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NETWORKS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

IN THE STATE OF OREGON

By

VIDA SUMNER TAYLOR

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

Portland State University
The University of Oregon

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Doctor of Education in Public School Administration and
Supervision November 21, 1986.

TITLE: Networks for Staff Development in the
State of Oregon

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This study documents and describes efforts by Oregon
school districts to network in order to improve schools and
provide resources for staff development. There are at least
41 networks linking school districts, institutions of higher
education, and Educational Service Districts in both rural
and urban areas of the state. These networks, collabora-
tives, and consortia have the common purpose of improving

education, and the belief that they can accomplish more cooperatively than they can individually.

These networks are described in terms of purposes, benefits and problems, and desire for assistance. Comparisons showed that large school districts are much more likely to participate in networks than small ones. This is significant because there are many small school districts in Oregon that would benefit from the assistance of a network in providing resources and expertise for school improvement efforts.

Descriptions of three active networks in different parts of the state provided additional information regarding organizational structure, membership, and activities. There is a listing of the membership of 41 networks in the state.

Statistical comparisons indicate that the greatest benefits responding school districts derived from networking include increased effectiveness of staff development efforts, sharing of information, cost sharing, and psychological support. Problems encountered in networking were: conflicting work priorities, conflicting goals, organizational problems, and funding. Two-thirds of the districts surveyed would like to have assistance for their efforts in the form of funding or incentives for networking, information on school improvement practices, and a communications linkage among school districts.

This study indicates that networking is widely practiced in the state of Oregon for the purpose of improving school effectiveness and staff development efforts. Implications are that this is an effective way for schools to accomplish their goals. Therefore, it is recommended that school districts not engaged in this practice give consideration to networking as an effective way to increase resources for school improvement efforts and to become more effective.

It is hoped that encouragement and incentives for networking will be forthcoming from state and local education agencies. These agencies should exercise caution that their efforts to encourage networking not create unnecessary structures that would destroy the flexibility that makes networks so effective.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Recent developments have caused many school districts to re-evaluate the effectiveness of their educational programs and to consider cost-effective staff development and school improvement projects. Rapidly-expanding technologies require schools to develop new curricula and train teachers in their use. The computer has moved us into an age of rapidly-expanding information. Educational improvement efforts are necessary if the United States is to keep pace with the rest of the world in the global revolution we are experiencing (Naisbitt, 1981).

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) in its report on the quality of education in the United States stated the following:

We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people.

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed

it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have even squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems which helped make those gains possible. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament (p. 5).

As a result of this report, most states have developed their own plans for school improvement. Those states have taken up the challenge of encouraging efforts to improve schools through legislation on competency-based education, more stringent teacher certification requirements, the imposition of teacher tests, and merit pay for teachers. The State of Oregon is no exception. Verne Duncan, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, has proposed the Oregon Plan for Excellence, which includes teacher testing, testing of students at all levels, and a common curriculum of essential skills (Oregon Department of Education, 1984).

Although there are increased demands placed upon the schools to provide more effective instruction, federal funding for education is rapidly diminishing. Further, Oregon schools have experienced the effects of a prolonged and regionally-severe recession. Demands for improvement in the face of reductions in discretionary funds will require schools to make the best use of limited funds for school improvement efforts.

How, then, are school districts to provide the needed inservice, staff development and curriculum improvement efforts that are required in order to improve schooling?

Research on school effectiveness needs to be done, information must be provided, and inservice and other staff development opportunities need to be available in order to make schools more effective. New resources will be required if schools are to make the improvements indentified by most reformers. Some school districts may have the resources needed to carry out such efforts, but many, particularly the smaller districts, will find this to be an impossible task to undertake alone.

It is generally accepted that duplication of efforts is expensive and wasteful of resources, yet many school districts do just that when they tackle anew a problem that another neighboring district may have already solved. Logically, the sharing of information and resources among school districts does much to distribute the burdens of school improvement efforts and can provide higher quality results than could be realized by each district working independently.

Research indicates that collaboration can provide a method of meeting the needs of schools and society for improving education at lower costs (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1980). Some of these studies will be examined in the next chapter. School improvement efforts can occur at any level of an organization and may involve cooperation between schools and one or more of the following: institutions of higher education, public agencies, and

private industry. Such efforts are referred to by names such as "consortia," "alliances," "networks," and "collaboratives." They all involve organizations that participate in joint problem solving, shared decision making, and coordination of efforts, although the focus may vary from group to group. Typically one thing all of these groups have in common in their efforts to improve education is a belief that they can accomplish more collectively than they can as individuals.

The consortium movement in the United States dates back to the 1920's, though there have been consortia in education as far back as 1249. At that time an alliance was formed among several colleges in Oxford, England under the name of University College. This consortium later evolved into Oxford University (Moore, 1965).

During the 1960's and 1970's an effort was made by the U. S. government to encourage school improvement through the establishment of networks of school districts. The National Diffusion Network, one of the federally funded networks studied by Parker (1977), facilitated joint projects in developing innovations such as new reading, language arts and social studies programs. Other studies (Crandall, 1979, Havelock, 1982) document school-university collaboration in order to extend the capability of the university to meet the needs of the school districts for inservice and pre-service education. Goodlad (1977) created a network for school

improvement and studied how it functioned to facilitate changes in schooling in the participating organizations. Findings will be discussed in Chapter II.

