosophy would be distinct from both the elementary and secondary school. Research, however, indicated that the

middle schools like the junior highs, were established for alternative reasons such as to eliminate overcrowded conditions, to utilize a new building, to move grade nine into the high school, and to aid desegregation.

Although middle schools have continued to grow, much of the research indicates that most middle schools have failed to achieve middle school goals and that middle schools and junior high schools were more alike than different. Many of the researchers have concluded that they are only different in terms of name and grade organization.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study examined the perceived present and desired levels of implementation of the characteristics of effective middle level education researched from the literature on middle level education, as perceived by junior high school and middle school principals in suburban public schools of Illinois. The procedures followed included:

1. A search of the literature was made to determine the essential characteristics of effective middle level education.

2. A survey instrument was selected to assess present and desired levels of implementation of these characteristics.

3. A sample of suburban middle level schools with 5-8, 6-8, and 7-8 grade organizations were selected in the state of Illinois. The Survey of Middle Level Characteristics was administered to all principals in the sample to determine the relationships between the different school organizations with respect to actual and desired levels of implementation of the identified characteristics of effective middle level education.

4. Schools were identified as middle school, junior high school, or other based upon the principal's perception of the philosophic orientation of the school since the research
has indicated that the name of the school does not necessarily relate to the philosophy of the school. (Yoder, Clark and Valentine, Alexander, Trump, Gatewood)

5. Conclusions from the survey data were made relative to the characteristics of effective middle level education as they compared by school type and by actual and desired levels of implementation. Frequency distributions and ANOVAs were calculated to determine the relationships.

6. Principals that displayed the greatest disparity between actual levels of implementation of the identified characteristics of effective middle level education and desired levels of implementation based upon their survey responses were selected for a follow-up interview to investigate the reasons for their inability to implement these characteristics.

7. Questions for the interview were developed based upon a discrepancy analysis of the items on the initial questionnaire.

The remainder of this chapter specifies the methodology used with relation to the selection of the identified characteristics of effective middle level education, the selection of an instrument to measure the actual and desired levels of implementation of the characteristics, the sampling procedures, the treatment of the survey data, and the interview process.
Identification of the Essential Characteristics of Middle Level Schools

Based on a review of the literature of the characteristics of effective middle level education, Munsell's 1984 study typified the characteristics that have been recommended by the authorities in middle level education. In his study he drafted and revised characteristics from previous listings by Alexander and George, Georgiady, Riegle and Romano, Wiles and Bondi, and The National Middle School Association. This list of characteristics was submitted to a panel of recognized experts in the field of middle level education for review. The panel included Paul George, John Swaim, Joseph Bondi, William Alexander, Kenneth McEwin, and John Lounsbury.¹ The list of characteristics developed included the following:

1. continuous progress
2. variety of instructional strategies and materials
3. flexible scheduling of time and groups
4. appropriate social experiences
5. appropriate physical experiences
6. intramural activities
7. interdisciplinary team organization
8. vertical planning
9. exploratory studies
10. guidance services
11. independent study
12. basic skill repair and extension
13. creative experiences
14. student evaluation practices
15. community relations program
16. student services
17. auxiliary staffing
18. a staff of educators knowledgeable about and committed to transescents.²

²Ibid., 49-50.
A description of each of the above characteristics as defined by Munsell is included in Appendix A of this study.

Based upon the review of the literature as delineated in Chapter II, the characteristics proposed by middle level researchers was compared to the characteristics developed by Munsell to determine if the characteristics he proposed are reflective of the research conducted by other authorities in middle level education. Table 3-1 illustrates that comparison.
### Table 3-1

**Comparative Analysis of Research Findings**

**Relating to the Identified Characteristics of Middle Level Education**

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<td>2. Variety of Instructional Materials and Strategies</td>
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<td>3. Flexible Schedules</td>
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<td>6. Intramural Activities</td>
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<td>7. Interdisciplinary Team Organization</td>
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<td>8. Vertical Planning</td>
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<td>9. Exploratory Studies</td>
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<td>10. Guidance Services</td>
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<td>11. Independent Study</td>
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<td>12. Basic Skill Repair and Extension</td>
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<td>13. Creative Experiences</td>
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<td>14. Student Evaluation Practices</td>
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<td>15. Community Relations Program</td>
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<td>16. Student Services</td>
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<td>17. Auxiliary Staffing</td>
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<td>18. A Staff of Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed To Transcendents</td>
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Table 3-1 indicates that there is at least 50% agreement with each of the characteristics listed by Munsell by other researchers. It is significant to note that all of the researchers agreed that a variety of instructional materials and strategies and exploratory studies should be included in an effective middle level program and that thirteen of the fourteen researchers cite interdisciplinary team organization, guidance services, and independent study as essential for middle level programs. Student services, community relations programs, social experiences, and auxiliary staffing were mentioned least often but were cited by at least seven of the fourteen researchers.

Since all of the characteristics were mentioned by at least half of the researchers, it was determined to include all of the characteristics in the study.

Two additional characteristics cited by some of the researchers included a positive climate and a clearly defined and articulated philosophy. Determining levels of implementation for these characteristics are beyond the scope of this study since accurate identification would necessitate surveying both teachers and students, in addition to the principal.

Instrumentation

For the purpose of this study, the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics developed and validated by Munsell to measure the perceived and desired levels of implementation of the eighteen identified characteristics of effective middle level education was used.

The instrument included:
1. Ordinal response scales of "not at all," "minimally," "moderately," and "extensively" that allowed for respondent indication of perceived existing implementation of each item as well as desired implementation.

2. A social desirability scale consisting of three questions to estimate the extent to which the responses reflected actual characteristics rather than socially desired answers.

3. Demographic items that identified the respondent's position title, school type, grade level organization, and current endorsement level.

Items 1-44 of the questionnaire were designed to assess the respondent's perceptions of the extent to which it was felt that the described characteristic was both presently practiced and desired as a component in the middle level school of the respondent.

Since each of the eighteen identified characteristics of middle level education was multi-faceted, it required multiple items for adequate assessment of the respondent's position relative to the larger issues of the characteristics. A directory of survey items as they relate to each of the identified characteristics is provided in Appendix B.

The response scale for each of the items included the choices of "not at all," "minimally," "moderately," and "extensively" as a means of assessing levels of implementation. Each response was assigned a value of 1-4, with the lower value being assigned to the lower implementation level.3

3Ibid., 50-51.
Items #64 and #65 were added to Munsell's survey to ascertain how long the respondent has been principal of the building (#64) and to determine the perception of the principal as to the philosophic orientation of the building (#65).

A copy of the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics by Munsell is included in Appendix C.

**Sampling Procedures**

Based upon previously cited research, one can not identify the philosophic orientation of a school based upon its name. Therefore, for the purpose of this study the principal's perception of the school's philosophy was used to determine if a school was to be identified as a junior high, a middle school, or other. In selecting the sample, schools were selected as to grade organization. Only schools housing students in grades 5-8, 6-8, and 7-8 qualified. In the three suburban counties of Illinois selected for this study none of the schools included the ninth grade.

The Cook, Lake, and DuPage counties of Illinois were selected based upon their accessibility and as a representative sample of counties close to a large metropolitan city that have a middle level organizational structure. The counties are in close proximity relative to the city of Chicago and are equally accessible to universities and have active educational service regions to provide staff development activities for their school districts. Although the city of Chicago is included in the county of Cook, the public schools of Chicago were eliminated from the study since there are relatively few schools in Chicago that offer a middle level type of grade arrangement. Most of
the Chicago Public Schools have a K-8 arrangement and therefore did not meet the requirements established for the purpose of this study. Rural schools were also eliminated from the study since most tend to adopt a K-8 and 9-12 organizational format. Inclusion of Chicago Public Schools and rural schools would have made it difficult to identify any distinctness for middle level educational programs.

Schools in the sample were selected by grade organization as delineated in the 1986-87 county school directories published by their respective educational service regions. Since the population of schools in the three counties that adhered to the grade level criteria established for this study was relatively small, it was determined to survey all 171 of the schools to minimize the possibility of selecting a biased sample.

The principal of each identified school was surveyed. Each principal was sent a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics, and a stamped return envelope.

**Mail Survey Procedures**

Each principal was mailed the following:

1. A cover letter describing the purpose of the study, its confidentiality, and a tear-off form to request the results of the study.

2. The Survey of Middle Level Characteristics.

3. A stamped addressed return envelope.

A copy of the cover letter is included in Appendix D.
Surveys sent to the principals were coded so that an accurate accounting of returned surveys could be maintained for follow-up mailings and interview purposes. Principals were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and that no reference would be made to them or their schools in the analysis of the data.

The first mailing resulted in a net return of 76 completed surveys or a 44% return. Several weeks later a second mailing was sent to all the non-respondents. A copy of the cover letter sent in the second mailing is included in Appendix E. The second mailing resulted in a net return of 19 completed surveys for a total return of 95 surveys or a 55% return. Of the principals who responded 43 identified their schools as a junior high school, 40 as middle schools, and 11 as other and 1 did not respond to this item.

Treatment of the Data

Survey data were statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and SPSS User’s Guide.

The research questions and hypotheses of this study and the strategies for their analysis were as follows:

Research Question 1: What are the essential characteristics of effective middle level education that relate to the developmental needs of pre-adolescents as delineated in the literature?

Method of Analysis: The literature was reviewed to determine the characteristics of effective middle level education. A comparative analysis of the characteristics recommended by middle level researchers was made. Table 3-1 reports the findings.
Research Question 2: To what extent is each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools being implemented in Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" as perceived by the principals of the respective schools?

Method of Analysis: Mean frequency responses were tabulated for each of the survey items that related to the eighteen characteristics of effective middle level education on the "presently implemented" scale of the survey for the junior highs, the middle schools, and "others" in the sample. Collected mean responses were calculated for all of the items that reflected each one of the eighteen characteristics as indicated in the Item Directory in Appendix B.

Research Question 3: To what extent should each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools be implemented in Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" as perceived by the principals of the respective schools?

Method of Analysis: Mean frequency responses were tabulated for each of the survey items that related to the eighteen characteristics of effective middle level education on the "should be implemented" scale of the survey for the junior highs, the middle schools, and "others" in the sample. Collected mean responses were calculated for all of the items that reflected each one of the eighteen characteristics as indicated in the Item Directory in Appendix B.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in the actual level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, the junior high schools, and "others"?
Hypothesis: There is no difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools, or "others" with reference to the implementation of each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

Method of Analysis: For each characteristic of effective middle level education on the "presently implemented" scale a one-way analysis of variance was computed. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level of significance. In each ANOVA, the dependent variable was one of the eighteen characteristics of effective middle level education and the independent variable was the type of school. The Student-Newman-Keuls test was used to determine multiple comparisons among the three dependent variables to indicate significantly different group means at the .05 level of significance.

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the desired level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, the junior high schools, and "others"?

Hypothesis: There is no difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools, or "others" with reference to their desire to implement each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

Method of Analysis: For each characteristic of middle level education on the "should be implemented" scale a one-way analysis of variance was computed. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level of significance. In each ANOVA, the dependent variable was one of the eighteen characteristics of effective middle level education.
and the independent variable was the type of school. The Student-
Newman-Keuls test was used to determine multiple comparisons among
the three dependent variables to indicate significantly different group
means at the .05 level of significance.

Research Question 6: What reasons have been cited by the prin-
cipals in the study for not implementing the characteristics of effec-
tive middle level schools?

Method of Analysis: Principals that displayed the greatest
disparity between their actual levels of implementation of the eighteen
characteristics of effective middle level education and their desired
levels of implementation on the initial survey and who were not first
year principals in their present buildings were selected for a follow-
up interview to investigate the reasons for their inability to imple-
ment the characteristics that they deemed important for effective
middle level education.

Each survey was analyzed and assigned a composite total for both
the principal's present level of implementation and desired level of
implementation for items 1-44 of the survey. The response scale for
each of the items included the choices of "not at all," "minimally,"
"moderately," and "extensively" as a means of assessing levels of
implementation. Each response was assigned a value of 1-4, with the
lower value being assigned to the lower implementation level.

The composite total for the present level of implementation was
subtracted from the composite total of the desired level of implementa-
tion resulting in a discrepancy score for each principal. These scores
were rank ordered from the highest discrepancy score to the lowest. A
list of the discrepancy scores for the 95 principal respondents is included in Appendix F. Eleven or eleven percent of the principals were interviewed. Their discrepancy scores ranged from 65 to 46. Principal #12, a first year principal, had a discrepancy score of 44 which would not qualify him for a follow-up interview based upon the criteria established for this study. Principal #13 had a discrepancy score of 40 which was significantly lower than Principal #11 (46). It was therefore decided to interview Principals #1-#11, since most of the scores that followed clustered together at one point differentials.

Questions for the interview were developed based on high discrepancy scores between characteristics that are presently implemented and those that should be implemented for all the principals grouped as a whole to collect interview data that were standardized and quantifiable.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The presentation and analysis of the data is divided into two sections. The first section presents the data obtained through the Survey of the Middle Level Characteristics. The second section presents the data obtained through the principal interviews and analyzes them with respect to the statistical data presented in section one.

Presentation of Data from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics

In this section each research question is stated and the statistics related to each question are reported. This study sought answers to the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. What are the essential characteristics of effective middle level education that relate to the developmental needs of pre-adolescents as delineated in the literature?

2. To what extent is each of the identified characteristics of effective middle schools being implemented in Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and others as perceived by the principals of the respective schools?

3. To what extent should each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools be implemented in Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and
others as perceived by the principals of the respective schools?

4. Is there a significant difference in the actual level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, the junior high schools, and others?

Hypothesis: There is no difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools, or others with reference to the implementation of each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

5. Is there a significant difference in the desired level of implementation of each of the characteristics of effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, the junior high schools, and others.

Hypothesis: There is no difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools, or others with reference to their desire to implement each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

6. What reasons have been cited by the principals in the study for not implementing the characteristics of effective middle level schools?

Description of the Principals

Surveys were completed by 95 of the 171 principals. Of the principals who responded 43 identified themselves as junior high school principals, 40 as middle school principals, 11 as "other," and one who did not identify his philosophic orientation. It is significant to
note that of the 43 principals who identified themselves as principals of a junior high, four of them are principals in a building named middle school, 37 are principals in a building named junior high school, and two of them are principals in buildings with "other" names. Of the 40 principals who identified themselves as principals of a middle school, 18 of them are principals in a building named middle school, 18 are principals in a building named junior high, and four of them are principals in buildings with "other" names. Of the 11 principals who identified themselves as principals in a building with "other" names, three of them are principals in a building named middle school, four are principals in a building named junior high, and four of them are principals in buildings with "other" names.

Based on these statistics, 35 of the 94 reporting schools or 37% have a different philosophic orientation than what their names would imply. It is also significant to note that of the 11 schools reporting "other" as their perception of the philosophy of their buildings eight of them reported that their schools represent a combination of junior high school and middle school philosophy. As one respondent stated: "It's not what you call it that's important, it's what goes on inside the glass, brick, and mortar that is most important." Another stated: "Our mission is in keeping with doing what's best for early adolescents." These findings reinforce what the researchers have stated in that the name of the school does not reflect the type of middle level program presented in a school.

Table 4-1 reports the type of grade level organization in the
middle level schools sampled in this survey. As is evident 52 or 55% of the reporting schools have a 6-8 grade organization; 29 or 31% have a 7-8 grade organization; and 12 or 13% have a 5-8 organization. It is significant to note that 26 or 65% of the reporting middle schools have a 6-8 organization while 25% or ten schools have a 5-8 organization. Only four of the middle schools have a 7-8 organization which is consistent with the recommendations of the middle level researchers.

Table 4-1

Grade Level Organizations of The Sample by Types of School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Organization</th>
<th>Middle School Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Junior High School Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Other Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 4-2 most of the responding principals hold a secondary teaching or administrative endorsement. Seven of the principals have dual endorsements.
Table 4-2

Current Teaching or Administrative Endorsement
by Type of School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Endorsement</th>
<th>Middle School Principals</th>
<th></th>
<th>Junior High School Principals</th>
<th></th>
<th>Other Principals</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) elementary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) middle school/junior high</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) secondary</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixty-seven percent of the junior high school principals felt that they had adequate training in the field of middle level education. However, only 12 of the 43 principals had ten or more hours of professional training specifically geared to the middle school/junior high school. Seventy-eight percent of the middle school principals felt that they had adequate training in the field of middle level education. Fourteen of the 40 principals had ten or more hours of professional training specifically geared to the middle school/junior high school. Seventy-three percent of the "other" principals felt that they had adequate training in the field of middle level education. Five of the eleven principals had ten or more hours of professional training specifically geared to the middle school/junior high school. It is significant to note that 25 of all the principals or 27% had three or less hours of professional training specifically geared to the middle school/junior high school. Table 4-3 reports these findings.
Table 4-3

Hours of Professional Training Specifically Geared to the Middle School/Junior High

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of Training</th>
<th>Middle School Principals</th>
<th>Junior High Principals</th>
<th>Other Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) 0-3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) 4-6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) 7-9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) 10-12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) 13 or more</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Cases</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-4 reports that only 12 of all the principals had not received training specifically geared to middle level education.

Table 4-4

Additional Training Specifically Geared to Middle Level Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle Level Training</th>
<th>Middle School Principals</th>
<th>Junior High Principals</th>
<th>Other Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the principals reported that their additional training consisted of attending national and state middle level conferences, area workshops and seminars, and district in-service programs that concentrated on the developmental needs of the pre-adolescent.

The most frequent responses stated with reference to their need for additional training were in the areas of human growth and development of the pre-adolescent and how to effectively implement effective middle level practices.

Of the principals who participated in this study 50% of the junior high and middle school principals were in their present building five years or less. Fifty percent of the "other" principals were in their present buildings four years or less.

Since only one of the 95 principal respondents selected the socially desirable response for one of the three questions included in the social desirability scale (survey items 49, 50, and 58) it was concluded that their responses to the survey did actually reflect their perceptions of the implementation of the identified practices in their buildings. None of them reported that all of their students had a positive self-concept nor that all of their teaching staff members were currently capable of meeting all the special needs of pre-adolescent students. Only one of the middle school principals reported that none of the students in his building required disciplinary action.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 sought to determine the essential characteristics of middle level education that related to the developmental needs of pre-adolescents as delineated in the literature.
Based upon a review of the literature specifying the characteristics of effective middle level education, the characteristics delineated by Munsell in his 1984 study typified the characteristics that were recommended by the authorities in middle level education. The rationale for selecting these characteristics was discussed in Chapter III since identification of the characteristics was needed prior to selecting a survey instrument. See Table 3-1.

The identified characteristics of effective middle level education surveyed in this study included:

1. continuous progress
2. variety of instructional strategies and materials
3. flexible scheduling of time and groups
4. appropriate social experiences
5. appropriate physical experiences
6. intramural activities
7. interdisciplinary team organization
8. vertical planning
9. exploratory studies
10. guidance services
11. independent study
12. basic skill repair and extension
13. creative experiences
14. student evaluation practices
15. community relations program
16. student services
17. auxiliary staffing
18. a staff knowledgeable about and committed to transescents. A description of each of the above characteristics is included in Appendix A of this study.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 sought to determine the extent to which each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools was being implemented in Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and others as perceived by the principals of the respective schools.

Mean frequency responses which included all survey questions that related to each of the eighteen identified characteristics of effective middle level education on the presently implemented scale of the survey were calculated for the junior high schools, the middle schools, and others. Survey questions used to assess each of the identified characteristics are listed in Appendix B.

Table 4-5 lists the ranges of the means established for each of the response categories.

Table 4-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Range of the Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Not at All&quot;</td>
<td>1.00 - 1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Minimally&quot;</td>
<td>1.51 - 2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Moderately&quot;</td>
<td>2.51 - 3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Extensively&quot;</td>
<td>3.51 - 4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minimal implementation of independent study was reported by all three groups of schools. Junior high schools and others reported minimal implementation of flexible scheduling, and interdisciplinary team organization. The "other" schools also reported minimal implementation of auxiliary staffing.

All three schools reported moderate implementation of continuous progress, variety of instructional strategies and materials, intramural activities, exploratory studies, guidance services, basic skill repair and extension, creative experiences, student evaluation practices, community relations program, and a staff knowledgeable about and committed to transescents. Middle schools reported moderate implementation of flexible scheduling and interdisciplinary team organization and both junior high schools and middle schools reported moderate implementation of auxiliary staffing. Both junior high schools and "others" reported moderate implementation of social experiences, physical experiences, and vertical planning.

All three groups reported extensive implementation of student services. In addition the middle schools reported extensive implementation in social experiences, physical experiences, and vertical planning.

Although the middle schools are incorporating the characteristics of social experience, physical experiences, vertical planning, flexible scheduling and interdisciplinary team organization to a greater degree than the junior high schools and the "other" schools, it is significant to note that there is considerable similarity on the implementation of most of the identified characteristics. Junior high
schools and the "other" schools relatively have the same levels of implementation except for auxiliary staffing.

Table 4-6 reports the mean responses for each identified characteristic by type of school.
Table 4-6

Mean Responses of Middle Level Educators to Present Implementation of Identified Characteristics of Middle Level Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Middle School Principal</th>
<th>Junior High Principal</th>
<th>Other Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Continuous Progress</td>
<td>2.906</td>
<td>2.808</td>
<td>2.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Flexible Scheduling</td>
<td>2.590</td>
<td>2.171</td>
<td>2.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social Experiences</td>
<td>3.590</td>
<td>3.349</td>
<td>3.394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Physical Experiences</td>
<td>3.577</td>
<td>3.372</td>
<td>3.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Intramural Activities</td>
<td>2.654</td>
<td>2.651</td>
<td>2.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Interdisciplinary Team Organization</td>
<td>2.859</td>
<td>2.047</td>
<td>2.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Vertical Planning</td>
<td>3.603</td>
<td>3.209</td>
<td>3.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Guidance Services</td>
<td>2.842</td>
<td>2.744</td>
<td>2.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Independent Study</td>
<td>2.250</td>
<td>1.977</td>
<td>2.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Creative Experiences</td>
<td>3.162</td>
<td>3.116</td>
<td>2.955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Community Relations</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>2.948</td>
<td>2.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Student Services</td>
<td>3.850</td>
<td>3.683</td>
<td>3.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Auxiliary Staffing</td>
<td>2.650</td>
<td>2.690</td>
<td>2.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed to Transescents</td>
<td>3.450</td>
<td>3.333</td>
<td>3.364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 3

Research question 3 sought to determine the extent to which each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools should be implemented in Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" as perceived by the principals of the respective schools.

Mean frequency responses which included all questions that related to each of the eighteen identified characteristics of effective middle level education on the should be implemented scale of the survey have been calculated and analyzed in the same manner as the characteristics presently implemented in Research Question 2.

An analysis of the mean responses on the should be implemented scale indicate that all three school types should moderately implement continuous progress, flexible scheduling, intramural activities, independent study, student evaluation practices, community relations program, and auxiliary staffing. Both junior high schools and "other" schools reported that social experiences and interdisciplinary team organization should be moderately implemented. The middle schools and the "other" schools reported that exploratory experiences and creative experiences should be moderately implemented. Only the junior high school reported that guidance services should be moderately implemented.

All three types of schools reported that a variety of instructional strategies and materials, physical experiences, vertical planning, basic skill repair and extension, student services, and a staff knowledgeable about and committed to transescents should be extensively
implemented. Both the middle schools and the "other" schools reported that guidance services should be extensively implemented. The middle schools also reported their desire to extensively implement social experiences and interdisciplinary team organization while the junior high schools desired to extensively implement exploratory studies and creative experiences.

Although "moderate" and "extensive" choices have been reported among the three types of schools with reference to their desired levels of implementation, it should be noted that the differences among the means for each of the identified characteristics is relatively slight as can be observed in Table 4-7.
### Table 4-7

Mean Responses of Middle Level Educators to Desired Implementation of Identified Characteristics of Middle Level Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Middle School Principal</th>
<th>Junior High Principal</th>
<th>Other Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Variety of Instructional Strategies and Materials</td>
<td>3.757</td>
<td>3.756</td>
<td>3.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Flexible Scheduling</td>
<td>3.063</td>
<td>3.008</td>
<td>3.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Physical Experiences</td>
<td>3.824</td>
<td>3.733</td>
<td>3.773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Interdisciplinary Team Organization</td>
<td>3.556</td>
<td>3.163</td>
<td>3.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Independent Study</td>
<td>3.105</td>
<td>2.907</td>
<td>3.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Basic Skill Repair and Extension</td>
<td>3.640</td>
<td>3.674</td>
<td>3.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Creative Experiences</td>
<td>3.408</td>
<td>3.523</td>
<td>3.455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Community Relations</td>
<td>3.408</td>
<td>3.419</td>
<td>3.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Auxiliary Staffing</td>
<td>3.184</td>
<td>3.214</td>
<td>3.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed to Transcendents</td>
<td>3.895</td>
<td>3.940</td>
<td>3.909</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 4

Research question 4 sought to determine if there was a significant difference in the actual level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, the junior high schools, and others. The research question was formulated in terms of a null hypothesis: There is no difference among those schools identified as middle schools, junior high schools, or others with reference to the implementation of each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

For each characteristic of effective middle level education on the presently implemented scale a one-way analysis of variance was computed. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level of significance. The .05 level of significance was selected since it is the least stringent of the significance levels. Since the literature established that there is relatively little difference among the types of schools with reference to the implementation of characteristics for effective middle level schools, a lower significance level was selected so that any significant differences could be reported. If no significance appeared at the .05, the results of previous studies could be further substantiated.

Results of the analysis of variance indicated that there was no significant difference at the .05 level of significance for the identified characteristics of continuous progress, physical experiences, intramural activities, exploratory studies, guidance services, independent study, basic skill repair and extension, creative experiences,
student evaluation practices, community relations, student services, auxiliary staffing, and educators knowledgeable about and committed to transescents among the responses reported by the middle school, junior high, and other principals.

These results tend to support previously cited research that there is relatively little difference among the different types of middle level schools with respect to the implementation of the identified characteristics of middle level education. The results are very similar to Munsell's findings. He reported that no significant difference existed between the responses of the middle school and the junior high school for the implementation of the identified characteristics of continuous progress, variety of instructional strategies and materials, social experiences, physical experiences, exploratory studies, guidance services, basic skill repair and extension, creative experiences, evaluation, community relations, student services, auxiliary staffing, and a staff knowledgeable about and committed to transescents. He reported statistical significance for the implementation of the characteristics of flexible scheduling, intramural activities, interdisciplinary team organization, vertical planning, and independent study with the middle school reporting higher implementation of the characteristics.119

As Table 4-8 indicates, this study found statistical significance at the .05 level of significance among the three types of schools in the implementation of the characteristics of variety of instruction-

119 Ibid., 81.
al strategies and materials, flexible scheduling, social experiences, interdisciplinary team organization, and vertical planning.

Due to unequal cell sizes for the independent variable, the student-Newman-Keuls test of homogeneity was used at the .05 level of significance for each characteristic for which significant differences were found to produce multiple comparisons between the middle school, junior high, and "other" principals. The Student-Newman-Keuls test minimizes the possibility of a Type I error and reports the significance of the differences between specific pairs of means since a significant F does not imply that the mean of each sample necessarily differs significantly from the means of every other sample.

Based on the result of the test the only means that were significantly different at the .05 level of significance were those for interdisciplinary team organization. For this characteristic, the middle school principals reported a higher actual level of implementation than did the junior high school principals and the "other" principals.

To summarize the findings of Research Question 4, based on the eighteen one-way analysis of variances with a .05 level of significance, there were significant differences among the middle school principals, the junior high school principals, and the "other" principals for the identified middle level characteristics of variety of instructional strategies and materials, flexible scheduling, social experiences, interdisciplinary team organization, and vertical planning. Significant differences between the means using the Student-Newman-Keuls test at the .05 level of significance was found only for
the characteristic of interdisciplinary team organization with the middle school principals reporting a higher actual level of implementation than the junior high school and "other" principals.

These results further substantiate previous findings in the literature indicating that there is relatively little difference among the types of schools with reference to the implementation of characteristics for effective middle level schools.
Table 4-8

Analysis of Variance of Present Implementation of Eighteen Identified Characteristics of Middle Level Education by School Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>Within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Continuous Progress</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.1537</td>
<td>0.2329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Variety of Instructional Strategies and Materials</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1.1616</td>
<td>0.2355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Flexible Scheduling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1.9685</td>
<td>0.4449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social Experiences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.6169</td>
<td>0.1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Physical Experiences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.4467</td>
<td>0.2692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Intramural Activities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.1333</td>
<td>0.7165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Interdisciplinary Team Organization</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>7.6588</td>
<td>1.1709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Vertical Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1.5822</td>
<td>0.3402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Exploratory Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.1430</td>
<td>0.3243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Guidance Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.1039</td>
<td>0.4223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Independent Study</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.7740</td>
<td>0.5597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>Degrees of Freedom</td>
<td>Mean Squares</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Significance of F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>Within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Basic Skill Repair and Extension</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.2550</td>
<td>0.3881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Creative Experiences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.1866</td>
<td>0.4378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Student Evaluation Practice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.0365</td>
<td>0.2873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Community Relations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.1130</td>
<td>0.3624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Student Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.3632</td>
<td>0.3205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Auxiliary Staffing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.6195</td>
<td>0.5468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed to Transescents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.1429</td>
<td>0.3198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
Research Question 5

Research question 5 sought to determine if there was a significant difference in the desired level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, the junior high schools, and "other" schools. The research question was formulated in terms of a null hypothesis: There is no difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools, or "others" with reference to their desire to implement each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

For each characteristic of effective middle level education on the should be implemented scale a one-way analysis of variance was computed. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level of significance for the reasons stated in research question 4.

Results of the analysis of variance indicated that there was no significant difference at the .05 level of significance for the identified characteristics of continuous progress, variety of instructional strategies and materials, flexible scheduling, social experiences, physical experiences, intramural activities, interdisciplinary team organizations, exploratory studies, guidance services, independent study, basic skill repair and extension, creative experiences, evaluation practices, community relations, student services, auxiliary staffing, and educators knowledgeable about and committed to transescents among the responses reported by middle school, junior high, and "other" principals.
In Munsell's 1984 study he reported similar findings. He reported that no significant difference existed between the responses of the middle school and the junior high school for the desired level of implementation of the identified characteristics of continuous progress, variety of instructional strategies and materials, appropriate social experiences, appropriate physical experiences, intramural activities, vertical planning, exploratory studies, guidance services, provisions for independent study, basic skill repair and extension, creative experiences, individualized evaluation, community relations, student services, auxiliary staffing, and the need for a staff knowledgeable about and committed to transescents. He reported statistical significance for the desired level of implementation of the characteristics of flexible scheduling and interdisciplinary team organization with the middle school respondents indicating a greater desire for implementation than the junior high school respondents. 120

As Table 4-9 indicates, this study found statistical significance at the .05 level of significance among the three types of schools in the implementation of the characteristic of vertical planning.

Due to unequal cell sizes for the independent variable, the Student-Newman-Keuls test of homogeneity was used at the .05 level of significance for each characteristic for which significant differences were found to produce multiple comparisons between the middle school, junior high school, and "other" principals.

Based on the results of this test none of the means were significantly different at the .05 level of significance among the junior

120 Ibid., 111.
high principals, the middle school principals, and the "other" principals for the characteristic of vertical planning.

To summarize the findings of research question 5, based on the eighteen one-way analysis of variances with a .05 level of significance, there were significant differences among the middle school principals, the junior high school principals and the "other" principals for the identified middle level characteristic of vertical planning. Significant differences between the means for this characteristic using the Student-Newman-Keuls test at the .05 level of significance were not found for this characteristic between the middle school principals, the junior high principals, and the "other" principals.

These results further substantiate Munsell's findings that there is relatively little difference among the types of schools with reference to the desire of the principals to implement the identified characteristics for effective middle level schools. The data collected would indicate that principal attitudes, irrespective of philosophic orientation, are basically the same. This conclusion further supports the findings of middle level researchers as delineated in Chapter II that there is little difference among junior high principals, middle school principals, and "others" in terms of what should be implemented to create an effective middle level school.
Table 4-9
Analysis of Variance of Desired Implementation of Eighteen Identified Characteristics of Middle Level Education by School Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>Significance of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Continuous Progress</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.1502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Variety of Instructional Strategies and Materials</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.0268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Flexible Scheduling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.0464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social Experiences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.6096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Physical Experiences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.0838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Intramural Activities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.3240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Interdisciplinary Team Organization</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1.5141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Vertical Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.5691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Exploratory Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.2764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Guidance Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.0925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Independent Study</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.4967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-9 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th></th>
<th>Significance of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>Within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Basic Skill Repair and Extension</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.0593</td>
<td>0.1697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Creative Experiences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.1353</td>
<td>0.3048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Student Evaluation Practice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.1944</td>
<td>0.2474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Community Relations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.0047</td>
<td>0.2507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Student Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0.0156</td>
<td>0.1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Auxiliary Staffing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.0106</td>
<td>0.3343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed to Transescents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.0213</td>
<td>0.0578</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
Other Findings Relative to The Identified
Characteristics of Effective Middle Level Education

As the review of the literature indicated, the researchers reported that intramural activities should be included in an effective middle level program and that interscholastic activities should be minimized or eliminated. Bondi and Wiles stated that "intense sports competition, especially contact sports should be avoided" since "boys and girls are growing at various rates of speed" and "a wide range of individual differences among students begins to appear."\(^{121}\) "Intramural programs rather than interscholastic athletics should be emphasized so that each student will have a chance to achieve regardless of physical development."\(^{122}\)

The findings of this study indicated that interscholastic sport programs are widely implemented in all of the middle level schools. As Table 4-10 indicates based on the responses for Item 45 in the survey, 100% of the middle schools have an interscholastic sports program, 97.7% of the junior high schools have one, and 90.9% of the "other" schools have one. It is significant to note that all three groups of principals perceived their interscholastic athletic program as "moderately" implemented even though all of their average scores were in the nineties which would indicate "extensive" implementation. Their response to this question causes this researcher to question the accuracy of their perceptions as reported in part one of the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics. One might conclude that their responses to this

\(^{121}\) Bondi and Wiles, *Making Middle Schools Work*, 84-85.

\(^{122}\) Ibid., 85.
question are responses that they feel would be appropriate responses for middle level principals rather than what in effect is reality in their schools.

Table 4-10

Interscholastic Athletic Programs Presently Implemented in the Middle Level Schools as Reported by the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Junior High School</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number Percent</td>
<td>Number Percent</td>
<td>Number Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40 100</td>
<td>42 97.7</td>
<td>10 90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0 -</td>
<td>1 2.3</td>
<td>1 9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, all three groups of principals reported that interscholastic sports should be implemented. As Table 4-11 indicates based on the responses for Item 46 in the survey 100% of the middle school principals stated that interscholastic sports should be implemented in a middle level education program. 90.7% of the junior high principals reported the same, as did 100% of the "other" principals. Based on these findings, one can conclude that the middle level principals surveyed in this study feel strongly about including interscholastic sports in a middle level education program. It is very interesting to note that 100 percent of the responding middle school principals and "others" stated that interscholastic athletic programs should be implemented in middle level schools yet in their response to item 16 they responded that intramurals should be moderately emphasized over interscholastic activities. Also when one compares the responses cited for Item 45, "is implemented," with Item 46, "should be implemented," it is
noted that 100% of both middle schools and "others" believe that interscholastic athletic programs should be a part of the middle level program which together is a higher percentage than the responses they gave for presently implemented.

Table 4-11
Interscholastic Athletic Programs Should Be Implemented in the Middle Level Schools as Reported by the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Junior High School</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A review of the literature has also indicated that an effective middle level program should include a broad base of exploratory experiences for the pre-adolescent. As reported in Table 3-1, all the researchers cited in this study viewed exploratory studies as an essential component of effective middle level education.