Belcher (1973) states that the number of consortia in education more than doubled during the last 20 years, giving evidence that this organizational model has some history of helping schools achieve their goals. Some of these arrangements involved the sharing of resources to make cost-effective purchases, cooperative scheduling, establishment of uniform administrative procedures, and development of complementary programs.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Many school districts in the state of Oregon are pooling their resources and combining their efforts to improve schools. The primary purpose of this study was to document these collaborative efforts, their purposes, structures, and memberships. A secondary purpose was to find out what factors cause such relationships to be established among school districts and what barriers to successful networking might exist. In addition, an attempt was made to determine what assistance, if any, would facilitate the formation and operation of collaborative relationships among Oregon school districts.

In Oregon an effort is currently underway to encourage school districts to combine their efforts for school

improvement. Mellon grant money has been used to fund several conferences for the purpose of bringing together school districts, colleges, and universities. The State Department of Education is providing information and attempting to facilitate the development of networks and collaborative arrangements among these groups. No documentation of the existence and duration of such arrangements has been made to date. This kind of information would aid in evaluation of the effectiveness of the State's efforts.

While there may be many school districts within the state who participate in collaborative arrangements and networks, there are also many who do not. Documentation of existing successful networks, their purposes, needs and drawbacks, will provide information to others who would like to pursue similar undertakings, or to join established networks.

Although similar studies on networks, consortia and collaboratives have been undertaken by various researchers, there have been no efforts to document networks on a statewide basis. This study will add to the body of knowledge about such arrangements.

DEFINITIONS

A CONSORTIUM is defined by Moore (1968) as an arrangement whereby two or more institutions, at least one of which is an institution of higher education, agree to pursue between or among them a program for strengthening

academic programs, improving administration, or providing for other special needs.

A FORMAL COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENT is described by Cates, Hood and McKibbin (1981) as "an official, regularized agreement to 'do something together.' The emphasis on collaboration eliminates arrangements, however formal, which can be characterized primarily as purchase agreements for materials, supplies, services" (p. 19).

Goodlad (1977) defines a NETWORK as a structure deliberately created to facilitate the sharing of information among schools, school districts, and institutions. The resulting structure functions independently of the individual members, and financial support may be internal or external.

While there are differences among the above three definitions, all three describe efforts of individuals or organizations to work together on common problems or concerns. In this dissertation these terms are used interchangeably (Interligator, 1983).

METHODOLOGY

School districts in Oregon were surveyed to gain information about networks operating in the state. A questionnaire was designed to elicit information on the following topics: (1) Demographic information (2) Purposes (3) Membership (4) Structure (5) Benefits (6) Problems and

(7) Need for assistance. This questionnaire was designed with the assistance of Dr. Kenneth Kempner and Dr. John Lind of Portland State University. It was subjected to trials on ten experienced school administrators who have been involved in networking. It was then mailed to all School Superintendents in the state. To obtain the highest percentage of return, an accompanying letter offered information on networking to the respondents, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope was included with the questionnaire. In addition, nonrespondents received a second request and another copy of the questionnaire three weeks after the initial request (Appendix A).

Analysis of the data provided information regarding what benefits school districts found in the practice of networking, what barriers they found, and whether size has any relationship to the decision to network.

In addition, descriptive information is included from three successful networks in the state in an effort to describe characteristics they have in common and to determine how they may differ. From this information conclusions have been drawn regarding how rural and urban/suburban networks function to help schools improve, and what benefits and barriers to successful networking may exist.

Because the study was done by mail, some people chose not to reply. Therefore, the study provides information from a self-selected sample of the population. In addition,

items on the questionnaire were subject to the interpretation of the individual being surveyed, since the survey was conducted by mail rather than through personal interviews.

The school superintendents or their designee(s) who answered the the questionnaire may not have been the person(s) most knowledgeable about the district's involvement in networks. The determination of whether to answer the questionnaire or to pass it on to some other district employee was left up to the superintendent. There was no attempt to ask follow-up questions, even though some of the responses were ambiguous or incomplete.

SUPPORT

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction has called for improved schooling in Oregon. An effort is being made by the Department of Education to find out whether assisting local school districts to engage in networks might facilitate school improvement efforts. Assistance was provided by the State Department of Education for printing and mailing the questionnaires in return for sharing information obtained through the survey.

In addition, the Department of Education has expressed interest in producing a guide for networking based upon the results of this study. This information was offered to participants of this study upon request, providing a further incentive for participation.

Faculty at Portland State Univeristy have an active interest in furthering the effective interaction between the University and local school districts. These individuals have provided incentive and motivation for this effort. Many individuals employed by the school districts in Oregon currently participate in networks for staff development such as Project ACT, the Valley Educational Consortium, and the Central Oregon Network. They have provided information and support throughout this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a review of the literature on change as it relates to education from the early 50's to the present. It describes numerous case studies done during these years as examples of efforts to network over the last decade, when most activity of this kind was taking place. In addition, various theories of change are described and compared to provide background information for this study.

Studies of the U. S. Department of Education's Commission on Excellence in Education have caused educators to consider ways to increase school effectiveness. Research gives us evidence that there are differences among schools that cause some schools to be considerably more effective in educating students than others. Edmonds (1979) and Hunter (1974), describe characteristics that seem to account for the difference in achievement between more-effective and less-effective schools. These effective schools can be models for school districts aspiring to improve education for all children. Educators need to respond to this research and utilize available research to make all

schools more effective (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

A desire on the part of educators to respond to this research is evident throughout the country and is taking place at every level within the hierarchy. Governors and state officials are taking the initiative and developing their own plans of action. For example, Verne Duncan, Oregon's Superintendent of Education, has responded to the Federal Government's research with the Oregon Plan for Excellence (1984). School boards and administrators have responded with increased demands for school improvement at the local level, and teacher organizations have publicly indicated support for educational reform (Oregon Education Association, 1985).

CHANGE LITERATURE

Accomplishing changes such as those suggested by researchers on effective schooling and the Commission on Excellence is no small task. Change in education, according to Hanson (1979), and others, can be a slow and painful process due to the fact that schools tend to resist change and maintain the status quo. There are few benefits for risk-taking behavior in the American education system. Therefore, research indicates, school improvement is a difficult process that often does not result in lasting changes (Benne, 1951, Hanson, 1979, Goodlad, 1977).

Goodlad (1977) suggested that in order to bring about changes in education we must change not only the teachers, principals and superintendents, but also the organizational structures that influence their behaviors. He points out the fact that the Federal Government has failed to influence the quality of education despite extensive efforts to promote research and development in the schools during the sixties. He attributes this in part to the theory that as a social system, the school has goals and seeks to survive by maintaining its equilibrium by not changing.

Often efforts toward change are directed by personnel far removed from the individual school setting who may have an imperfect understanding of the change process and little or no contact with those who are being asked to change. These efforts fail because of the lack of commitment on the part of those who would ultimately put them into effect (Benne, 1951; Goodlad, 1977).

The question that comes to mind, then, is "How can schools be helped to improve?" Benne and Goodlad as cited above indicate that with stimulation from the outside, adequate commitment internally, and environmental and psychological support, schools can change themselves. Evidence of external forces demanding school improvement has been cited. The questions that remain are whether educators will accept the challenge and make the commitment to improve, and whether they will receive the support required in order to

be successful in spite of education's characteristic resistance to change.

Benne (1951), Goodlad (1977), and others state that support for change must include not only financial resources, but also psychological support throughout the change process. Each of these areas will be addressed separately.

Psychological support is cited by many authors as being necessary if lasting changes are to take place in education. Parish (1976) suggests that a change agent or some other outside support needs to be available to provide information and ideas, and to facilitate the change process. Although this seems to be an ideal arrangement for helping schools change, it is unfortunately a costly option for financially stressed school districts in the 1980's. Schmuck and Runkel et al. (1977) suggest that this support may come from sub-systems within the larger system rather than from the outside. They indicate that a principal rarely brings about changes without support from the outside. Goodlad (1977), in his model of school improvement, states that psychological support is essential if changes are to be lasting and ongoing within the school. He also stresses that financial support is necessary if changes are to take place. Money for school improvement was abundant during the 1960's, when expansion and curriculum development efforts were funded by the Federal Government (Parish, 1976).

There is evidence that the current administration has not seen the need to increase funding for public education in order to effect school improvement efforts. State legislatures and local school districts are under pressure to provide quality education. At the same time, declining school enrollments and increasing costs for everything from basic supplies to expert consultation put pressure on funding sources (Groenings, 1981). An already overtaxed public is balking at the increasing cost of education by refusing to approve funds for education.

Schools, then, must maximize utilization of existing resources and avoid expensive duplication of efforts. They must find new ways to become more financially responsible to their public constituencies and at the same time become more effective. Research indicates that through collaboration school districts can meet the need to keep costs down while greatly extending their capabilities to provide quality staff development and implement school improvement projects. The following studies indicate that inter-organizational networking may provide a way to facilitate school improvement efforts.

NETWORKS IN EDUCATION

Proceedings of a conference presented by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (1980) defines networks as "collaborative efforts that occur in business and industry

as well as in education, linking two or more of these groups in an effort to increase their ability to provide services at lower costs" (p. 1). This publication cites numerous successful collaborative efforts and suggests this as a solution to some of the problems in educational improvement.

Crandall (1979) defines collaboration as the process of working together to solve problems and acting on the solution under circumstances where all parties agree that a mutually agreeable solution is possible. Crandall states that the quality of implementation achieved and level of satisfaction experienced will be improved by virtue of engaging in a joint process.

Dalin (1977) found in his research that efforts to network provide support for reform, renewal, and innovation in education. He states that networks tend to serve multiple purposes for individuals and organizations whose goals may shift over time. He suggests that the strength of these organizations is due to their ability to change as the needs of the members change.

Efforts to network in U. S. education have been recorded in the literature as far back as the 1920's (Moore, 1968). During the 1950's and 1960's, however, there was a proliferation of networks, during which time their numbers more than doubled (Patterson, 1970).