Based on the responses of all three groups of principals to Item 47 on the survey, exploratory experiences are moderately implemented in the three types of middle level schools as indicated in Table 4-12.
Table 4-12

Exploratory Experience Programs Presently Implemented in the Middle Level Schools as Reported by the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Junior High School</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All three groups of principals reported that they desire a higher level of implementation for exploratory studies than presently implemented in their buildings based on their responses to Item 48 in the survey. Table 4-13 further indicates that the attitudes of the three groups of principals regarding exploratory studies is relatively the same with the middle school principals reporting only a slightly higher difference relative to desired implementation.

Table 4-13

Exploratory Experience Programs Should Be Implemented in the Middle Level Schools as Reported by the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Junior High School</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although most of the middle level researchers cited in the review of the literature, state that student evaluation practices should be descriptive in nature and individualized for all students the
principals surveyed in this study are mixed in terms of what is presently implemented and in what should be implemented. Based on the principals' responses to Item 51, Table 4-14 reports the disparity of what is presently being implemented in the middle level schools with respect to student evaluation practices. The junior high principals report the graded report card as the primary method for evaluating student progress, while the middle school principals report a combination format, and the "other" principals report a descriptive progress report.

Table 4-14
Grading Format Employed in the Middle Level Schools as Reported by all Principals of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Format</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Junior High School</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graded Report Card</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Progress Report</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of the Above</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the principals' responses to Item 52 which reports their desire to implement the different types of evaluation practices, there is more agreement. As indicated in Table 4-15, 72.5% of the middle school principals and 72.1% of the junior high principals stated that student evaluation should be based on a combination of the graded report card and a descriptive progress report while 90.9% of the
"other" principals report that the combination format should be utilized. It is significant to note that 58.1% of the junior high principals and 42.5% of the middle school principals presently use the graded report card yet only 18.6% of the junior high principals and 22.5% of the middle school principals desire to use that type of format for evaluating student progress.

Table 4-15
Grading Format That Should Be Employed in the Middle Level Schools as Reported by all Principals of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Format</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Junior High School</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graded Report Card</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Progress Report</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of the Above</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, research questions 2, 3, 4, 5, and other findings relative to the identified characteristics of effective middle level education support the conclusions found in the review of the literature that there is little difference among middle level schools, regardless of name and philosophic orientation with regard to the implementation of the identified characteristics of effective middle level education.
Research Question 6

Research question 6 sought to determine the reasons why the principals in the study were unable to implement the characteristics of effective middle level education in their schools.

Principals that displayed the greatest disparity between their actual levels of implementation of the eighteen characteristics of effective middle level education and their desired levels of implementation on the initial survey and who were not first year principals in their present buildings were selected for a follow-up interview to investigate the reasons for their inability to implement the characteristics that they deemed important for effective middle level education.

Each survey was analyzed and assigned a composite total for both the principal’s present level of implementation and the desired level of implementation for items 1-44 of the survey. The response scale for each of the items included the choices of "not at all," "minimally," "moderately," and "extensively" as a means of assessing levels of implementation. Each response was assigned a value of 1-4, with the lower value being assigned to the lower implementation level.

The composite total for the present level of implementation was subtracted from the composite total of the desired level of implementation resulting in a discrepancy score for each principal. These scores were rank ordered from the highest discrepancy score to the lowest. A list of the discrepancy scores for the 95 principal respondents is included in Appendix F. Eleven or 11% of the principals were inter-
viewed. The guidelines used to select the interview sample were detailed in Chapter III.

Interview questions were developed based on the results of a t-test with a significance level of .05. The results of the t-test determined which of the eighteen identified characteristics had a significant difference between the characteristics that are presently implemented and those that should be implemented for all the principals grouped together.

Table 4-16 indicated that there is a significant difference between the present level of implementation and the desired level of implementation among the principals for the characteristics of continuous progress, variety of instructional strategies and materials, flexible scheduling, social experiences, physical experiences, intramural activities, interdisciplinary team organization, vertical planning, guidance services, independent study, basic skill repair and extension, creative experiences, student evaluation practices, community relations program, auxiliary staffing, and educators knowledgeable about and committed to transescents. The characteristics of exploratory studies and student services were not significantly different at the .05 level of significance.
Table 4-16

T-Test of Present Implementation and Desired Implementation of Eighteen Identified Characteristics of Middle Level Education For All Principal Respondents

| Variable                                      | Mean   | Std Error of Mean | T      | PR>|T| |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|-----|-----|
| 1. Continuous Progress                        | 1.77659574 | 0.21398920        | 8.30   | 0.0001* |
| 2. Variety of Instructional Strategies and Materials | 0.91304348 | 0.11321241        | 8.06   | 0.0001* |
| 3. Flexible Scheduling                        | 2.13043478 | 0.18816982        | 11.32  | 0.0001* |
| 4. Social Experiences                         | 0.27173913 | 0.11982554        | 2.27   | 0.0257* |
| 5. Physical Experiences                       | 0.64130435 | 0.09475182        | 6.77   | 0.0001* |
| 6. Intramural Activities                      | 1.55434783 | 0.15561180        | 9.99   | 0.0001* |
| 7. Interdisciplinary Team Organization         | 1.95604396 | 0.2049580         | 9.57   | 0.0001* |
| 8. Vertical Planning                          | 0.75000000 | 0.11732913        | 6.39   | 0.0001* |
| 9. Exploratory Studies                        | 0.10638298 | 0.13483603        | 0.79   | 0.4321 |
| 10. Guidance Services                         | 2.21505376 | 0.18273381        | 12.12  | 0.0001* |
| 11. Independent Study                         | 1.84782609 | 0.14738911        | 12.54  | 0.0001* |
| 12. Basic Skill Repair and Extension          | 1.06451613 | 0.15874571        | 6.71   | 0.0001* |
| 13. Creative Experiences                      | 0.70967742 | 0.14143842        | 5.02   | 0.0001* |
| 14. Student Evaluation Practices              | 1.15957447 | 0.14051511        | 8.25   | 0.0001* |
| 15. Community Relations Program               | 1.83870968 | 0.21365840        | 8.61   | 0.0001* |
| 16. Student Services                          | 0.09890110 | 0.05425699        | 1.82   | 0.0716 |
| 17. Auxiliary Staffing                        | 1.16304348 | 0.13140170        | 8.85   | 0.0001* |
| 18. Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed to Transcendents | 1.07608696 | 0.12094715        | 8.90   | 0.0001* |

* p < .05
All of the interviewed principals were asked the same questions in the same order to standardize the format of the interview and to facilitate quantifying the data. Of the eleven principals interviewed seven described themselves as junior high school principals, three as middle school principals, and one as "other." It should be noted that the principals selected for the interview sample are probably a skewed sample in that these are principals who desire to implement the characteristics of effective middle level education more extensively than they are presently implementing them. One might conclude that they are very aware of the current trends in middle level education and want to implement the strategies suggested in the literature but are ineffective to accomplish that end to the level they desire. Since they acknowledge the discrepancy between what they implement and what they would like to implement they would be a logical sample to use to investigate the reasons why implementation is not at the level they desire.

Each principal was first asked what he saw as the primary difference between junior high schools and middle schools. The purpose of this question was to determine if the principal had a clear understanding of the philosophic differences between the junior high movement and the middle school movement. Each principal was then asked why he was unable to implement each of the sixteen previously listed characteristics of effective middle level education that had a significant difference at the .05 level of significance between the actual level of implementation and the desired level of implementation.
Rather than report the data from each interview separately, it was decided to report the data collected from the principal interviews collectively by question since there was considerable agreement in the responses given by the individual principals.

**Interview Question 1**

Initially all the interviewed principals were asked what they saw as the primary difference between the junior high school and the middle school to determine if they had a clear understanding of the philosophical differences between them.

Based on the responses given for this question, all the principals displayed a clear understanding of the primary differences between the junior high and middle school philosophies. All the principals identified the primary difference in terms of the focus of a middle school which they described as one that is more child oriented as opposed to the junior high school which they perceived as more content oriented. As one principal stated: "The junior high is a mini-high school whose primary emphasis is on the presentation of subject matter while the middle school has an equal focus on youngsters, their needs, and the curriculum." Another principal stated that "the middle school is more developmental and is based on student needs, and this philosophy is seen in its curriculum presentation, its services, athletics, and the total organization of the school. The traditional junior high is more content oriented."

One of the principals described the middle school as a "more student centered approach from scheduling to dialog with problems. It is individually oriented rather than mass oriented." This principal
emphasized that the main objective in a middle school is to give all the students an equal chance to participate in as many activities and programs as possible so that students can explore and capitalize on their strengths and interests.

Some of the principals highlighted the differences by addressing the instructional process. Comments made included: "Middle schools are more focused on the process, while junior high schools are focused on the product." "Exploratory experiences are essential in a middle school. Students are afforded the opportunity to explore areas of interests that relate to their developmental needs." "In the middle school there is more of a concentration on team learning. More time is made available for cooperative learning." "Middle school teachers are more apt to look for solutions to their problems outside of their classrooms. Teachers are more active and work together to deal with the kids."

One principal described the difference between the junior high school and the middle school in terms of its philosophy toward discipline. "In the junior high the focus is on punishing students for what they are not doing - coercive methods are used. In the middle school the focus is on understanding the "why" of a student's behavior based on the development process."

In general, all the principals viewed the middle school as more child oriented where more personalized attention is given to the students. Several of them stressed the "significant other" concept whereby students have a strong bond with at least one adult role model. In essence, the principals viewed the middle school as a proactive organ-
ization where all members of the organization are involved in leadership and presentation of the curriculum. Nine of the eleven principals interviewed did state that in order for a middle school program to be effective, schools must be staffed with teachers who are flexible in their approach to teaching and who have a "true love" for the middle level student. They viewed high school trained teachers who are content oriented as the most difficult "roadblock" to overcome to implement a true middle school program.

Based upon the responses given to this question, it was quite apparent that the interviewed principals were very knowledgeable with regard to the current research on what constitutes an effective middle level school and what are the primary differences between junior high and middle school philosophies. It is the intent of this researcher to determine not only what restraints are cited by the principals for not implementing the characteristics to the levels they desire but also what initiative they have shown in each area to accomplish that end.

Presentation of Interview Data and Analysis

This section presents the data obtained through the principal interviews and analyzes it with respect to the statistical data presented in section one. Questions two through seventeen concentrated on the reasons why the interviewed middle level principals were unable to implement the characteristics of effective middle level education. An analysis of the data collected in the interviews indicated that these characteristics are not being implemented for the following reasons:

1. Traditional Teacher Attitudes
2. Teacher Competency at the Middle Level
An analysis of the data also indicated that similar multi-faceted responses, were given by the principals for each of the characteristics. Table 4-17 reports the findings for each characteristic in a quantified manner to present an overview of data collected in the interview. Each number reflects the number of times principals cited the above stated restraints for the implementation of each of the characteristics under investigation.
### Table 4-17

Implementation Restraints For Characteristics of Effective Middle Level Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional Teacher Attitudes</th>
<th>Teacher Competency at the Middle Level</th>
<th>Community Attitudes</th>
<th>Budgetary Restraints</th>
<th>Scheduling Complexities</th>
<th>Test Results and State Mandates</th>
<th>Lack of Emphasis</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Continuous Progress</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Variety of Instructional Strategies and Materials</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3. Flexible Scheduling</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4. Social Experiences</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>5. Physical Experiences</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>6. Intramural Activities</td>
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<td>7. Interdisciplinary Team Organization</td>
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<td>8. Vertical Planning</td>
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<td>9. Guidance Services</td>
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<td>10. Independent Study</td>
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<td>11. Basic Skill Repair and Extension</td>
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<td>12. Creative Experiences</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>13. Student Evaluation Practices</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>14. Community Relations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Auxiliary Staffing</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed To Transcendents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11</td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 4-17 reports, the primary overall reasons reported by the interviewed middle level principals for not being able to implement the identified characteristics of effective middle level education are traditional staff attitudes and a lack of preparation by the assigned staff to teach in a middle level school. Community attitudes and lack of adequate funding for specialized middle programs were also cited as serious restraints for not implementing the identified characteristics. Other secondary restraints included scheduling complexities, standardized test results and state mandates, and a lack of emphasis at the building level.

In the analysis that follows, an extension of the specific reasons cited by the principals for their inability to effectively implement each of the identified characteristics are listed. Their responses are correlated to the statistical data presented in section one. An analysis of their responses follows with respect to why the characteristics of effective middle level education are not implemented to the levels desired by the interviewed middle level administrators.

Additionally, through the interview process it will be the intent of this researcher to ascertain what each of the principals has done to overcome each of the reported restraints. If the principals believe that traditional teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, community attitudes, budgetary restraints, scheduling complexities, test results and state mandates, and lack of emphasis are the reasons for their inability to implement the characteristics of effective middle level education to the level they desire, it is necessary to analyze how they have shown leadership to effectuate the change
before conclusions can be drawn that these restraints are truly re-
straints.

Interview question 2 sought to determine the reasons why the
principals were unable to effectively implement continuous progress at
the middle level school. The primary reason cited by ten of the eleven
principals was that their communities would not accept programming
students of different chronological ages into the same classes. Two of
the ten principals reported that the sixth grade had been moved to the
junior high school within the past few years and that the move was not
readily accepted by the community. The fear of the influence of eight
graders on sixth graders was reported as the primary concern of the
parents.

One principal stated that "the community really knows very
little about it in terms of actually working and functioning well.
Their fear of change is hard to deal with." Another principal stated
that for this concept to succeed "the community would have to be sold
on its advantages ... and initially you would have to do a 'sell job'
with the kids." One of the principals stated that a "rationale would
have to be provided for the school board and that one would need to
give them and the parents very clearly defined exit objectives and
mastery learning objectives." The principals agreed that this practice
could not be implemented until parent and board opposition was ad-
dressed.

Three of the principals also cited the "back to the basics"
reform movement as a deterrent to its implementation. One of the
principals stated that "the parents want their kids ready for a rigor-
ous high school and college program and they would feel that multi-age grouping would 'water down' the curriculum." Another principal stated: "At the middle level parents are too concerned with academics and grades." The third principal stated that "back to basics is destroying the middle level concept."

Scheduling complexities was cited as another reason by five of the principals. These principals expressed concern that it would be very difficult to schedule students across all grade levels in terms of the present curriculum. One stated that it would be "an administrative nightmare." Another principal suggested that continuous progress "might be operational in physical education since there would be no leveling concerns or with gifted education and remedial reading." The general feeling of these three principals was that continuous progress could be implemented with a very limited population due to scheduling complications.

A fourth reason cited by three of the principals was a negative attitude on the part of staffs. Comments made included: "Staffs are entrenched." "Their way is better." "I have an aging staff and they would not accept this type of programming." One of the principals reported that his staff viewed their school as very successful even though the successes were "surface successes" so their attitude is "why do we have to change?"

In summary, principals cited four major reasons for their inability to implement the identified characteristic of continuous progress: community attitudes, scheduling complexities, traditional teacher attitudes, and an emphasis on test scores and grades.
Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that all three types of schools implemented continuous progress to a moderate degree. Data also indicated that principals only desired to implement continuous progress to a slightly higher degree of moderate implementation. Although principals cited community attitudes, scheduling complexities, traditional teacher attitudes, and an emphasis on test scores and grades as the primary reasons for not fully implementing continuous progress in their schools one might also question their leadership to initiate change in this area.

When questioned regarding the implementation of continuous progress, it was apparent based upon responses that the actual level of implementation in their schools was minimal at best. None of the interviewed principals had a defined program that allowed students to progress at their individual rates. For the most part, principals considered grouping within classes and tracking as examples of continuous progress within their schools.

Although ten of the principals cited community attitudes as a reason for not implementing such a program none of these principals had attempted to educate their parents in the area of continuous progress. One might conclude that they anticipated a negative response from the parents and in effect did nothing to actively initiate the change in their schools. "Selling" the program to the board, parents, and students was never pursued in any of the buildings. In addition, none of these principals developed a rationale for the program nor did they propose mastery learning objectives that could be used to justify
placement of students based upon developmental level and academic abilities.

As indicated five of the principals cited scheduling complexities as deterrents to initiate the change. None of the principals had attempted to create the type of schedule that would lend itself to this type of programming. Responses were primarily single focused based upon rigid schedules already in place in their schools. As a result, they felt that implementing continuous progress would be an "administrative nightmare" since they would not be able to address it within their present lock-stepped schedules. None of the principals had attempted to develop a master schedule with their staffs that would lend itself to this type of programming.

In analyzing the interview data, it was apparent that the principals did not take an aggressive position with regard to implementing continuous progress. It was not addressed with staff nor parents nor was there any attempt on their part to develop schedules that would accommodate this change. Interview data indicated that implementation of this characteristic was minimal and that there was no real desire to implement it more extensively.

Interview question 3 sought to determine the reasons why a variety of instructional strategies and materials were not being implemented as extensively as the principals desired them to be implemented. The reasons cited by the principals were: teacher competency at the middle level, traditional teacher attitudes, and budgetary restraints.

Eight of the interviewed principals cited a lack of specially trained middle level teachers as the primary reasons for the minimal
use of a variety of instructional strategies and materials. As one principal stated: "Teachers are not prepared to use a variety of instructional strategies to reach students who have a wide range of learning styles and aptitudes." The principals agreed that most of their teachers were content oriented and generally maintained a teacher-directed classroom format. They reported that the primary instructional strategy used was lecture with a question and answer session following the lecture. They explained that most of the middle level teachers in their buildings were trained as secondary school teachers and that they primarily desire to teach the subjects that they enjoy.

Most of the principals reported that their teachers rarely utilize cooperative learning techniques such as peer tutoring or teamed instruction which would create more student-directed classes. As one principal explained: "Effective teaching practices at the middle level should include teaching techniques that are both teacher-directed and student-directed. Both techniques are essential and middle level teachers should move the two together." Another principal stated that the teachers in his building "rely too heavily on the textbook and do not interrelate their subject area with the other areas of the curriculum."

Three of the principals stated that an effective staff development program in this area is definitely needed "to make these secondary teachers more aware of the developmental needs of the junior high school student so that the individual student learning styles could be addressed." Another principal stated that "middle school teachers need to be made aware of the importance of using hands-on-experiences in the
classroom to make learning more personal and rewarding for the students." It was also reported by one of the principals that most of his teachers "do not conduct problem solving group discussions ... they spend too much time 'giving' the students information." He further stated that "teachers need to be retaught how to teach at the middle level and that the school district should provide retraining experiences for the teachers if they value the importance of a middle level education."

Four of the principals specifically cited teacher attitudes as a problem for implementing this identified characteristic. As one principal stated: "Most of my teachers are cognitively focused since their teacher preparation was subject-based. Their main goal is to teach content because that is what they value." Another principal reported that his teachers are "adverse to using techniques such as learning stations and learning packets because they associate those techniques with the elementary school and they regard themselves as secondary teachers." These principals agreed that a complacent aging staff who are resistant to change is a major problem at the middle level. One principal summarized by stating: "Until the universities offer a specific course of study for middle level teachers that concentrates on effective teaching techniques for middle level students change at this level is virtually impossible." He further stated that "change at the universities is also unlikely unless the state mandates certification for teachers to teach at the middle level."

Budgetary restraints were also reported by three of the principals as a reason for not implementing a variety of instructional
strategies and materials. As one principal stated: "If the district does not offer an intensive staff development program to retrain our middle level teachers there is very little that could be done at the building level. To date, we have not been successful in obtaining the necessary funds to accomplish this end." Another principal stated that he was unable to acquire funds to purchase materials that would enhance the middle level program in his building. "We have very limited resources to purchase updated teaching materials especially in the area of technology. We have computers but we do not have available software to offer an integrated program in computer-based-instruction." One of the principals reported that the prescribed middle level curriculum in his district was inappropriate for his junior high students. "Our curriculum is too content oriented and there is little room for exploration and experimentation. We need to hire a middle level curriculum consultant to oversee the rewriting of our curriculum so that the social and emotional needs of the youngsters are also addressed. We are a unique educational organization but our special needs are not addressed by our school district."

To summarize, the principals cited three primary reasons for their inability to implement the identified characteristic of utilizing a variety of instructional strategies and materials: teacher competency at the middle level, traditional teacher attitudes, and budgetary restraints.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that all three types of schools implemented a variety of instructional strategies and materials to a moderate degree. Data also
indicated that principals desired to implement a variety of instructional strategies and materials extensively. As mentioned, principals cited teacher competency at the middle level, traditional teacher attitudes, and budgetary restraints as the reasons for not fully implementing this change. When interviewing the principals, their responses seemed to indicate that the majority of their teachers were not utilizing a variety of instructional strategies and materials even though they initially responded that there was a high moderate degree of implementation.

As a group they primarily stated that teacher attitudes and teacher competency at the middle level were the primary restraints for not implementing this characteristic to the level they desired. One would have to question if that were the case how their present level of implementation fell within the high moderate range of implementation. If the majority of teachers lacked middle level competency and middle level attitudes how were they able to report a high moderate level of implementation?

Principals alluded to poor questioning techniques by teachers that did not generate a higher level of thinking responses and a limited use of cooperative groupings as the primary reason for determining that their teachers were not utilizing a variety of instructional materials and strategies.

Only one of the principals stated that faculty meeting time was utilized to explore alternate teaching strategies. This would be a cost free medium to share information. None of the principals had explored the possibility of using peer coaching to enhance the im-
plementation of this characteristic. In addition, none of the principals had personally demonstrated in classrooms how these techniques could be implemented.

If the characteristic of utilizing a variety of instructional strategies is to be implemented more extensively principals will have to assume a stronger leadership role to acquaint staff with these techniques and the instructional benefits that can be derived through their use. All of the principals stated that their teachers do not take advantage of an interdisciplinary approach yet none of the principals have introduced the concept to them.

As stated in the interview report, several of the principals felt that "little could be done at the building level." They responded that change would have to first begin with the course of study required by the universities for middle level teachers and district support. Universities and the district could help enhance change but there are unexplored avenues that could be addressed at the building level: for example, the focus of faculty meetings, participation in the cooperative learning network, before school in-service meetings coordinated by the principal, peer coaching, and the demonstration of these techniques in the classroom.

However, principals will need district financial support if technology is to be expanded in the middle level school and if curriculum changes are to be made. For this characteristic to evolve, principals should not overlook the strategy of lobbying with their districts. Of the principals interviewed, none of them have taken this type of aggressive stance with their superintendents.
In analyzing the interview data, it seems that the principals feel strongly regarding the implementation of the characteristic of utilizing a variety of instructional strategies and materials but they have not tapped the opportunities at the building level that could be utilized to further its implementation.

Interview question 4 sought to determine reasons why it was difficult for the principals to utilize flexible scheduling at the middle level. The reasons cited by the principals included traditional teacher attitudes, scheduling complexities, teacher competency at the middle level, state mandates, and budgetary restraints.

Seven of the principals cited traditional teacher attitudes as the primary problem for not implementing flexible scheduling. As one principal stated: "Teachers want to control their 45 minute block of time." Another principal reported that "the staff needs to view their role differently. They were hired as junior high teachers and they are comfortable in a departmental setting." Several of the principals reported that they have an older staff who are reluctant to change. "Many of my teachers don’t always see the interrelationship of the various subject areas. They feel that their subject area is the most important and they do not want to share time with other subject area specialists."

Closely aligned to teacher attitude is teacher competency at the middle level. Three principals reported this as an impediment. "For this practice to be effectively implemented staff development would be required. In-service would be needed to explain to the teachers how to do it, why to do it, how to share with other teachers, and how to
manage their time." As one principal stated: "Ideally we need to hire teachers who are comfortable with that format." All three of the principals again reported that middle level certification is a must for this type of programming to be totally effective. "We need qualified middle level teachers who realize that middle level teaching is more than the dissemination of information."

Seventeen of the principals also reported scheduling complexities as a reason for not implementing flexible scheduling in their buildings. Budgetary restraints and state mandates create some of the scheduling complications. As one principal stated: "The need to accommodate mandated programs such as physical education and health places restrictions on scheduling flexibility." Another principal stated that his schedule is "locked in with ability grouped reading classes that minimize flexibility in scheduling." It was also reported that "tracking develops from foreign language and algebra and this forces a stricter schedule." "For flexible scheduling to be implemented tracking classes would have to be eliminated. You lose all your flexibility when students must be tracked into remedial reading, literature, pre-algebra, and foreign language. When classes are tracked you can't set up teams effectively and do justice to the tracks." Elective classes were also cited as a problem for instituting flexible scheduling. Three of the principals stated that a lack of available personnel lessens their scheduling opportunities. As one stated: "The teacher contract restricts the number of classes teachers can teach which reduces the possibility for the creative use of teacher time."
To summarize, the principals cited five reasons for their inability to implement a program utilizing flexible scheduling: traditional teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, budgetary restraints, scheduling complexities, and state mandates.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that all three types of schools implemented flexible scheduling to a moderate degree. Data also indicated that principals only desired to implement flexible scheduling to a slightly higher moderate degree. Although there was not a strong desire to extensively implement this characteristic, the principals cited five reasons for not doing it: traditional teacher attitudes, scheduling complexities, teacher competency at the middle level, state mandates, and budgetary restraints.

In interviewing the principals it was found that none of them actually has a flexible schedule. Examples of flexible scheduling primarily cited by them included pull-out programs for learning disability and gifted students. Only one of the principals described a schedule that was truly flexible in terms of the schedule permitting deviations that would allow teachers the ability to offer varying time allotments for classes on a weekly basis. For the most part, schedules were lock stepped with specific times designated for each curricular offering.

As indicated earlier, almost 50% of the principals surveyed had a secondary endorsement. One might conclude that their primary focus is departmental and not interdisciplinary. This type of focus would lend itself to a more regimented type of scheduling. Although they
state that their teachers are primarily content oriented, maybe they have the same type of orientation based upon their training. As mentioned, only one of the eleven interviewed principals has attempted to create a schedule that would empower teachers with creating a flexible schedule within a block time arrangement. The primary response was that it could not be done based upon the reasons previously cited. None of the other principals has attempted to create a flexible schedule as described in the literature but yet based upon their perceptions they feel that they moderately implement flexible scheduling.

Interview question 5 sought to determine why appropriate social experiences were not effectively implemented at the middle level. The primary reasons cited were a lack of emphasis by the principal at the building level and community attitudes.

Nine of the principals reported that they have not assumed a strong leadership position in this area to initiate change. They described the social experiences offered to their students as a "replication of what the high school offers." All the principals interviewed reported that their schools offered an intensive interscholastic program, cheerleading, dances, and academically based clubs. Seven of these principals also reported that their band, orchestra, and chorus programs were selective and were very "product oriented." Only three of the principals interviewed had an organized service club for the students to participate in. As one principal reported "I inherited the social programs that are presently offered and to be perfectly honest I have not exerted much energy in trying to change them." Another
stated: "I spend most of my time on administrative, organizational, and supervisory tasks to the point that I have neglected this area of our program."

Several of the principals commented that parental pressure is so strong in the area of interscholastic sports and the music programs that to change these programs to better address the developmental needs of the junior high school students would be met with great resistance. One principal reported that he attempted to drop the interscholastic athletic program but was unable to secure the support of the parents, the board, and the administration. Parents view these programs as vital for the success of their kids in high school in these areas. Many of the parents hope that their kids will receive athletic and music scholarships for college. If these programs were eliminated at the junior high they feel that their kids would not be equally competitive with other kids who had training in the junior high."

In summary, the principals cited two major reasons for not adequately addressing appropriate social experiences for the middle level student: lack of emphasis on their part at the building level and strong community pressures to maintain the programs as they presently exist.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that middle school principals implement this characteristic extensively and that junior high and "other" principals implement it moderately. It should be noted, however, that middle school principals implement this characteristic to a "low" extensive degree and that junior high and "other" principals implement it to a "high" moderate
degree. Each of the three groups only desire to increase the level of implementation by approximately one-tenth. Again this data reinforces the concept that the three groups of schools are relatively the same.

The data collected in the interview indicated that the principals by their own admission have not assumed a strong leadership position in this area. Although they did not verbally support many of the social experiences promoted in their buildings, they in effect have done little to change them.

Principal responses for interview questions 6 and 7 were very similar. These questions sought to determine reasons why the principals could not adequately implement appropriate physical experiences and intramural activities at the middle level. The reasons cited by the principals included budgetary restraints, community attitudes, and teacher attitudes. An additional reason for difficulty in implementation for intramural activities included teacher competencies at the middle level.

All of the principals reported that their school's interscholastic sport program was an impediment to appropriately addressing the physical experiences and intramural activities for their students. One of the primary reasons cited for this difficulty was budget. As one of the principals stated: "Too much money is spent on the interscholastic sport program and not enough money is allocated for intramural activities." Another principal stated: "We need a solid intramural program but to do it we need people and more people equals money and we don't have it." Three of the principals interviewed were part of a unit school district. They reported that their districts do not allo-
cate enough money to the junior high schools for a solid physical education program. Two of these principals stated that in their districts the junior high students do not have daily physical education. Physical education is only offered for a semester. As one of the principals stated: "Our district spends too much money prepping kids for high school. Daily physical education is not a priority but our interscholastic sports program is."

Community pressure was also addressed as a deterrent in providing an appropriate physical education program. All of the principals reported that their communities want interscholastic sports. As one principal stated: "Our physical education program is evaluated based on the number of wins our kids have in conference play." Other comments included: "If we tried to minimize interscholastic competition we would be killed politically." "Pressure from the school board, the parents, and the high school guarantees the existence and the expansion of interscholastic sports."

All of the principals reported that they are not totally opposed to interscholastic athletics. They are opposed to the emphasis that is placed upon it. As one principal stated: "Interscholastic sports has its place but there should be a strong intramural program to supplement it." Another stated: "The only problem with interscholastic sports is that the program does not provide benefits for a wide range of students. Other physically oriented programs must be offered to address the needs of all of the students." Other comments included: "There are not enough kids who can participate. It would be okay if you could have more teams." "I realize that the kids need some junior high
school training if they are to compete in high school but competition
is not good for all of the students in junior high." "If opportunities
for participation were not limited it would be fine. It is okay if you
have an intramural program with it." "The only problem with inter-
scholastics is that it is too limiting. Too many kids are left out
because they are not good enough."

Teacher attitudes were also reported as a problem for appropri-
ately addressing the physical needs of students at the middle level.
As one principal reported: "Let's face it, the staff and community
like interscholastics. Most of my teachers are high school trained and
they enjoy the mini-high school environment." Several of the prin-
cipals cited the attitudes of the coaches as a problem. "We need
middle level thinking coaches so that the emphasis is not on winning."
"Coaches should not overemphasize winning." "Interscholastics would be
fine if the coaches didn't emphasize win, win, win. They need to
concentrate more on the team concept." Another principal stated: "It
is inappropriate to put that kind of pressure on kids, but in reality
it is almost necessary to see if the youngster has those abilities."

Eight of the principals reported that teacher competency at the
middle level was a problem for implementing a strong intramural pro-
gram. "My staff is not committed to the intramural program. It is not
a valued part of the program." Several of the principals commented
that their staffs were not adequately trained to supervise the program.
As one principal stated: "You need total staff involvement to have a
successful intramural program. You need people who understand its
importance and who are willing to participate in it. My staff is too
content oriented and they are not willing to spend their time supervis­
ing a 'recess program'.'

To summarize, the principals cited four reasons for not offering an appropriate physical program at the middle level: budgetary re­
straints, community attitudes, teacher attitudes, and teacher competen­
cy at the middle level.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that middle school principals implement physical experiences extensively on the lower end of the continuum while junior high and "other" principals implement it to a "high" moderate degree. With respect to intramural activities all three groups of principals imple­
ment this characteristic moderately. In terms of their desire to implement physical experiences all three groups desire to implement them extensively, while all three groups desire to implement intramural activities moderately.

Principals cited budgetary restraints, community attitudes, teacher attitudes, and teacher competencies as deterrents to implement these characteristics to the level they desire. It is interesting to note that in the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics 96% of the principals cited that interscholastic athletics should be a part of the middle level program. However, in the interview most of the principals stated that the interscholastic athletic program does not address the needs of the students and that these programs exist because of board and parental pressure.

In the interview process most of the principals acknowledged the need for intramural programs to offset the interscholastic program yet
as a group they only desire to implement intramural programs to a moderate degree compared to their extensive support cited for interscholastic athletics in the survey. The principals also cited indifferent staff attitudes toward intramurals as a problem with respect to staffing them and the low value placed upon them by their staffs. None of the principals discussed any type of programs initiated in their buildings to create changes among their staffs to enhance the intramural program. Based upon their desire to have interscholastic programs one might question if any true attempts were made to enhance intramurals at the expense of the interscholastic athletic programs.

Not offering daily physical education as part of the middle school curriculum, however, is basically a board and central office decision. All of the principals interviewed stated that daily physical education should be required at the middle level and that they were powerless in initiating this change at building level.

In analyzing the interview data, it was apparent that the principals did not take an aggressive position with regard to enhancing physical experiences and intramural activities. One might conclude that their biases toward interscholastic activities lessened their zeal toward reducing these activities.

Interview question 8 sought to determine why principals could not effectively implement interdisciplinary team organization at the middle level. Principals cited five reasons for their inability to adequately implement this program: traditional teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, budgetary restraints, scheduling complexities, and standardized test score orientation.
All eleven of the principals cited teacher attitudes and teacher competency at the middle level as the primary reasons for their inability to offer a full interdisciplinary team organization at the middle level. As one principal stated: "Most of my teachers are trained at the secondary level and their attitudes are very content oriented. You can not implement this type of program unless your teachers have a strong vision and a mission toward middle school education. Teachers must be willing to invest the time to be sure that outcome objectives of each subject area are satisfied. It can't subtract from the regular curriculum - it must embellish it." Another principal stated: "Teacher attitude is a stumbling block. They primarily are content area teachers and this area takes precedent."

Another stated: "My teachers do not see the connectedness among areas. Their training is too narrow. Subject area rules." Other comments included: "Teachers are too traditional. They struggle with their approach to teaching." "To do this we need more teachers who are child centered. We need to hire more elementary trained teachers." "I have an older staff. They can only teach one area." "If I tried to implement interdisciplinary teams there would be an emotional upheaval in my building. I have a staff that is set in their ways and they have not been trained to teach in this type of a format." "To implement interdisciplinary teaching you need a staff well trained in several areas. Most of my teachers have a secondary background with a specific major." "Middle level teachers need to have their roles redefined." Based on the responses cited principals report that their teachers have not been
trained with a middle level focus which results in traditional teaching attitudes.

In addition to the teacher's role, budgetary restraints were also cited as a contributory factor for not being able to fully implement interdisciplinary teaching. As the principals stated: "We need smaller classes." "Teachers need a lighter load to do the planning for interdisciplinary teaching effectively." "For interdisciplinary teaching to work the school board would have to make a strong financial commitment. The entire middle level curriculum would have to be redeveloped with an emphasis on process instead of outcome objectives." "Our district would have to appropriate funds for an extensive staff development program that emphasized instructional techniques rather than content." "We need a commitment from the district to hire more teachers." "Stipends need to be allocated for team leaders and that is not likely to occur."

Six of the principals reported that their present schedule would prohibit a pure interdisciplinary approach. "Our district would have to change their whole philosophy toward scheduling. Interdisciplinary teaching works best with a flexible schedule." Another principal stated: "As long as we have tracking in scheduling it would be impossible to have a pure form of interdisciplinary teaching. Our schedule is too lock-stepped." It was also reported that "departmentalization at the middle level reinforces the philosophy prevalent among most middle level teachers that content is our primary focus." "We need to eliminate department chairs and add team leaders. Our approach to scheduling should not replicate the high school." "The administration
and the teachers' union need to redefine and restructure the current work day for middle level teachers. Change must be addressed in the teachers' contract. Our scheduling options for teachers when based on a five period day are too restricting."