Miles (1979) identifies some of the purposes of networking. First, he says a network can help to modernize its members by providing them with up-to-date information about current educational practices and innovations and increasing diffusion of new technology. In addition, it can function to provide power and influence to its members in order to balance distribution of money, materials, good teachers, and good schooling. It can also enable its participants to realize what they are able to do and energize them to proceed with revitalization.

Other purposes Miles cites are to enable schools to import more resources such as special knowledge and labor through bartering and exchange and to develop an extended social system in which participants support each other in their efforts to improve schools. In addition, he indicates that a network can help to extend educational craft and knowledge through peer sharing among its members. According to Dalin (1977), networks may have multiple purposes which will come into play as the need for them arises, and these may shift as priorities change.

Patterson (1970) cites advantages for cooperative arrangements such as networks. First, they enable institutions to be more flexible, imaginative and creative in solving problems by providing a broader base of knowledge and support. Second, networks can cut across state and political boundaries because of the cooperative nature of

the arrangement. These linkages can include public as well as private institutions, bringing together the benefits of both kinds of organization. Networks incorporate some of the advantages of largeness with some of the advantages of smallness enabling activities and improvements to occur where they otherwise might not have been possible. In addition, networking can cultivate a healthy atmosphere of decision-making and participation based on the needs and the desires of participating organizations.

An experimental network was created in the 1960's by Goodlad (1976) in order to provide information on the effectiveness of networks in facilitating change in education. This network drew together principals from eighteen individual schools in Southern California creating a network called the League of Cooperating Schools. The network received support from the Research Division of the Institute for Development of Educational Activities (IDEA) at UCLA.

Goodlad observed and documented the activities of the League as its members attempted to improve their schools. For example, in monthly meetings, the principals discussed common needs, problems, shared ideas, and advice. A newsletter was developed including contributions from the Institute as well as from principals and teachers from member schools. Principals and staffs met to share and discuss the information being fed into the system. Meetings and visitations between schools were set up to provide further

information and to facilitate school improvement efforts. This informal staff development resulted in establishing goals for change through discussion and shared decision-making. Teachers had authority over, and accountability for instructional decisions. These activities provided information upon which Goodlad based his theory of change in education (Goodlad, 1977).

Goodlad states that the local school principal is the critical ingredient to producing change within the school, and that the individual school is the place for improvements to begin. He perceives the principal as being lonely and isolated and in need of support during the change process. In his experiment, Goodlad provided this support through the League, both through contact with the Institute, and through relationships developed among the principals involved in the project.

In his account of the League, Goodlad describes how change was implemented in the participating schools. He states that this was made possible because teachers were involved from the outset, and because they took responsibility for educational changes. Positive reinforcement for teachers and principals was provided by the network, and resources were made available through sharing among the schools and through the institute. The schools were able to rely upon each other for advice and support, and the role of

the Institute diminished as they became more independent and self-reliant.

Drawing on this experience, Goodlad (1977) describes how a consortium or network might function to facilitate change. First, a process of dialogue must precede the change involving the principal, teachers, and parents at the local level. Results of evaluations and other information may be shared at this time to establish the fact that a change is needed and to identify where change is needed.

Goodlad describes how a network of schools can provide information and support to principals and teachers to help them overcome insecurities they may experience as they approach changes. This can come through individuals or schools, or through a resource center such as a college or university that provides information and functions as a facilitator for the network. He states that this support needs to be ongoing to support the local school throughout the change process, and must continue to be available as future modifications may need to be made.

Finally, Goodlad stresses that the classroom is the site where change must occur in order to effect changes in student outcomes. He says that resources for teacher development need to be provided or made available if changes are to make their way into the individual classroom. He suggests that this may be facilitated through affiliation with a college or University or through teacher-to-teacher

sharing that may occur when schools join together in a network for school improvement.

According to Goodlad's theory of change, there must be external stimulation and internal responsiveness which provide a productive state of tension within the organization resulting in change. The individual school, including its students, teachers, principals and its relationship with the community is the optimal unit for change.

Under favorable conditions, changes can occur in an individual school that will benefit and support those involved in the teaching and learning process. These conditions involve recognizing the need for change and supporting the participants throughout the change process.

The systems within the school, both formal and informal, exert pressures on behaviors of teachers and administrators. These pressures are essentially traditional and tend to discourage change. If change is to proceed more rapidly than change in the larger eco-system, it will require support from outside. This support may be provided through contact with a local college or university.

Efforts to change will probably require a supportive reference group. This group might be a network of peer schools, school districts, or other agencies. Change requires an infusion of new knowledge, skills, and ways of doing things. This could be provided through sharing with

other schools in a network, or through contact with university or other agency.

The impetus to change must be strong and must be sustained over a period of time. In other words, the support needs to be ongoing rather than temporary or intermittent in order to support the school throughout the entire change process (Goodlad, 1977).

In a case study, Havelock (1982) described three networks, each involving one university and surrounding school districts in cooperative projects directed toward school improvement. This study provides historical data on the establishment of each of the three networks, describes their operations and makes comparisons among them in an effort to determine which model is most effective.