Two of the principals also cited standardized test results as an additional problem. As one stated: "Our curriculum is too structured. We have separate texts for each area and each subject area teacher is accountable for multitudinous outcome objectives. Senate Bill 730 and all the reform programs associated with it has destroyed any possibility for totally implementing interdisciplinary teaching in my district. Test scores are supreme. Content mastery not process is the focus." The other principal stated that his district has extremely high test scores and the attitude of the board and the community is "don't rock the boat - what we do, we do well!"

To summarize, the principals cited traditional teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, budgetary restraints, scheduling complexities, and test results as the primary reasons for their inability to implement an effective interdisciplinary team organization program at the middle level.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that interdisciplinary team organization was implemented to a moderate degree among all three types of schools with the middle schools displaying a greater level of implementation within the moderate range. The data further indicated that the middle school principals desired to implement it extensively at the low end of the extensive continuum while the junior high and "other" principals desired to
implement it moderately. Although the principals cited traditional
teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, budgetary
restraints, scheduling complexities, and test results as the primary
reasons for not fully implementing interdisciplinary team organization,
only one of the principals has attempted to implement such a model in
his building.

When questioned regarding how interdisciplinary teams function
moderately in their buildings, the responses cited by most of the
principals did not involve any type of school wide interdisciplinary
arrangements. Many of them referenced teachers team teaching a speci-
fic unit in language arts and social studies or a unit of study combin­
ing mathematical principles and science. Most often principals refer­
red to situations whereby individual teachers in presenting a lesson in
their specific content area would interrelate the material to other
content areas. Based upon the responses there was minimal implementa­
tion of interdisciplinary units involving a flexible schedule arrange­
ment. Little correlation existed between academic areas and the prac­
tical and fine art areas.

Not to discount their arguments that smaller class size, a
refocused curriculum, more teachers, stipends for team leaders, and the
exclusion of a departmental arrangement would enhance the possibilities
for effective interdisciplinary team organization, it is also apparent
that they have not attempted to create schedules that might facilitate
this type of teaching. Like the teachers, most of the interviewed
principals are secondary trained teachers and possibly they are as much
concerned about the "emotional upheaval" that such a schedule would
create for them as they perceive it would create for the teachers. Of the ten principals not utilizing an interdisciplinary team organization in their buildings, not one of them has even suggested its implementation with their staffs.

In analyzing the interview data, it was apparent that ten of the eleven principals minimally at best implement any type of interdisciplinary team organization on a full scale. In addition, they have made no overt attempts to create a schedule that would enhance that type of teaching arrangement for their staffs.

Interview question 9 sought to determine the problems associated with vertical planning at the middle level. Principals cited three primary reasons for not appropriately addressing this area of middle level education: lack of emphasis, teacher attitude, and teacher competency at the middle level.

Based upon principal responses vertical planning at the middle level is often overlooked and not given appropriate emphasis. As one principal stated: "To properly articulate at the middle level cooperation among the elementary, middle school, and high school is paramount. Programs and curriculum must have a K-12 scope and issues can not be addressed in a compartmentalized fashion. To me this is the most difficult area to address at the middle level because proper implementation is contingent upon too many other factors." Another principal stated: "It is difficult to be in the middle. Our concerns are too often overlooked. In our district, the focus is on the elementary school and the high school and both ends pull upon us in this 'tug of war.' For articulation programs to be successful our purpose and
identity needs to be recognized. We actually are in a perfect position to enhance the articulation process but this position is not recognized." It was also stated by another principal that "the high school dictates our curriculum. They are not willing to bend and accept students and offer a curriculum that meets individualized needs. As a result our role is then to prepare them for the high school program as it presently exists." Most of the principals reported that there is no established network for articulation above and below. "Articulation is a hit or miss process. We really only articulate when the students leave elementary school and enter junior high and when they leave junior high and enter high school." Most of the principals interviewed felt that the scope for addressing this problem was beyond their control. As stated: "This is an area where the district must initiate leadership. If this doesn't happen we will continue being the school in the middle."

Principals also cited teacher attitudes and teacher competency at the middle level as factors in not fully implementing a strong program of transition. As one principal stated: "It is difficult to affect change at the middle level when most of the teachers are content with emulating the high school program. They view themselves as secondary teachers and many of them align themselves with the high school program and curriculum." Another principal stated: "My teachers do not want to really articulate with the self-contained elementary school. That is unfortunate since that type of articulation might help them to understand the value of some of the other middle school approaches like teaming and teacher guidance that would make adjustment
to junior high easier for the students." Another principal stated: "My teachers don't effectively address articulation issues among themselves in terms of curriculum presentation let alone as part of a K-12 continuum." One principal summarized: "I don't want to sound repetitious but unless the middle schools have teachers who are trained and believe in middle school ideology and programs on staff changes, such as this one can not be accomplished."

To summarize, the principals cited lack of emphasis at both the building and district levels and teacher attitudes and teacher competency at the middle level as the primary impediments for not addressing transitional issues at the middle level.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that middle school principals implement vertical planning extensively while the junior high and "other" principals implement it moderately. It should be noted, however, that the differences expressed are minimal in terms of their placement on the continuum. Data also indicated that all three groups of principals desire to implement this characteristic extensively. Principals cited their lack of emphasis and teacher attitudes and competencies at the middle level as the primary reasons for this characteristic not being implemented to the level they desire.

In fairness to the principals this is an area that should be coordinated at the district level if it is to be truly effective. Realizing the number of tasks for which principals are responsible this is one for which results are not immediately apparent. It is understandable to see why they do not initiate leadership in this area.
When questioned regarding how they attempt to implement articulation since all three groups reported at least a moderate level of implementation most of them cited how they interact with their feeder schools when students enter the middle level school and how they interact with the high school when their students leave the middle school. As a general observation, little communication exists among the three levels to provide a developmental curriculum on a K-12 continuum. Very little is addressed at the building level with staffs to familiarize them with the curriculum that is presented on both ends of the continuum. Principals from unit districts felt they were more aware of a K-12 program than their counterparts in elementary districts. They, however, felt that the curriculum was too influenced by the high school.

In analyzing the interview data, it was apparent that the principals did not take a leadership role with regard to strengthening articulation with elementary and high school programs. This may be an area where leadership must be provided by central office personnel. All of the principals desired extensive implementation of this characteristic but in terms of their perceptions of their roles this was not an area in which they felt that leadership should be provided by them.

Interview question 10 sought to determine why the principals felt that guidance services were not adequately addressed at the middle level. Principals cited teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, budgetary restraints, and scheduling complexities as the primary obstacles.

All of the principals interviewed equated guidance services at the middle level with an advisor-advisee program. Most of them de-
scribed their counselors as competent and caring people but felt that
middle school counseling requires much more than access to a school
counselor. As one principal stated: "Our counselors are responsible
for too many administrative duties. They do not have the time to
sufficiently deal with all the day-to-day adjustment problems that
occur among the junior high kids. These kids need someone to turn to
on a daily basis." Another principal stated: "Students need regular
supportive guidance from an adult that they trust. A high school
guidance program does not work in a middle school. An intensive stu-
dent advisement program is essential if we are to meet the social and
emotional needs of our students."

Principals cited teacher attitudes and teacher competency at the
middle level as two primary obstacles for not initiating an advisor-
advisee program in their buildings. Some of the principal comments
included: "Some teachers would not feel comfortable acting in that
role." "Many teachers can't relate to the students in that kind of a
format." "Although I have a very caring staff, they resist this type
of a program. It is a different role for them and it is scary." "Sev-
eral of my teachers see this as a program that will cause a lot of
paperwork, additional grade assignments, and loads of preparation."
"Teachers might buy into it if they totally understood the program and
if they had a resource to go to. This program would require a lot of
staff development since most of my teachers have not had the training
for it." "When I introduced the program to my staff they saw it as
another added duty." "The first problem to overcome is getting the
staff to realize the need for it - they need to identify it as a con-
cern." "The age of my staff is a factor and they would not be ready to accept this kind of a program. Their attitude is that counseling is for counselors and teaching is for teachers. Don't misunderstand. My staff relates well with the kids but they would find it difficult to be involved in an 'organized' guidance program. It is all in the training and the perception of the teachers." As one principal summarized: "To implement an advisory program you must have a staff that wants to do it and who are capable of doing it."

Budgetary restraints were also cited by seven of the principals for their inability to effectively implement an advisor-advisee program. Two of the principals cited lack of staff development as a problem. As one stated: "You need extensive on-going in-service. Our district has so many priorities and this one is on the low end." The other stated: "The district must provide a curriculum and a staff development program. This costs dollars. The administrators need resources to properly develop the program. We also need enough time to present the concept and the purpose." The issue of teacher contract was also addressed by three of the principals. As one stated: "How does this teaching responsibility fit into the contract? Some districts give their teachers an additional stipend for it." Another stated: "Our contract does not address this issue. How it would be handled is questionable. Do we rotate supervisory duties, is it a class plus a resource, or should additional pay be given to the teachers? This is another problem for the middle level. We are forced to adhere to a contract that doesn't recognize the uniqueness of programs
at our level." As one principal stated; "The cost of this program would be prohibitive in my district."

Eight of the principals reported that scheduling complexities are another issue for proper implementation of the program. As one reported: "Based on our present schedule with all the requirements that must be addressed I don't know how I would fit it in." Another principal stated that he would not be able to implement the program without implementing flexible scheduling and "presently that is not a realistic goal in our district." It was also stated by another principal that his "computer schedule with a block set of 40 minutes would not be able to accommodate an advisory program." "Students need to be with teachers for an extended period of time and there is no room in our schedule for this to take place."

To summarize, the principals cited teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, budgetary restraints, and scheduling complexities as the main reasons for not implementing a full guidance program that would address the developmental needs of the pre-adolescent at the middle level.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that all three types of schools implemented guidance services to a moderate degree. Data also indicated that middle schools and "other" schools desired extensive implementation at the low end of the continuum with junior highs desiring moderate implementation at the high end of the continuum. In effect, there was little difference among the three schools with respect to their desire to implement guidance services at the middle level.
When questioned regarding the implementation of guidance services, it was apparent based upon responses that all of the principals equated an effective middle level guidance program with the implementation of an advisor-advisee program. Because of this focus principals cited teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, budgetary restraints, and scheduling complexities as the primary reasons for not implementing a full guidance program.

Although all of the principals stated that an advisor-advisee program should be an integral part of the middle level guidance program only two of them had such a program in their buildings. Like several of the characteristics previously discussed, most of the principals exerted little or no influence in terms of implementing such a program in their schools. They recognized the quality of guidance services presently provided which accounts for their perception of implementing these services moderately but felt that their guidance services were lacking since advisor-advisee programs were not present. It is interesting to note that the two advisor-advisee programs implemented were implemented in middle schools.

All of the principals reported that their counselors did an effective job in providing guidance services to the students both in terms of individual and group guidance. Five of the principals stated that the Quest Guidance program which centers on student self-esteem and drug prevention was offered in their schools. Several of the principals reported that the counselors were responsible for too many administrative tasks which lessened their contact time with the students. If they felt this was a legitimate concern, this researcher
would have to question why the principals assigned these tasks to the counselors.

In analyzing the interview data, it was apparent that the principals were basically content with the quality of guidance services provided by the counselors. All of them did stress the importance of establishing an advisor-advisee program but only two of the eleven had taken steps to implement such a program despite the restraints previously stated.

Interview question 11 sought to determine the reasons for the principals' inability to offer an adequate program for independent study. Principals cited test scores, teacher attitudes, and teacher competency at the middle level as the primary reasons for not adequately implementing this program.

Most of the principals reported that independent study follows a very traditional format in their buildings. "Independent study generally means extra credit projects that directly relate to the curriculum being presented," reported one of the principals. Another principal reported that "most of my teachers do not use this alternate method to instruction. They do not construct learning situations that promote independent and divergent learning. There are few opportunities for student choice in the learning." He further explained: "My teachers are secondary trained teachers and their primary goal is to teach the curriculum utilizing total class instruction. Totally independent projects that are student directed are rare." Another principal stated: "My teachers don't avail themselves of opportunities in the library resource center. Learning center activities and learning
packet instruction is rarely used in my building." Several of the principals commented about the lack of middle level training of their teachers. As one of the principals stated: "My teachers are all academically competent, however, they are hesitant to experiment with instructional strategies that are new to them. They primarily rely on large and small group instruction." Another stated: "Personal creativity in the classroom is not a primary goal among my teachers. Learning is rigid and not personalized."

Six of the principals cited standardized test results as a deterrent to independent learning. As one principal stated: "Since the advent of the district report card and the state testing program, teachers are more concerned about accountability. They want their students to score well and as a result they carefully guard their academic time. During this past school year I have had few requests for field trips and the number of related activities have also decreased." On the same topic another principal stated: "School reform in Illinois has done more damage to middle level education than any other factor. As a principal, I know I am sending double messages to my staff. On one hand I am asking them to be creative in their approach to the curriculum while on the other I am explaining all the new reforms which have an underlying message of accountability." He further commented: "I am frustrated as a principal. Creativity has been stripped from my job. It is difficult enough to retrain teachers, but when the state and the board of education only stress outcome objectives, I know I am fighting a losing battle." As one principal stated: "For independent study to become an integral part of our middle level
program it will have to be written into the curriculum. Teachers in my building rarely deviate from the curriculum."

To summarize, the principals cited teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, and standardized test scores as the primary reasons for their inability to offer a program that incorporates independent study.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that all three types of schools implemented independent study to a minimal degree. Data also indicated that principals desired to implement independent study to a moderate degree of implementation. In analyzing the statistical data it should be noted that this characteristic had the lowest overall average in terms of level of implementation and the second lowest overall average in terms of desired level of implementation. Based on these statistics one might conclude that the characteristic of independent study is not a high priority among principals with regard to implementation. The principals, however, cited test scores, teacher attitudes, and teacher competency at the middle level as the primary reasons for not adequately implementing this program.

In questioning the principals it was found that none of the principals had a defined program that allowed students to pursue study in areas that they selected. Most of the principals cited extra credit projects as an opportunity for students to do additional research in areas of their choosing. It was apparent through the interview process that principals really did not want to schedule a portion of time during the student’s day for independent study. Although they cited
teacher attitudes as one of the primary reasons for not addressing this characteristic, they too seemed quite concerned about test scores and utilizing time in school for academic subjects. In addition, the principals stated that they did not really encourage teachers to use the library with their students for independent study. Their lack of concern in this area was further evidenced in that none of them had ever attempted to create a schedule where independent study was built into the student's day.

The data collected in the interviews indicated that the principals have not assumed a strong leadership position in this area nor did they intend to in the future.

Interview question 12 sought to determine reasons why principals had difficulty in implementing a full program that incorporates basic skill repair and extension. All of the principals cited budgetary restraints and three of the principals cited scheduling difficulties as reasons for not appropriately addressing basic skill repair and extension programs.

Overall, the principals reported a lack of certified personnel available for addressing remedial concerns of the students. Principal comments were very much the same. As one principal stated: "Our district offers an excellent learning disability program but if the students are not identified for a special education program our services for them are minimal." Another principal stated: "Ideally we need learning centers staffed with certified specialists in reading and math to deal with the learning problems of individual students and to serve as resources for our staff." All the principals agreed that the
resources are not available to address this problem adequately. Another stated: "We need materials and computer software but the funding isn’t there." Most of the principals felt the problem could not be totally addressed by their staffs. As one principal stated: "I have an excellent dedicated staff but it is unrealistic to expect them to be all things to all people. There aren’t enough minutes in the day. The demands on a junior high teacher are overwhelming. Basically they are responsible for implementing all of these characteristics that we have been discussing. This is an area where they definitely need support. All of my teachers want their kids to achieve but realistically how can they address all the academic needs of 150 kids. Sometimes I think our expectations for them are unreasonable. I would love to see the legislators, board members, and central office personnel step into their shoes for a while. It is easy to demand but very difficult to accomplish all of the demands."

All the principals were very discontent with gifted education at the middle level. As one principal stated: "We only give lip service to gifted education to placate the parents." Another stated: "If gifted education was really valued in our school district there would be a gifted education curriculum taught by certified personnel. Pull-out programs once or twice a week do not address the needs of the gifted student." None of the interviewed principals reported having a comprehensive program for gifted instruction. Most of their districts supported the pull-out program concept. One principal summarized: "True gifted education at any level is costly. It must be a total program that not only addresses acceleration and enrichment but also
addresses the total child. Gifted students are special education students and their identity needs and peer relationships demand special attention."

Three of the principals also cited scheduling complexities as a problem in implementing remedial and enrichment programs. As one principal stated: "Pulling students for gifted and remedial classes not only creates logistic problems but also emotional problems for the students. In junior high no one wants to be different and most of the students are very self-conscious about being pulled from their mainstreamed classes." Another principal stated: "Our students view remedial and gifted classes as a punishment since they are generally pulled from their physical education classes or activity periods." Another principal stated that he has a very difficult time scheduling special services since he is "at the mercy of the district schedules." He stated: "Students must be scheduled when the resource people are assigned to my building. This definitely limits flexibility."

To summarize, the principals cited budgetary restraints and scheduling complexities as the primary problems for not implementing an appropriate program for basic skill repair and extension.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that all three types of schools implemented programs in basic skill repair and extension to a high moderate degree. Data also indicated that all three groups of principals desired to implement programs in basic skill repair and extension to an extensive degree.

As a group the interviewed principals were quite concerned about providing appropriate educational experiences for both remedial and
gifted students. Many of their concerns were warranted and one could feel their frustrations when they discussed their programs in this area. Most of them expressed positive feelings regarding their special education programs since these students were being serviced and this is what accounted for their high moderate rating in this area. All of them expressed serious concern for the "slow" learner who did not qualify for any type of special program. As they explained, the problem is multi-faceted. Junior high students do not like to be involved in programs that "make" them different, staff time is limited, schedules compound the problem, and there are limited resources to purchase materials necessary to enhance these services. It would appear that principals do need some assistance especially in terms of resources for them to truly address the characteristic of basic skill repair and extension.

Interview question 13 sought to determine reasons why the principals had difficulty implementing a full program of creative experiences for the middle level student. Principals cited traditional teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, and test scores as the primary reasons for not adequately implementing this characteristic of effective middle level education.

Many of the reasons reported by the principals were very similar to previous responses. Content orientation of the teachers was cited most often. As one principal stated: "Teachers in my building occasionally involved the students in creative projects but most of the classes are fairly traditional." Another principal stated: "Creative emphasis varies from teacher to teacher. Some of our teachers never
deviate from the curriculum. However, I do have some teachers that are involved with cooperative learning and other types of group activities." Another principal stated; "The language arts teachers are probably the most creative teachers in my building. They have the students dress up like the characters in the autobiographies they read. They involve the students in the Young Authors Contest and one of my language arts teachers has worked on a civil war unit with one of the social studies teachers. But generally creativity in the classroom is not an everyday happening." It was also stated by one of the principals that the "instructional design of their lessons are very restricting. You will rarely see teacher-made projects or projects created by the kids. The focus is purely academic." Another principal stated: "Our classes lack excitement. Teachers do very little to get the kids enthusiastic about what they are learning. The kids learn in spite of it but there is so much more that we could be doing in this area. Part of the problem is that the teachers are not enthused. Many of them do the same thing year after year - this, I suppose, is a by-product of having an older staff." One principal stated: "Creativity at the middle level should go beyond the classroom. There should be school-wide projects like decorating the school, being involved in community projects, visiting the elementary schools and working with those kids. Teachers need to 'let their hair down' and be a little more like the elementary teachers. I have only been principal here for two years but I can tell you in that time I have only hired elementary trained teachers." As one principal summarized: "Our teachers at the middle level, for the most part, do not have a middle school vision.
They do not see middle level education holistically. Education at this level is too fragmented. Short of hiring a completely new staff that would be committed to middle level education I don't really know what the answer would be."

Four of the principals also cited standardized test results as a concern. One principal stated: "As I mentioned before teachers are overly concerned about the results of the IOWA tests. Because accountability is so strong in our district they feel the need to stress skill development in their classes. This is especially true in our reading, math, and language arts classes." Another principal admitted: "I am probably one of the main reasons why there is not more creative experiences in our building. I just don't stress it. I am more concerned about the district report card. There are two junior highs in our community and we are constantly being compared especially with academics. I spend a lot of time analyzing test results and working with the teachers to improve areas of weakness. This is a very competitive community and our schools are judged by those test scores." Another principal stated: "We have become too grade conscious at the middle level. We just don't let the kids be kids. We don't promote imaginative undertakings, fantasies, and occasional daydreaming. We are too purposeful in our approach to teaching. Just look at the junior high schedule - it is more demanding than most college schedules. The very structure of our organization prohibits creativity - we are not creative, so how can we expect the kids to be creative. Radical changes are needed at the middle level if we want to be true to our belief that middle level education is unique."
To summarize, the principals cited traditional teacher attitudes, teacher competency at the middle level, and standardized test results as reasons for not implementing a middle level program that strongly incorporates creative experiences.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that all three types of schools implemented creative experiences to a moderate degree. Data also indicated that junior high schools desired to implement this characteristic to a low extensive degree while the middle and "other" schools desired to implement it to a high moderate degree. In actuality, there was very little difference among the averages for all three types of schools.

Based upon the principal responses in the interviews, it would appear that creative experiences are not addressed to any large degree in most of their schools, but yet the principals perceived implementation of this characteristic on the survey as moderate. It is also interesting to note that most of the principals cite teacher attitudes and teacher competency at the middle level for not implementing most characteristics investigated in this report. Throughout the interview process it was stated in essence that if principals could hire new staffs that were trained at the middle level most of the characteristics could be implemented. It would seem that most of the characteristics are interrelated and if major changes occurred in scheduling to accommodate a flexible schedule other characteristics like continuous progress, variety of instructional strategies and materials, physical experiences, interdisciplinary team organization, independent study, basic skill repair and extension, and creative experiences could be
implemented more easily. Since building level principals create the schedule and set the tone for the implementation of the curriculum, one would have to question why they have not exerted more initiative in that area. It may be that they harbor the same type of fears and have the same academic focus that they perceive the teachers to have.

The principal is the master teacher in the building and it should be his role to provide the instructional leadership that would facilitate change where needed. To simply state that change can not be effectuated because of teacher training seems to be too simplistic a response for not initiating change. In most situations based on the interviews conducted, the principals have not assumed an aggressive stance to create change. This is not to say that the reasons cited by the principals are not valid. Instead the question to be resolved is "what can I do to minimize the effects of the restraints?"

Interview question 14 sought to determine why appropriate student evaluation practices were not utilized at the middle level. Principals cited teacher attitudes and community attitudes as the primary reasons.

All of the principals interviewed agreed that grade reporting should include more than a letter grade. As one principal stated: "Evaluation should be ongoing and it should not be limited to once a quarter. Reporting should be timely with frequent written narratives sent to the parents." Another stated: "Student evaluation should include written reports and parent conferences. Letter grades are meaningless at the middle level." One principal stated: "Grading should include effort, behavior, and academics. We should correlate
what kids are doing to what they are capable of doing." It was also stated: "Parent and student conferencing should be the core of grading at the middle level and these conferences should be often." Another stated: "If you use letter grades there should be comments with them. Narrative reports are necessary to explain the 'why' behind the grades." Although all of the principals agreed that student evaluation practices should include more than letter grades, only two of the eleven principals had reporting systems that included written narratives. All of the principals reported that their students received letter grades and that letter grade assignment was mandated by their respective school districts.

Eight of the principals reported that teacher attitudes reinforce their present grading systems. One principal stated: "Teachers do not want the extra paperwork that would be involved with narrative reports. They feel that grade reporting is complicated enough." Another principal stated: "Some teachers are lazy." One principal reported that he would be concerned about just using narrative reports. "Teachers have too many students at the junior high. If we were to simply use a narrative report comments would probably become very generic." Another principal had a similar concern: "For narrative reports to be effective and worthwhile teacher comments would have to be very specific and address specific learning skills. I really don't think that most of the teachers would do a thorough job especially with the number of students they are responsible for." One principal suggested a checklist format that would relate to achievement in specific skill areas. "This type of evaluation would give parents more informa-
tion about what their kids have learned. It would be very structured and the teachers would not be responsible for a lot of writing. Teachers might be more agreeable to this. I know my staff would not want to write narratives for all their students four times a year." One principal summarized by stating: "Grading is a classic example of the junior high dilemma. We know what is good for kids at this level. We should stress individual achievement using an elementary focus. But our teachers have five times the students that an elementary teacher has. With our high school structure how can we expect our teachers to be like the elementary teachers. The problem is we are neither and we are constantly being forced into molds that don't fit us."

Ten of the principals reported parental pressure as an impediment to change. As one principal stated: "Parents are most concerned about how their kids compare to the others. Narrative reports won't satisfy them." Another stated: "Parents will not understand anything else. For parents, letter grades are sufficient - they lead to high school and that is the focus of the parents." One of the principals stated: "Many parents use grades to motivate their kids. They can only relate progress to the grade." All of the principals felt strongly that the parents in their communities demand grades. As one principal summarized: "Parents are academic oriented. They want to know how their kids compare. Traditional grading has always compared the individual to the group and this is the type of feedback that the parents feel comfortable with."

To summarize, the principals cited teacher attitudes and com-
munity attitudes as major obstacles for implementing an appropriate student evaluation system at the middle level.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that all three types of schools implemented evaluation programs that meet the needs of the middle level student to a moderate degree. Data also indicated that principals in all three types of schools desired to implement this characteristic to a moderate degree. Although the principals cited teacher attitudes and community attitudes for not utilizing a different evaluation format, it became apparent during the interview format that the principals were basically comfortable with the systems presently being implemented in their schools. This observation is reinforced by the results of the survey which indicated that appropriate evaluation systems are moderately being implemented and that principals only desire to implement this characteristic to a moderate degree.

Philosophically all the principals agreed that just assigning a letter grade was not an appropriate way to evaluate the progress of middle level students. All of the principals interviewed felt that their present evaluation systems were satisfactory since they included interim reports and conferencing with parents. They themselves admitted that they were reticent to rely solely on narrative reports for evaluation since they were concerned about the depth of reporting because junior high teachers were responsible for a large number of students each quarter. It was apparent that none of the principals have exerted any leadership to change their present evaluation formats based upon the data collected in the interview process.
Interview question 15 sought to determine why a strong community relations program was not implemented at the middle level. Principals cited teacher attitudes, community attitudes, scheduling complexities, and lack of emphasis as the primary reasons.

Eight of the interviewed principals cited community attitudes as a problem in implementing a strong community relations program. Several of the principals commented that unsuccessful attempts have been made to involve the community in school projects. As one principal commented: "In trying to plan a career day for our students we made sixty contacts and of those we only received one positive response." Another principal stated: "People in our community just want to be left alone." Other comments included: "Our community is difficult to work with. It is a working class community and they have other priorities for their free time." "We would like to see more people from the community come into our school but we are unable to accomplish that." "You can't get junior high parents involved in the school. Those who were active when their kids were in elementary school feel that they have already paid their dues. Many of them go to work when their kids enter junior high." "We serve six different municipalities and trying to find a common denominator for a community relations program would be extremely difficult." "We can't even get our parents to attend special evening programs that involve their children. The only time we get an excellent parent turn-out is for parent-teacher conferences. Even for our sixth grade orientation program we will only get about fifty parents." "Trying to get parents to serve on our PTO Board is even a problem. The interest is not there."
All the principals reported that they make every attempt to keep parents informed about the school programs and activities. All the interviewed principals stated that they send home monthly newsletters and special letters relating to specific school activities. As one principal stated: "I doubt if 20% of the newsletters sent home are actually read by the parents." Another comment made by the principals concerned the neighborhood newspapers. "It is very difficult to get any positive publicity from the press. We inform them of all our activities, special programs, and recognitions. Rarely do we get any print. They, however, are quick to report school revenues and expenditures - even our salaries get printed." Another principal stated: "Publicity at the junior high level is like everything at our level - we are lost in the middle."

Four of the principals reported that their teachers rarely use community people and community resources in their classes. As one principal stated: "Our curriculum is so intense. Teachers are protective of their time and do not want to deviate from it." "Some teachers just don't know what the community has to offer and what would be appropriate for their students." Another stated: "Many of the teachers don't involve the community in their lessons because they don't have a sense of commitment to the community." One of the principals stated: "Often times the teachers just don't consider that as an option. It probably is an area I should stress more." It was also commented by one of the principals that teachers "just don't want the hassle of taking kids into the community or bringing community people
into the building. It is time consuming and some teachers are concerned about liabilities."

Five of the principals mentioned scheduling complexities as a factor in involving the community into the course of study. As one principal stated: "Time is a problem - when to do it - during the day, after school. Anything after school will conflict with another activity. If you do it during the day you are faced with class coverage." Another stated: "If you try to bring the community into the school for something like a career day or an all school assembly, you need people with time to do the coordinating and scheduling." One principal reported: "Our schedule and curriculum don't really lend themselves to a lot of flexibility. School projects for a select group of students involve several staff reassignments and sometimes that is not even possible."

Four of the principals reported that community involvement in the curriculum has not been a major emphasis for them. As one stated: "I haven't really shown a lot of initiative in this area." Another stated: "Encouragement hasn't been given to the staff to incorporate the community into the curriculum." One of the principals reported that "time is a factor and I know I don't do enough with this."

To summarize, the principals cited community attitudes, teacher attitudes, scheduling complexities, and lack of emphasis on their part for not providing a strong community relations program in their buildings.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that all three types of schools implemented community rela-
tion programs to a moderate degree. Data also indicated that principals in all three types of schools desire to implement this characteristic to a high moderate degree.

Based upon the responses of the principals, most of them have not tried to directly involve the community in their schools. Some of them cited past unsuccessful experiences and as a result no longer make direct overtures for community involvement in the schools. All of the interviewed principals referenced specific techniques that they utilized to make parents and the community aware of what is happening in their schools. All of them publish monthly newsletters which are sent to all parents and various community groups. It is their perceptions, however, that these newsletters are not read by the majority of people receiving them. They are also dismayed regarding the minimal amount of publicity they receive in the community papers despite all of their efforts to make them aware of the positive programs occurring in their schools.

Again, this is another area in which the principals feel frustrated. They realize that community relations is vital to the health of their schools but despite legitimate efforts put forth they are unable to make positive inroads. All of them cited the laissez faire attitudes of parents with regard to their direct involvement with middle level schools. These parental attitudes may be attributable to societal changes beyond the scope of the schools. There are increasing numbers of dual income families and single parent families. As a result, many parents are reluctant to spend their leisure time with school related projects.
Based upon the data collected in the interviews, it appears that community relations is valued very highly by the principals but they are unable to make the type of impact with the community that they desire despite their legitimate attempts to do so. Therefore, many of them no longer take any initiative in this area.

Interview question 16 sought to determine the reasons why auxiliary staffing was difficult to implement into the middle level program. Principals cited teacher attitudes, community attitudes, and lack of emphasis as the major reasons.

Principal responses for not adequately implementing this characteristic into their school program were almost identical to those cited under a community relations program. Primarily principals stated that they have not taken a leadership role in this area. As previously stated they mentioned the difficulties associated with obtaining volunteers to work in their schools. Comments were also made regarding the teachers' disinterest in this area. Of all the characteristics discussed with the principals this is the one area that generated no enthusiasm nor strong opinions.

To summarize, the principals cited teacher attitudes, community attitudes, and lack of emphasis at the building level for not extensively using auxiliary staffing in their schools.

Interview question 17 sought to determine the reasons why educators knowledgeable about and committed to transescents were not extensively employed in the middle level schools. Principals cited teacher competency at the middle level and budgetary restraints as the primary reasons.
Every principal interviewed reported that teacher competency at the middle level was a serious concern. All the principals agreed that middle level teachers should be required to take classes specifically geared to middle level education. In addition, they all reported that there should be certification requirements to teach at the middle level. Comments made by the principals included: "All middle level teachers should be required to take classes that address organizational structure, content, and developmental psychology." "Our teachers need professional training. They need to know more about the socio/emotional development of the pre-adolescent, in addition to knowledge about methods that are effective for middle level kids. They should also take courses in decision-making." "Junior high teachers are too subject oriented. More attention should be given to the developmental aspects in their training." "Our teachers need special training." "All middle level teachers should be required to take classes in methodologies that are important at the middle level in addition to classes that emphasize the traits of the middle level student."

All of the principals were advocates of a middle level certification. "Teachers at the middle level should be certified in that area." "There should be middle level certification for both administrators and teachers." "Special certification is a must if we are to offer a middle level program that addresses the special needs of the middle level student." "It would be ideal for all middle level teachers to have elementary certification with a subject area certification. It would be best if there was a middle school certification. Teachers need to know how to deal with the special needs of our youngsters."
"If we had a middle school certification we would not have the high school overflow. Middle level teachers must be advocates of a middle school philosophy." "If middle school certification is not possible, elementary teachers would be preferred."

Principals also reported that universities must take the initiative to offer classes in middle level education. "Middle school teaching will only improve when the universities offer a course of study for middle level education and when the states require middle level certification." Another principal stated: "Universities need to address the area of middle level teaching." "The quality of middle level teachers will only improve when Illinois requires certification for middle level teachers." "Training for middle level teaching will develop teachers who are more compassionate toward the kids and who are more knowledgeable about teaching techniques that match their developmental needs." One principal summarized by stating: "The initiative for improving middle level education rests with the universities and the legislators. If training isn’t offered and required we will continue to deal with teachers who are inadequately prepared to teach at the middle level. Good middle level teachers just aren’t out there because there are not many schools that offer a full program in middle level education."

Five of the principals also cited budgetary restraints as a problem for not having teachers who are knowledgeable about and committed to transescents. As one principal stated: "Unless the middle teachers teach in a unit district they are paid less than their counterparts at the high school. Therefore, many of the teachers get their
training at the secondary level. As a result we get 'high school leftovers'." Another stated: "The pay scale for middle level teachers conveys a message that they are not valued as much as the high school teachers." One principal stated: "We want our middle level teachers to be committed to middle level teaching but actually we tell them that we are not committed to it by what we are willing to pay them. Elementary, middle school, and high school teachers should all be paid the same. Each group of teachers has a special role in the education of children and they should all be equally recognized and supported."

Principals also cited lack of budget for staff development at the middle level as a concern. As one principal stated: "Staff development at our level must be ongoing. Since most of our teachers have not been trained to teach at this level we have a responsibility to present continuous and related staff development activities for them. We just don't have the resources nor the time to do this effectively." Another stated: "I know our district isn't committed to really improving educational programs at the middle level. If they were we would have funds available to train our teachers in effective teaching techniques designed for the needs of the middle level student."

To summarize, principals cited teacher competency at the middle level and budgetary restraints as the primary reasons for not having a staff that is knowledgeable about and committed to transescents.

Data collected from the Survey of Middle Level Characteristics indicated that all three groups of principals identified their teachers as educators who are moderately knowledgeable about and committed to transescents. Data also indicated that principals desired to have
teachers on staff who were extensively knowledgeable about and committed to transescents. These data are particularly interesting since survey responses are not consistent with the responses cited throughout the interview process. For example, the principals perceived their staffs on the high moderate range of the continuum when asked about their knowledge and commitment to transescents, yet in the interviews all eleven principals cited lack of teacher competency at the middle level when describing their staffs. In addition, principals cited traditional teacher attitudes and competency at the middle level as the primary reasons for their inability to implement many of the characteristics of effective middle level education.