Havelock found the three networks to have these common features. They included: (1) an extensive history of informal university-school linkages; (2) charismatic and energetic leaders at the critical stages of development; and (3) diverse objectives resulting from high responsiveness of university staff to the needs of school personnel. The activities of the three networks focused on the training of teachers through workshops, courses, and supervision. In some cases formal credit was provided for participation.

Benefits to the participants of the networks, according to Havelock, were: increased status for participants,

new and strengthened linkages among schools, transfer of knowledge, and improved school practices and capabilities.

Havelock analyzed the structures of the three networks and reached the following conclusions: (1) No structure is apparently superior to the others; one network's loose structure seemed to be durable and to allow for easy entry and exit for school districts, but may have resulted in less serious commitments and concentrated efforts. (2) The existence of teacher centers and a central office on campus seemed to strengthen efforts, but the degree of formality seemed to make little difference in effectiveness of these organizations.

The scale of the three networks in terms of geographic area and in number of schools varied greatly. The most rural and least-populated area was most successful, leading to one possible conclusion that the absence of competing resources may have contributed to its success.

Havelock states that the information flow to the school districts came mostly from a limited number of university faculty, and that little information flowed to universities from school districts, although there were exceptions. Methods of transferring innovative practices from one site to another included teacher-to-teacher contact, materials development, self-guided instruction, observation and modeling, and individual, group and system problem-solving.

The outcomes derived from participation in networks, according to Havelock, benefited participating school districts, teachers, and the university as well. Increased power and status resulted from association of school personnel with the university, as well as through working on advanced degrees. Inter-organizational and intra-organizational linkages were strengthened, as were school-to-school linkages. Transfer of knowledge was diverse, and covered all subject areas resulting in improved practices. Teachers reported enhanced capacity and "rejuvenation" as a result of participation. The universities reported increased outreach and increased capacity for inservice training as a result of networking.

Crandall (1979) studied the Network of Innovative Schools, including six schools in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, area in collaboration with the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The goal for this group was a change in basic skills instruction at the local school level, and the development of problem solving strategies within the schools to enable them to confront problems in a more rational, systematic way. In his study, Crandall describes how this network functioned to facilitate change. The network provided a framework for defining and diagnosing problems and provided information pertaining to areas identified as needing improvement. The university functioned as a program facilitator, providing inservice training as needed for

proper implementation and facilitating group processes such as communication and decision making. It provided leadership in solving problems and monitoring the effort and by providing feedback to schools.

Crandall's study summarizes the participation of the individual schools and resulting outcomes. Changes did occur in every school. Although these changes were not related to the original goals in some cases, they may have been more appropriate than the original goals. For example, changes affected the roles of personnel within the school in one case, and had an effect upon personal relationships among staff in another. In addition, decision making practices and the use of technology in the school underwent changes. In Crandall's opinion the original goals might have been met in more cases if funding to continue the effort had been available. This indicates that outside funding was necessary to continue the effort in this case.

Parker (1977) studied several networks in order to determine what factors contributed to their success or lack of success. One of these networks was the Ford Foundation Comprehensive School Improvement Program, established to link together autonomous exemplary programs funded by the Ford Foundation. This experimental network was established to foster the sharing of information and inspiration among 20 independent schools in a broad geographical area. This

network had limited success that leads Parker to conclude that in order for a network to be cost-effective and practical participating schools need to be in close proximity to each other. His studies of other regional networks support the concept of regional networks as being more effective in terms of facilitating change, as was the case in the thirteen regional centers involved with the National Center for Educational Media and Materials for the Handicapped (May, 1980). Parker also described the Federation for United Science Education, a network of eight regional centers for the development of improved science curriculum.

Based on his observations, Parker gave the following steps for the development of a successful network. First, informal contact must be made by problem-solvers in schools facing similar situations. Second, a loosely-knit group of innovative teachers is formed to share ideas and get support from other teachers. Release time and reimbursement for travel expenses must be provided to facilitate this sharing. A deliberate effort may be made at this time to establish a formal network. A name, statement of purpose, roster of members and other formalized matters may lend credence to the group as an entity. Finally, a funding source, either internal or external must be found and formal governance procedures developed. Staff may be hired if funds permit, to facilitate functioning of the group.

Parker added that care must be taken to insure that the original purposes of the effort (sharing of information, solving problems, and providing psychological support) remain in focus. He also suggested that continuing the alliance beyond its logical ends would be counter-productive if the needs of the group are no longer being met.

Dalin (1977) documented a network of rural schools in Norway which was supported in their efforts to develop a comprehensive curriculum by the National Council for Innovations in Education. As a result of their cooperative efforts, these small rural schools became some of the most academically excellent schools in Norway during the 1950's. A broad base of community support developed as a result of their efforts to include members of the community in problem solving. Their purposes having been met, the network no longer functions as a formal entity.

Dalin studied the effort of the International Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to create the International Network for Educational Change during the 1960's. This organization was devoted to the support of educational improvement and research on an international scale. As a result, a center for research was established in Paris and teacher centers in various locations. It provided an international testing ground for new ideas as well as support and attention for local innovations or projects. Psychological support was the most important outcome of this

effort, facilitating communication among educators of many different countries through seminars and conferences on educational trends and curriculum. The most lasting and important benefit was the support for research and development of innovations in education which ultimately led to the establishment of a professional network for change. Although difficulties arose due to the distances between members of the organization and because of the language barrier, the network continues in a modified form, funded by the institutions involved.

As a result of these studies and others, Dalin has developed the following theory of educational change based on the network concept. First, he says the characteristics of the network will determine its influence. For example, if horizontal levels of responsibility are represented, changes will only occur at that level; vertical representation will result in changes at multiple levels.

According to Dalin, environmental conditions influence the effects and the process of change. When network goals mesh with the needs of the community, it is more likely to succeed. Complex forces influence social systems; for example, sometimes a particular group may reinforce the status quo, and at other times support changes. The traditions and characteristics of the innovation determine the type of change strategies needed, and success may depend upon how well these match the needs of the organization.

According to Dalin, the extent of the influence of a change will be dependent upon the levels of acceptance and support it has. The psychological and political power base of the group is critical to its success. Finally, a network for change need not be permanent. Its goals and membership may change as the needs of the individual organizations in the group change. As a result, networks may dissolve when the needs for which they developed have been met.

Dalin stressed that successful operation of a network or consortium requires open communications and sharing between members. The members must have at least some common goals; psychological support comes from colleagues who are in similar situations. Process skills may need to be taught at seminars for group members unless a common base of knowledge exists.

Political support is of critical importance if the effect of a network is to be widespread and lasting, according to Dalin, and in order to have this type of impact networks need the resources of researchers and practitioners for the development of improvements. He suggests a core staff supported by the membership or some outside funding source to facilitate the process.

BARRIERS TO NETWORKING

Previously reviewed studies by Goodlad, Havelock, Crandall, Parker and Dalin indicate that networking is in-

deed possible, and can be of benefit to educational institutions. It will be useful to also consider some barriers to successful networking found in the literature. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in its review of the literature (1980) presents the following cautions for organizations seeking to participate in collaborative arrangements. First, organizations must realize that a high degree of commitment is required for successful networking. Those who participate in networks must have an awareness of what can reasonably be accomplished, the time involved, and what human and financial resources are available to do so (Crandall, 1979).

Another potential problem is that of conflicting priorities. Members must be willing to put aside selfish goals and work together for common purposes in order for the venture to be satisfactory to all members. Otherwise, the coalition will be weakened as individuals pursue their own self-interests (Dalin, 1977).

Individuals involved in networking need to have the commitment of some larger organization in order to be effective (Goodlad, 1977). In the case of the League of Cooperating Schools, school districts provided release time and paid travel expenses so principals and teachers could meet. In doing this they supported the efforts of individual schools to improve themselves.

Several authors also cautioned that the ultimate intent of the organization might be lost within the structure created to carry out its goals. For example, Goodlad warned against leaders who might influence the network in directions other than those for which it was developed. Miles (1979) indicated that interference from outside sources can destroy effective collaborative efforts through formalizing their structure and taking away their flexibility. He suggested that those who would encourage networking should take care not to disrupt established efforts.

Despite these problems, evidence indicated that many educational organizations are involved in networking for the purpose of school improvement. At this time there is little evidence of how widespread the practice of networking for school improvement is. Previous studies have focused on specific networks or consortia, rather than on establishing number of participants or organizations.

Cates et al. (1981), in a study of inter-organizational arrangements in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area, attempted to identify and classify inter-organizational arrangements for school improvement and to identify their characteristics. In order to do this, they looked at directories and documents, and interviewed participants of such organizations to determine their history, environmental context, structure, operations and outputs.

In terms of participation, Cates et al. found that in the 13 counties surrounding San Francisco, each of the school districts was participating in at least one inter-organizational arrangement for school improvement. They found that institutions of higher education participated in about one-fourth of these arrangements, and county offices, Research and Development agencies, State Departments of Education and other organizations also participated.

Cates et al. studied the organization of these arrangements to find out whether they were mandated, free-standing, or enabling. They found that incentives and mandates influenced participation in these arrangements to a great degree. In terms of size, most of the arrangements studied consisted of fewer than ten member organizations.

Cates' et al. study supports the efficacy of collaborative arrangements to further school improvement efforts. In fact, it found that most school districts she studied participated in more than one such arrangement. These arrangements varied greatly in degree of complexity, although it was found that most of them had a moderate to high degree of support from outside. This leads to the conclusion that outside support is critical to the operation of such efforts.

SUMMARY

The literature, then, reveals that many collaborative arrangements or networks for the purpose of school

improvement exist among educational organizations. We see that they vary in size and complexity, although they may have similar goals. Although there are barriers to successful networking, many successful efforts are documented in the literature, presented in the form of descriptive case studies. None of the studies present statistical comparisons or data, and none of them provide comparisons of more than a few networks.

There was a noticeable lack of state-wide documentation of efforts to network for school improvement, although Cates' study does give one regional example. Goodlad, Havlock, Dalin and others have developed theories about how networking can be successfully carried out. These theories, though cautious, indicate that networking may help school districts improve education and avoid duplication of services.