One might conclude from these conflicting opinions that in actuality principals are pleased with the efforts put forth by their teachers with respect to being child-centered in their approaches with the students as indicated by their survey responses. However, when these same principals are asked to evaluate their staffs' knowledge and commitment to transescents in an interview that is focused specifically on effective characteristics of middle level education they may be evaluating their own efforts in terms of why they are not initiating change. They may possibly be concluding that their teachers are not ready for the changes that would accompany these programs. This statement can be supported from interview data which indicated that in most situations principals have not demonstrated aggressive leadership to initiate change. Their responses generally indicated that they felt change would be impossible since their teachers had traditional attitudes and were not competent at the middle level.
Researchers have also identified lack of educators knowledgeable about and committed to transescents as the major problem for the success of middle level education. As McEwin states:

For at least 30 years the literature on intermediate education has called for teachers trained for the middle level and has decried the seeming reluctance of teacher education institutions and state departments of education to establish such programs. This singular lack of specially trained teachers has resulted in middle level schools that are staffed primarily by teachers trained for other levels. These teachers often lack the insights, skills, and knowledge needed for teaching at the middle level. 123

Alexander also states:

Accreditation standards have long tended to make the junior high school too much a high school ... Certification standards and teacher education programs have but very rarely really provided for training teachers of the junior high differently from the high school, now middle school principals have to take people prepared for elementary and high school and convert them to the middle school. The fact that many principals prefer teachers with elementary backgrounds suggests that the secondary education program through which most junior high school teachers have come is not right for the middle school years. 124

Thornburg stresses the need for middle level teacher preparation programs. He states:

There are few effective middle level teacher preparation programs which use even present knowledge about necessary components of effective middle-level education. Therefore, we must play "catch-up" un-tangling the complexity of middle-level teacher education programs that will increase teaching and learning effectiveness. 125

McEwin summarizes the dilemma faced by middle level administrators in obtaining well trained middle level teachers:

124 Alexander, "What Has Happened to the Middle School," 139-140.
125 Thornburg, "Middle Level Education," 33.
A large number of respondents to the Alexander and McEwin study stated that their institutions did not plan to initiate specialized middle level teacher education programs until middle level certification was in effect in their respective states. Conversely, many state departments of education reported that no special certification existed because teacher education institutions did not have special middle level preparation programs. This situation must be resolved by cooperative efforts of teacher education institutions, state departments of education, professional associations, school officials, and others if quality teacher education programs are to become a reality.126

There is no question that university programs focused on middle level teaching and on administration would facilitate implementing the characteristics of effective middle level education as defined in the research. Moreover, state certification for middle level teachers would enhance the likelihood that teachers entering teaching at the middle level would be better prepared. However, since these changes are basically beyond the control of principals alternate means for effecting change at the middle level must be found. Change can be effected in most of the areas previously discussed if the principal takes an aggressive leadership position. By creating schedules that accommodate change, by demonstrating middle level teaching strategies, by better utilizing faculty meeting time to retrain teachers, and by actively promoting these changes among parents, board members, and administration, so that necessary resources and equitable pay are made available, it may be possible for effective middle level programs to evolve.

Chapter IV reported the findings from the data collected in this study. Generally the data collected revealed that middle level schools are implementing many of the characteristics of effective middle level

126 McEwin, "Middle Level Teacher Education and Certification," 80.
education but that these characteristics are not being implemented to the level that the principals desire. Similarity was also found among the junior high schools, the middle schools, and "others" with respect to the implementation of these characteristics of middle level education. Problems identified by the interviewed principals for not implementing these characteristics to their desired levels are as follows:

1. Traditional Teacher Attitudes
2. Teacher Competency at the Middle Level
3. Community Attitudes
4. Budgetary Restraints
5. Scheduling Complexities
6. Test Results and State Mandates
7. Lack of Emphasis

Further interpretation of the data is presented in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Chapter V presents a summary of the study, conclusions drawn from an analysis of the survey and interview data, and recommendations for further study.

**Summary of the Study**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to determine the characteristics for effective learning for middle level students based upon an examination of the research. The intent was to ascertain the extent to which each of these identified characteristics was implemented and was desired to be implemented in schools housing middle level students based on the perceptions of the Illinois middle level principals surveyed. It was further intended to determine if there were consistencies in the education of students between the ages of 10-14 which are independent of the organizational format of the buildings. If, through the survey conducted, a discrepancy was found between current level of implementation and desired levels of implementation of the characteristics of effective middle level education, interviews of the principals with the greatest disparities would be conducted to determine the reasons for not incorporating these characteristics. This study sought to determine:
1. What are the essential characteristics of effective middle level education that relate to the developmental needs of pre-adolescents as delineated in the literature?

2. To what extent is each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools being implemented in Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" as perceived by the principals of the respective schools?

3. To what extent should each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools be implemented in Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" as perceived by the principals of the respective schools?

4. Is there a significant difference in the actual level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, the junior high schools, and "others"?

   Hypothesis: There is no difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools, or "others" with reference to the implementation of each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

5. Is there a significant difference in the desired level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others"?
Hypothesis: There is no difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools, or "others" with reference to their desire to implement each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

6. What reasons have been cited by the principals in the study for not implementing the characteristics of effective middle level schools?

Procedures

The procedures followed in the study included:

1. A search of the literature was made to determine the essential characteristics of effective middle level education.

2. A survey instrument was selected to assess present and desired levels of implementation of these characteristics.

3. A sample of 171 suburban middle level schools with 5-8, 6-8, and 7-8 grade organizations was selected in the state of Illinois.

4. The Survey of Middle Level Characteristics was administered to all principals in the sample to determine the relationships between the different school organizations with respect to actual and desired levels of implementation of the identified characteristics of effective middle level education. Ninety-five principals responded for a 55% return.

5. The schools were identified as middle school, junior high school, or "other" based upon the principal's perception of the philosophic orientation of the school since the re-
search indicated that the name of the school does not necessarily relate to the philosophy of the school. Of the responding principals, 43 identified themselves as junior high principals, 40 as middle school principals, 11 as "other," and one did not respond.

6. Conclusions from the survey data were made relative to the characteristics of effective middle level education as they compared by school type and by actual and desired levels of implementation. Frequency distributions, ANOVAS (.05 level of significance), and the Student-Newman-Keuls test (.05 level of significance) were calculated to determine the relationships. Results are presented in Chapter IV.

7. Principals that displayed the greatest disparity between actual levels of implementation of the identified characteristics of effective middle level education and desired levels of implementation based upon their survey responses were selected for a follow-up interview to investigate the reasons for their inability to implement these characteristics.

8. Questions for the interview were developed based upon a discrepancy analysis of the actual and desired levels of implementation. A T-test was calculated using a .05 level of significance.

Summary of the Findings

Research Question 1: What are the essential characteristics of
effective middle level education that relate to the developmental needs of pre-adolescents as delineated in the literature?

Based upon a review of the literature 18 characteristics were identified for effective middle level education:

1. Continuous progress
2. Variety of instructional strategies and materials
3. Flexible scheduling of time and groups
4. Appropriate social experiences
5. Intramural activities
6. Interdisciplinary team organization
7. Vertical planning
8. Exploratory studies
9. Guidance services
10. Independent study
11. Basic skill repair and extension
12. Creative experiences
13. Student evaluation practices
14. Community relations program
15. Student services
16. Auxiliary staffing
17. Educators knowledgeable about and committed to transes-

Table 3-1 references these characteristics to the characteristics recommended by the researchers in middle level education.

Research Question 2: To what extent is each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools being implemented in
Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" as perceived by the principals of the respective schools?

Table 4-6 reports the mean responses for each characteristic by school type. An analysis of the mean responses indicated:

Principals of middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" all reported minimal implementation of independent study. Both the junior high schools and the "others" reported minimal implementation of flexible scheduling and interdisciplinary team organization. The "other" schools also reported minimal implementation of auxiliary staffing.

Principals of the middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" all reported moderate implementation of continuous progress, variety of instructional strategies and materials, intramural activities, exploratory studies, guidance services, basic skill repair and extension, creative experiences, student evaluation practices, community relations program, and a staff knowledgeable about and committed to transescents. Both the junior high school principals and the "other" principals reported moderate implementation of social experiences, physical experiences, and vertical planning. Middle school principals reported moderate implementation of flexible scheduling and interdisciplinary team organization. Both the junior high principals and the middle school principals reported moderate implementation of auxiliary staffing.

All three groups of principals reported extensive implementation of student services. In addition, middle school principals reported
extensive implementation of social experiences, physical experiences, and vertical planning.

Research Question 3: To what extent should each of the characteristics of effective middle level education be implemented in Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" as perceived by the principals of the respective schools?

Table 4-7 reports the mean responses for each characteristic by school type. An analysis of the mean responses indicated:

Principals of middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" all reported that the characteristics of continuous progress, flexible scheduling, intramural activities, independent study, student evaluation practices, community relations program, and auxiliary staffing should be moderately implemented at the middle level. Both the junior high school and "other" principals reported that the characteristics of appropriate social experiences and interdisciplinary team organization should be moderately implemented. The middle school and "other" principals reported that exploratory experiences and creative experiences should be moderately implemented. Only the junior high school principals reported that guidance services should be moderately implemented.

Principals of all three types of schools reported that the characteristics of a variety of instructional strategies and materials, appropriate physical experiences, vertical planning, basic skill repair and extension, student services, and a staff knowledgeable about and committed to transescents should be extensively implemented. Both the middle school principals and the "other" principals reported that
guidance services should be extensively implemented. The middle school principals reported that social experiences and interdisciplinary team organization should be extensively implemented. The junior high principals reported that exploratory experiences and creative experiences should be extensively implemented.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in the actual level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools among Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others"?

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools, and "others" with reference to the implementation of each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

Table 4-8 reports that the 18 one-way analysis of variances indicated no significant difference at the .05 level of significance among the three groups of principals in their implementation of the identified characteristics of continuous progress, physical experiences, intramural activities, exploratory studies, guidance services, independent study, basic skill repair and extension, creative experiences, student services, auxiliary staffing, and educators knowledgeable about and committed to transescents. For each of these characteristics the null hypothesis was accepted.

The 18 one-way analysis of variances also indicated that statistical significance at the .05 level of significance was found among the three groups of principals in their implementation of the identified characteristics of a variety of instructional strategies and materials,
flexible scheduling, social experiences, interdisciplinary team organization, and vertical planning. For each of these characteristics the null hypothesis was rejected.

Significant differences between the means using the Student-Newman-Keuls test at the .05 level of significance was found only for the characteristic of interdisciplinary team organization with the middle school principals reporting a higher actual level of implementation than the junior high school and "other" principals.

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the desired level of implementation of each of the identified characteristics of effective middle level schools among the Chicagoland suburban middle schools, junior high schools, and "others"?

Hypothesis: There is no difference among those schools identified as junior high schools, middle schools or "others" with reference to their desire to implement each characteristic of effective middle level schools as determined through the literature.

Table 4-9 reports that the 18 one-way analysis of variances indicated no significant difference at the .05 level of significance among the three groups of principals in their desire to implement the identified characteristics of continuous progress, variety of instructional strategies and materials, flexible scheduling, social experiences, physical experiences, intramural activities, interdisciplinary team organization, exploratory experiences, guidance services, independent study, basic skill repair and extension, creative experiences, student evaluation practices, community relations, student services, auxiliary staffing, and educators knowledgeable about and committed to
transescents. For each of these characteristics the null hypothesis was accepted.

The 18 one-way analysis of variances also indicated that statistical significance at the .05 level of significance was found among the three groups of principals in their desire to implement the identified characteristic of vertical planning. For this characteristic the null hypothesis was rejected.

Significant differences between the means using the Student-Newman-Keuls test at the .05 level of significance was not found for vertical planning.

Research Question 6: What reasons have been cited by the principals in the study for not implementing the characteristics of effective middle level schools?

Based upon the responses of the interviewed middle level principals seven reasons were reported for not implementing the characteristics of effective middle level education to their desired levels:

1. Traditional teacher attitudes (75 responses)
2. Teacher competency at the middle level (64 responses)
3. Budgetary restraints (53 responses)
4. Community attitudes (46 responses)
5. Scheduling complexities (34 responses)
6. Lack of emphasis (28 responses)
7. Test results and state mandates (18 responses)

Conclusions

Based upon the survey and interview data collected from Illinois
suburban middle level principals the following conclusions have been made:

1. **Middle level schools are moderately implementing most of the identified characteristics of effective middle level education.**

2. **There is relatively little difference among the different types of middle level schools with respect to the implementation of the identified characteristics of middle level education based upon the results of the ANOVAS.**

   Middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" do not differ significantly in their implementation of the following identified characteristics:

   a) continuous progress
   b) physical experiences
   c) intramural activities
   d) exploratory studies
   e) guidance services
   f) independent study
   g) basic skill repair and extension
   h) creative experiences
   i) student evaluation practices
   j) auxiliary staffing
   k) educators knowledgeable about and committed to transescents.

3. **With the exception of the characteristic of interdisciplinary team organization it was concluded that the middle**
schools, the junior high schools, and the "others" were more alike than different in their implementation of all the identified characteristics of effective middle level education.

Middle schools, junior high schools, and "others" differed significantly in the implementation of the following identified characteristics based on the results of the ANOVAS:

a) a variety of instructional strategies and materials
b) flexible scheduling
c) social experiences
d) interdisciplinary team organization
e) vertical planning.

The results of the Student-Newman-Keuls test, however, indicated that interdisciplinary team organization was the only characteristic that displayed significant difference with the middle schools reporting a higher level of implementation than either the junior high schools or the "other" schools.

4. Relatively little difference was found among the three groups of principals in their desire to implement the identified characteristics of effective middle level education.

Middle school, junior high, and "other" principals do not differ significantly in their desire to implement the following identified characteristics:

a) continuous progress
b) variety of instructional strategies and materials  
c) flexible scheduling  
d) social experiences  
e) physical experiences  
f) intramural activities  
g) interdisciplinary team organization  
h) exploratory experiences  
i) guidance services  
j) independent study  
k) basic skill repair and extension  
l) creative experiences  
m) student evaluation practices  
n) community relations  
o) student services  
p) auxiliary staffing  
q) educators knowledgeable about and committed to transescents.

The three groups of principals differed significantly in their desire to implement the identified characteristic of vertical planning based on the results of the ANOVAs. The results of the Student-Newman-Keuls test, however, indicated no significant difference for the characteristic.

5. Principals cited traditional teacher attitudes and teacher competency at the middle level as the primary factors for not implementing the characteristics of effective middle
6. Principals cited budgetary restraints, community attitudes, scheduling complexities, lack of personal emphasis, and test results and state mandates as secondary factors for not implementing the characteristics of effective middle level education to the level of implementation that they desire.

7. Lower levels of implementation of the identified characteristics of effective middle level education were cited by the principals in their interview responses as compared to their survey responses.

8. Based on the survey data Illinois middle level principals are implementing the identified characteristics of effective middle level education to a higher degree than reporting principals in several previously cited studies.

Recommendations

1. The basis for improving middle level education programs should emphasize middle level programs that address the needs of the pre-adolescent rather than the controversy of grade organization and name.

2. All middle level advocates must clearly define the mission and purpose of middle level education for legislators, state boards of education, school districts, and parents to garner their support in implementing programs specifically designed for middle level students.
3. Middle level principals need to take a more aggressive leadership position to effect change at the middle level by creating schedules that accommodate change, by demonstrating middle level teaching strategies, by better utilizing faculty meeting time to retrain teachers, and by actively promoting these changes among parents, board members, and administration.

4. State reimbursement formulas must be changed to help meet the increased costs of effective middle level education.

5. School boards must allocate additional funds to expand staff development programs at the middle level to retrain teachers in methodologies appropriate for middle level programs as well as in the knowledge of current research in cognitive development, thinking skills, self-esteem, and learning styles as it affects middle level education.

6. School districts should resist implementing state mandates that only encourage a "back to the basics" program.

7. Middle level advocates must work cooperatively toward influencing institutions of higher learning to offer a program of study specifically geared for the training of middle level teachers.

8. Middle level advocates must provide leadership in influencing legislators and state boards of education to require middle level certification.
Suggestions For Further Research

1. Middle level programs incorporated in a K-8 organizational structure were not addressed in this study. Further research in this area can provide data to determine if middle level programs offered in this type of organizational structure have similar levels of implementation of identified characteristics of effective middle level education.

2. This study did not survey the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students regarding the implementation of the identified characteristics of effective middle level education. Such data would provide a basis for a comparative analysis of the levels of implementation for the characteristics of effective middle level education.

3. Additional research is needed correlating the implementation of characteristics of effective middle level education with outcome objectives such as school climate, student achievement, and pupil attendance rates.

4. A national study similar in nature to this study would provide data indicating the levels of implementation of the characteristics of effective middle level education on a nationwide basis.

5. A case study approach would yield specific data to evaluate their overall operational effectiveness using exemplary middle level schools that implement the characteristics of effective middle level education.
6. Research studies that would provide data comparing middle level goals to high school level entry expectations could provide necessary data to enhance better articulation between middle level schools and the high schools.

7. Research needs to be undertaken to establish measurable objectives to assess the effectiveness of middle level programs. A systematic evaluation program based on the specific goals of middle level education could provide necessary input to garner support from legislators and boards of education to promote appropriate middle level programs.
REFERENCES

Books.


National Middle School Association. This We Believe. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association, 1982.


Journals.


Other Sources.


Munsell, William R. "The Extent to Which Identified Programmatic Characteristics of Middle Level Education are Implemented in the Middle Level Schools of Colorado" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 1984), 52-53.