The following study attempts to establish documentation of the extent of networking on a state-wide basis as it occurs in Oregon. An explanation of how this study was carried out and expected conclusions follow in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Research indicates that networks, collaboratives, and consortia in education have been developing in steadily increasing numbers (Moore, 1965). This phenomenon provides evidence that educators are finding that by working together they can accomplish more than they can individually. A study by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (1979) says of the current trend toward collaboration in education:

In recent and not so recent education literature, there is encouragement for collaborative association, joint problem solving and interorganizational resource sharing. Collaborative agreements between agencies, organizations, and institutions offer solutions to problems of increasing social needs, decreasing budgets and current frustration with piecemeal and inadequate approaches to complex problems (p. 1).

The Northwest Laboratory (1979), Goodlad (1976), and others cite the need for more studies to document the characteristics of collaborative arrangements for school improvement and provide further evidence of whether such arrangements actually help schools improve. In addition, there is a need for information regarding what obstacles to successful networking exist and whether something needs to be done to facilitate networking among schools.

This study was designed to provide information on a state-wide basis regarding the existence of networks, collaboratives, and consortia in the state of Oregon, their purposes, membership, and organizational structures. It attempts to determine whether there is a relationship with respect to size of school district and participation in networks. perceived benefits, problems, and desire for assistance. It also attempts to describe how these networks function; who does the work, who finances the activities, and how networking benefits participant school districts. It also attempts to document the operations of several existing Oregon networks in detail with the intention of providing a more detailed description of how school districts utilize networking as a means of improving schools.

Investigation of the literature reveals numerous studies undertaken to document the characteristics and benefits of networks and collaborative arrangements. The study of networks and consortia does not lend itself to experimentation. Goodlad (1976, 1977), Parker (1977) and Havelock (1982) all turned to the descriptive methodology, which included document analysis, case studies, and the mailed survey.

Yin (1985) recommended the survey method to describe a phenomenon or to attempt to predict certain outcomes. He recommends the case study for the purpose of determining why such phenomena exist.

Although this study is primarily a description of networks in the state of Oregon, there is the possibility that it may provide generalizable information regarding characteristics, benefits and problems experienced in networks that seem to have survived over a number of years. It also provides information regarding the extent of networks for school improvement on a state-wide basis, thus adding to the body of knowledge regarding significant trends in education.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was conducted to focus on following questions:

Question #1. What efforts to participate in networks for the purpose of staff development or school improvement are underway in the state of Oregon?

Question #2. What characteristics do these networks have? What are their purposes, structures, benefits, and problems?

In order to answer the above two questions, existing cases were described, and documentation of networks in the state was undertaken.

Question #3. Does size of district have an influence upon the decision to participate in networks as a means of improving schools?

For the purpose of answering Question 3, the following Hypotheses were developed and form the basis for statistical comparisons.

Research Hypothesis A: There is a difference with respect to size among school districts that choose to network and those that do not network.

Null Hypothesis A: There is no difference with respect to size among school districts that choose to network and those that do not network.

Question #4. Is there a difference between the benefits, problems, and needs for assistance experienced by small districts as compared to large ones?

For the purpose of answering question 4, the following hypotheses were developed and form the basis for statistical comparisons.

Research Hypothesis B: There is a difference with respect to district size in perceived benefits, problems, and need for assistance in relationship to networking.

Null Hypothesis B: There is no difference with respect to district size in perceived benefits, problems and need for assistance in relationship to networking.

METHODOLOGY

The method of the present study may be described as the descriptive survey method. The primary data-gathering tool was a mailed questionnaire. Although it studies cases, it is not a case study per se because it does not examine a limited number of the instances of networking, but rather all of the instances of networking within a defined geographic area.

The instrument selected for data collection in this study was a questionnaire developed specifically for the purpose. The survey was chosen because of the extent and unique nature of the study, and because of the flexibility possible with its use. In addition, consideration was given to the fact that by mailing the questionnaires, anonymity would be preserved, and more accurate information obtained.

Although surveys were a part of several of the studies in the literature, none of them was capable of providing the information desired, since the information called for was specific to those studies. Therefore, a questionnaire was designed to elicit demographic information, type of network, length of participation, membership, benefits and problems connected with such activities. The instrument consisted of 22 questions, most of which had multiple answers from which to choose. In addition, districts were asked to provide answers to several open-ended questions to develop a more complete description.

The instrument was developed by the author with the cooperation of colleagues who participate in the types of organizations being studied. In addition, input was provided by the Oregon Department of Education about what types of information about networks in Oregon would prove useful in their efforts to assist school districts. The resulting questionnaire was tested by persons in administrative positions within the state, several of whom participate in networks. After several revisions, the final version was developed and determined through testing to meet the needs of the study (See Appendix A).

Questionnaires were mailed, along with a cover letter and stamped, addressed envelope, to school superintendents in all 306 school districts in the state of Oregon. The letter indicated the nature of the study, and stressed the fact that the information obtained through the survey would be used to facilitate school improvement efforts in the state. In addition, the assistance of Portland State University and the Oregon Department of Education was mentioned. Participants were asked to complete the survey and return it within two weeks. They were offered an opportunity to receive information resulting from the data if desired.