APPENDIX A
1. Continuous Progress: The middle level school program should be organized in a manner that provides sequential learning activities for students to progress at their own individual rate regardless of chronological age. The students may learn with students of varying ages from a curriculum prescribed for them. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady, Riegle, & Romano, 1974; National Middle School Association, 1982)

2. Variety of Instructional Strategies and Materials: The middle level school instructional program should employ a variety of instructional strategies; rather than exclusive elevation of one particular strategy over all others. A broad variety of instructional materials should be used to facilitate meeting the diverse learning styles of middle level students. Classroom activities should be planned around a multi-media approach rather than a single textbook organization. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

3. Flexible Schedules: The middle level school schedule should be flexible in its organization. A variety of time units and instructional groups should be provided within the schedule that allow for a variety of activities suited to the educational needs of the students. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

4. Social Experiences: The middle level program should provide experiences appropriate for the social development of transescent youth and should not duplicate neither the social experiences of the senior high school nor the elementary school. (Georgiady et al., 1974; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

5. Physical Experiences: The middle level school curricular and co-curricular programs should provide physical activities based on the students' needs. Involvement as a participant rather than as a spectator is critical for all students. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

6. Intramural Activities: The middle level school should provide a broad range of intramural activities for all students as part of the total instructional program of the school. The middle level school should feature participation-based intramural activities rather than highly competitive and restrictive interscholastic activities. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)
7. **Interdisciplinary Team Organization:** The middle level school should provide a means of organizing the faculty so that a group of teachers with a similar schedule share responsibility for planning, teaching, and evaluating curriculum and instruction in more than one instructional area for the same group of students. (Alexander & George, 1981; NMSA, 1982; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

8. **Vertical Planning (Planned Gradualism):** The middle level school program should provide experiences that are articulated in a fashion that facilitate the transescent making the transition from a dependent child to an independent adult. The middle level school should help the student bridge the gap between elementary and secondary school. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

9. **Exploratory Studies:** The middle level school program should provide a wide variety of educational opportunities to meet the individual interests of the students. The program should broaden the experiences of the student rather than specialize his training. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

10. **Guidance Services:** The middle level school program should provide both group and individual guidance services for all students. Provision for such services must be of a highly individualized and personal nature. These services should be provided by both teachers and trained guidance counselors. An advisor-advisee program should exist in a format that enables every student to have a relationship with at least one caring, open, and understanding adult. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

11. **Independent Study:** The middle level school program should provide opportunities for students to spend time, under the guidance of an adult, exploring individual interests or needs in activities that do not appear in the organized curricular offerings. Such "enrichment activities" may be provided for through an organized program of special interest days or by individual student study of a topic of a specific personal interest. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

12. **Basic Skill Repair and Extension:** The middle level school program should provide opportunities for students to receive clinical help in learning basic skills. The special services of remedial teachers should be available to all students needing such instruction. The basic education program fostered in the elementary school should be extended in the middle level school. (Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982)
13. Creative Experiences: The middle level school program should provide opportunities for students to express themselves in creative ways. Provisions should exist in the program that encourage students to select, conceive, plan, and carry out activities that allow for free self-expression. (Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982)

14. Evaluation: The middle level school program should provide a positive, individualized, and non-threatening evaluation of the student's progress that is based on the personal learnings of the individual student. Regular provisions must be made that allow the student and parent to be aware of the progress the student is making towards becoming a self-directed learner. The middle level student should be allowed to assess his own progress and plan for future progress. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

15. Community Relations: The middle level school should develop and maintain a varied and continuous program of community relations. A continuous presentation of information about the school keeps the community informed about the unique role of the middle level school. Provisions should be made in the middle level program that provide for parent involvement in the activities of the school. Middle level students should be afforded frequent opportunities to study the community of which they are a part. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

16. Student Services: The middle level school should provide a broad spectrum of special services for students. Community, county, and state agencies should be utilized to expand the range of specialists to its broadest possible extent. (Alexander & George, 1981; Georgiady et al., 1974; NMSA, 1982)

17. Auxiliary Staffing: The middle level school should utilize a diverse variety of people from the community in many ways. Personnel such as volunteer parents, teacher aides, clerical aides, student volunteers, and other similar types of support staffing can help to facilitate the operation of the middle level school program (Georgiady et al., 1974)

18. Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed to Transescents: The middle level school should be staffed by educators that are aware of and sensitive to the unique characteristics of transescent youth. A prerequisite for working with transescents should be a genuine desire to teach students of this age group. (Alexander & George, 1981; NMSA, 1982; Wiles & Bondi, 1981)

APPENDIX B
DIRECTORY OF ITEMS FOR THE SURVEY OF MIDDLE LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS

CONTINUOUS PROGRESS

1. Sequential learning activities
2. Individualized rate
3. Varied age groups
4. Prescribed learning experiences

VARIETY OF STRATEGIES AND MATERIALS

5. Diverse instructional strategies
6. Use of a variety of instructional materials

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES

7. Flexible time schedule
8. Flexible grouping of students
9. Schedule adjustments based on needs of students

SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

10. Different from senior high school
11. Different from the elementary school
12. Experiences appropriate to pre-adolescent development

PHYSICAL EXPERIENCES

13. Activities based on pre-adolescent development
14. Students involved as participants

INTRAMURAL ACTIVITIES

15. Broad range of intramurals for all students
16. Intramurals are emphasized over interscholastics

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ORGANIZATION

17. Teacher teams with a common schedule for planning, etc.
18. Common group of students for the interdisciplinary team

VERTICAL PLANNING (PLANNED GRADUALISM)

19. Planned experiences for gradual transition
20. School is a bridge between elementary and secondary
EXPLORATORY STUDIES

21. Wide variety of experiences available to students
22. Intent of program is to broaden student experiences

GUIDANCE SERVICES

23. Individual services for all
24. Group services for all
25. Advisor-advisee program for every student

INDEPENDENT STUDY

26. Students can pursue areas of individual interest
27. Special interest days provided

BASIC SKILL REPAIR AND EXTENSION

28. Clinical help available for all students
29. Remedial teachers are available
30. Extension of basic education program

CREATIVE EXPERIENCES

31. Provisions are made for student expression
32. Provisions are made to encourage creative endeavors

EVALUATION

33. Offers non-threatening assessment
34. Provides for parent and student consultation
35. Provides opportunity for individuals to assess progress

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

36. School maintains a program
37. School informs community of uniqueness of middle level
38. Provisions are made to involve parents
39. Students have the opportunity to study their community

STUDENT SERVICES

40. School offers broad spectrum of services

AUXILIARY STAFFING

41. School uses a diverse variety of community members
42. School uses auxiliary staff to facilitate school program
EDUCATORS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT/COMMITTED TO TRANSESCENTS

43. School staff knowledgeable about transescents
44. School staff desires to be at middle level

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

45. & 46. Interscholastic athletics in the school
47. & 48. Exploratory studies program in the school
51. & 52. Type of grade reporting format in the school
57. Extent of respondent’s professional middle level training
59. Extent of respondent’s additional middle level training
60. Respondent’s most valuable middle level training
61. Respondent’s perception of adequacy of training
62. Respondent’s perception of middle level training need(s).

SOCIAL DESIRABILITY QUESTIONS

49, 50, 58

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

53. Respondent’s position title
54. Respondent’s school title
55. Grade level organization of respondent’s school
56. Respondent’s teaching (administrative) endorsement
63. Respondent’s years as a middle level educator

APPENDIX C
A SURVEY OF MIDDLE LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS

PART I:

DIRECTIONS: Each of the following statements describes a particular characteristic or practice that has been proposed by several middle level authorities as descriptive of the ideal middle level education program. Each item requires two separate responses. Carefully read the statement and then in the "IS PRESENTLY IMPLEMENTED and PRACTICED" column indicate with (X) the extent to which you feel the listed practice is presently implemented in the middle level school at which you are currently employed. Next, in the "SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED and PRACTICED" column indicate with (X) the extent to which you feel the specific middle level educational practice should be implemented in middle level schools.

It is important that you realize that your responses are not to be used in any manner to assess the educational program of your individual school; but rather, will assist in the research of the extent to which middle school theory and practice are congruent throughout the middle level schools of Illinois.

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<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS/PRACTICES</th>
<th>Extent the characteristic IS PRESENTLY IMPLEMENTED and PRACTICED in your school</th>
<th>Extent the characteristics SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED and PRACTICED in middle level schools</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. The organization of the overall instructional program provides students with sequential learning activities.</td>
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<td>2. The design of the overall instructional program is personalized to allow each student to learn at his/her individual rate.</td>
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<td>3. The design of the overall instructional program allows students to learn with students of varying ages (cross-grade level organization).</td>
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<td>4. Provisions are made in the overall instructional program to prescribe learning experiences for individual students based upon their needs.</td>
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5. When instruction occurs on a specific topic, a deliberate effort is made to employ a variety of instructional strategies, (e.g. small and large group discussion, independent activities, demonstration, individual and group projects, media presentations, etc.)

6. The instructional activities for any subject area are based on utilization of a broad variety of instructional materials.

7. The schedule is flexible in its time organization. (Fixed periods of equal length for all classes would be considered a rigid time organization.)

8. Flexibility is provided for in the grouping of students for instruction. (Provisions are made for large, small, and individual groupings of students.)

9. The schedule allows for periodic adjustments based upon the needs of the students.

10. The school sponsored social experiences for students are different from the school experiences of the senior high school.

11. The school sponsored social experiences for students are different from the social experiences of the elementary school.

12. The school sponsored social experiences offered students are appropriate to the social development of the pre-/early adolescent.

13. The school provides physical activities that are based upon the developmental (physical, social, emotional) needs of the pre-/early adolescent student.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Nature of the characteristic</th>
<th>Extent the characteristic IS PRESENTLY IMPLEMENTED in your school</th>
<th>Extent the characteristics SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED and PRACTICED in middle level schools</th>
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<td>14. The middle level student is involved as a participant (rather than as a spectator) in curricular and co-curricular programs.</td>
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<td>15. The school provides a broad range of intramural (within the school) activities for all its students.</td>
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<td>16. Intramural activities are emphasized over interscholastic (between different schools) activities.</td>
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<td>17. Teacher assignments are organized in such a manner that teams of teachers (2-7) share responsibility for planning, teaching, and evaluating curriculum in more than one instructional area for the same group of students.</td>
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<td>18. Each teacher is assigned to an interdisciplinary team that is responsible for a common group of students.</td>
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<td>19. Experiences in the school are planned in a manner that provide opportunities for students to gradually make the transition from dependent child towards greater independence.</td>
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<td>20. The school is a bridge between the instructional and developmental experiences of the elementary and secondary school.</td>
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<td>21. The school offers a wide variety of experiences to enable students to explore areas of individual interests.</td>
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<td>22. The intent of the school program is to broaden the experiences of the students rather than specialize their training.</td>
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<td>23. Individual guidance services (academic and/or personal) are available to all students.</td>
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### Extent the characteristic IS PRESENTLY IMPLEMENTED
### and PRACTICED in your school
### Extent the characteristics SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED
### and PRACTICED in middle level schools

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<td>24. <strong>Formal group guidance services are available to all students.</strong></td>
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<td>25. <strong>An advisor-advisee program is available that enables every student to have a direct relationship with an individual staff member.</strong></td>
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<td>26. <strong>Provisions are made in the school program that permit students, under the guidance of an adult, to pursue areas of individual interest which are not part of the organized curriculum of the school.</strong></td>
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<td>27. <strong>A program of special interest days or activities is provided that permits students the opportunity to pursue topics of special personal interest.</strong></td>
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<td>28. <strong>Provisions are made in the school program to provide all students with clinical help (diagnosis, prescription) in basic learning skills as needed.</strong></td>
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<td>29. <strong>Remedial teachers are available to all students needing such assistance.</strong></td>
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<td>30. <strong>The basic education program fostered in the elementary school is continued and broadened at the middle level school.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>31. <strong>Provisions are made in the school program for the students to express themselves in creative ways.</strong></td>
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<td>32. <strong>Provisions exist in the school program to encourage students to select, conceive, plan, and carry out activities that allow for free self-expression.</strong></td>
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<td>33. <strong>The school provides an evaluation program that consists of a non-threatening, constructive assessment of each student's progress.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extent the characteristic is presently implemented</td>
<td>Extent the characteristics should be implemented and practiced in middle level schools</td>
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34. Provisions are made for parents and students to consult with staff to discuss a student's progress and needs.

35. The school provides the opportunity for each student to assess his/her own progress and plan for future.

36. The school maintains a continuous program of community relations.

37. The school makes an effort to keep the community informed of the special nature of middle level education.

38. Provisions are made to involve parents in the activities of the school.

39. The students are afforded frequent opportunities to study the community of which they are a part.

40. The school offers a broad spectrum of special services for students (e.g., school psychologists, social workers, school nurses, speech therapists, home-bound teachers, teachers for the intellectually handicapped, etc.).

41. The school utilizes a diverse variety of people from the community in many ways as a part of the educational program.

42. Personnel such as volunteer parents, teacher aids, community volunteers, and the like are used in a planned manner to facilitate the school program.

43. The school is staffed with educators that are knowledgeable of the unique characteristics of the pre-early adolescent.

44. The school is staffed with educators that have a genuine desire to teach middle level students.
PART II

DIRECTIONS: For each of the following questions, please place a check mark in the blank provided before the response that best describes your circumstance or opinion.

45. Does your school offer an interscholastic (competition between different schools) athletic program?
   a. ___ yes
   b. ___ no

46. Do you feel that your school should offer an interscholastic athletic program?
   a. ___ yes
   b. ___ no

47. Does your school offer an exploratory experience program for all students?
   a. ___ yes
   b. ___ no

48. Do you feel your school should offer an exploratory experience program for all students?
   a. ___ yes
   b. ___ no

49. What portion of the students at your school have a positive self-concept?
   a. ___ all of the students
   b. ___ most of the students
   c. ___ some of the students
   d. ___ none of the students

50. The portion of students requiring disciplinary action in our school is:
   a. ___ high
   b. ___ average
   c. ___ low
   d. ___ non-existent

51. Which of the following does your school employ for reporting individual student progress?
   a. ___ graded report card
   b. ___ descriptive progress report
   c. ___ combination of the above two formats
   d. ___ other __________________________

52. Which of the following formats do you feel middle level schools should utilize for reporting individual student progress?
   a. ___ graded report card
   b. ___ descriptive progress report
   c. ___ combination of the above two formats
   d. ___ other __________________________

53. Which of the following describes your current position?
   a. ___ building principal
   b. ___ classroom teacher
   c. ___ other __________________________
54. Which of the following is used in the name of the school you are currently assigned to?
   a. ____ middle school
   b. ____ junior high school
   c. ____ other ____________________________

55. Which of the following describes the grade level organization of your school?
   a. ____ 5 - 8
   b. ____ 6 - 8
   c. ____ 7 - 8
   d. ____ 7 - 9
   e. ____ other

56. Which of the following best describes your current endorsement on your teaching or administrative certificate?
   a. ____ elementary
   b. ____ middle school/junior high
   c. ____ secondary
   d. ____ other ____________________________

57. Approximately how many semester hours of professional training have you received specifically geared to the level of middle school/junior high?
   a. ____ 0 - 3
   b. ____ 4 - 6
   c. ____ 7 - 9
   d. ____ 10 - 12
   e. ____ 13 or more

58. What portion of your building teaching staff is currently capable of meeting all of the special needs of pre-early adolescent students?
   a. ____ all of the staff
   b. ____ most of the staff
   c. ____ some of the staff
   d. ____ none of the staff

59. Have you received additional training (i.e. in-service, workshops, seminars, college courses, independent study, etc...) specific to middle level education?
   a. ____ yes
   b. ____ no

60. If you answered "yes" to the above question, would you please describe briefly in the space below what training you feel was most valuable?

61. Do you feel you have adequate professional preparation in the field of middle level education?
   a. ____ yes
   b. ____ no

62. If you answered "no" to the above question, would you please describe briefly in the space below the additional training in middle level education you feel that you need?
63. How many years have you been involved in the education of middle level students (as either teacher or administrator?)

64. How long have you been principal in your present building?

65. How would you best describe your school?
   a. _____ middle school
   b. _____ junior high school
   c. _____ other

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.
January 28, 1988

Dear Fellow Administrator:

With the help of principals in Cook, DuPage, and Lake Counties, I am gathering data to determine the characteristics of effective middle level schools and the degree to which these characteristics are being implemented. I hope to gather sufficient information to make a contribution toward a better understanding of middle level education.

Please take a few minutes from your busy schedule to complete the enclosed questionnaire. Be assured that great care will be taken to keep participants anonymous. All responses are confidential and no individuals or schools will be identified in the results. The survey instrument has an identification number for mailing and follow-up purposes only.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the postage paid envelope by February 17, 1988.

Your assistance is very much appreciated. If you have any questions regarding the study, please feel free to contact me at 834-4534.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Ross
Principal

If you would like a copy of the results, please detach and complete the following:

NAME_____________________________________

ADDRESS___________________________________

TELEPHONE NUMBER__________________________

Return to: Mary Ann Ross
207 Rue Jardin
Barrington, Illinois 60010

EDUCATION THROUGH DEDICATION
March 7, 1988

Dear Fellow Administrator:

Recently you received a survey which was sent to all junior high/middle school principals in Cook, DuPage, and Lake Counties to gather data to determine the characteristics of effective middle level schools and the degree to which these characteristics are being implemented. To ensure that the results of the study truly reflect the three counties in the sample, it is extremely important that your responses are included.

If you have not previously returned the questionnaire it would be appreciated if you would take a few minutes to complete the attached.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the postage paid envelope by March 25, 1988.

Your assistance is very much appreciated. If you have any questions regarding the study, please feel free to contact me at 834-4534.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Ross
Doctoral Candidate
Loyola University of Chicago
820 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611

If you would like a copy of the results, please detach and complete the following:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBER

RETURN TO: Mary Ann Ross
207 Rue Jardin
Barrington, IL 60010
<table>
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<th>Principal</th>
<th>Discrepancy Score</th>
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The dissertation submitted by Mary Ann Ross has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Mel Heller, Director
Professor, Chairman,
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola

Dr. Max Bailey
Associate Professor
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola

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Assistant Professor
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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 5, 1988
Date

Mel Heller
Director's Signature

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