The first mailing took place on April 28, 1985. One questionnaire was mailed to each of the 306 school superintendents in the state. An accompanying letter

explained the need for the study and requested participation through completing the questionnaire. A second mailing was done on May 10, 1985 including an additional letter of request, and providing a second questionnaire, but no stamped envelope. A total of 191 questionnaires were returned from the two mailings, giving a return of 62%.

The resulting data were analyzed by computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hill & Jenkins, 1975). Comparisons were made regarding characteristics of school districts that choose to network for staff development. Much of the resulting information is reported in the form of percentages, providing information on whether size of networks has a relationship to participation in networks, what districts in the state choose to belong to networks, length of existence of networks, and other descriptive data. This information is reported in Chapter IV of this document in the form of percentages, compared in crosstabulations or contingency tables. Jendrek (1985) states that this type of comparison helps to demonstrate the relationship of independent variables on dependent variables. Crosstabulations provide an opportunity to demonstrate whether size of district has any relationship to choosing to participate in networks, and whether size has an influence on benefits, problems and assistance desired. The Chi-Square statistical procedure was used to determine whether any differences observed are statistically

significant. This is appropriate because it meets the following requirements for this procedure as suggested by Sharp (1970). (1) The data are nominal rather than interval, (2) the study involves two groups, (3) there are one or more categories to be compared, (4) the observations were independent, (5) the sample size is large enough. All of the above conditions were determined to be met by this study, therefore Chi-Square was the statistical procedure of choice. The table below demonstrates the relationship of independent to dependent variables.

TABLE I
INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Independent Variables (Student enrollment)	Dependent Variables		
	Network	Benefits	Assistance Desired
Small districts 750 or fewer students			
Large districts over 750 students			

The population for this study included all 306 school districts in the state of Oregon. Responses were obtained from 191 individuals or 62% of the sample. The level of significance is set at .05, or a chance of error 5 times in 100. This is the level recommended by Jendrek (1985) for social science research.

Yin (1985) states that combining the survey method with a small pool of case studies can allow additional insight into causal processes surrounding the data. It is hoped that this study provides some insight into why some school districts participate in networking while others do not. This was the reason for including some case studies in this disseration.

Descriptions of three networks in the state were chosen on the basis of location and type to add information not otherwise available through the survey. These networks are described with respect to their purposes, organizational structures, memberships, and educational outcomes. They are intended as examples of successful networks in existence in the state. Data for these case studies were provided through personal interviews with members of networks, and through examination of various documents and publications provided by network members for this purpose. Yin (1985) suggests that the combined use of interview data and documents helps to validate information, giving more strength to the study. It is hoped that inclusion of this descriptive information fulfilled this purpose in the present study.

In addition to the case studies a compilation was made of all networks in the state whose members replied to the survey or for which information was otherwise available. This provides a partial listing of Oregon networks and their memberships which is included in Appendix C. Hopefully,

this information will assist other school districts desiring to participate in networking to contact members of existing networks for information.

Data analysis was done on the Honeywell Conversion of SPSS (Nie et al., 1985) and reported in Chapter IV. Conclusions drawn from this information are included in Chapter V as are suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter pointed out the fact that networking has been used effectively by organizations seeking to improve education. The intent of this chapter is to document such efforts in the state of Oregon and to describe these organizations, their purposes, structures, benefits and problems. In addition, it provides information on a state-wide basis of formal and informal linkages for the purpose of improving staff development in cooperating school districts.

All superintendents in the state of Oregon were mailed surveys and asked to respond to a number of questions regarding efforts to collaborate for staff development and school improvement. They were asked to route the questionnaire to the person most knowledgeable about staff development in the district if they were not that person. Therefore, the resulting information should provide more valid information. The 191 responses received represent 62% of the total population to be studied, and provide the information presented in this chapter describing networks that exist within the state. This information was analyzed to

find out what purposes, problems and benefits these districts have in common, and what assistance, if any, would be seen as likely to enhance their efforts.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Districts responding to the survey were asked to indicate their student enrollment. Comparing the number of responses in each size category to the number of possible responses in that category, (Table II) it can be seen that the highest percentage of possible responses came from school districts with 2,000 to 3,000 students, and the lowest percentage from districts with fewer than 250 students. In a comparison of the number of responses received (n) against the total number of school districts in Oregon (N) it was found that districts with fewer than 250 students represent the largest percentage of total responses received.

TABLE II
STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN DISTRICTS RESPONDING

Student Enrollment	n	N	% of N	% of n
3,000 or more	29	37	78.4%	9.5%
2,000-3,000	17	18	94.4%	5.6%
750-2,000	38	51	74.5%	12.4%
250-750	42	63	66.6%	13.7%
less than 250	65	137	47.4%	21.2%
Totals	191	306		62.4%

n = number of districts responding

N = total number of districts in Oregon

DATA ANALYSIS

The first question under consideration is as follows:

Question #1. What efforts to network for the purpose of staff development or school improvement are underway in the state of Oregon?

To answer this question, data indicating past or present involvement in networking were analyzed to find out (a) How many school districts in Oregon have participated or presently participate in networks for the purpose of staff development or school improvement and (b) What type of organizations (networks, collaboratives or consortia) they belong to.

Percentages were calculated and membership in networks, consortia, and collaboratives were compared in order to find out whether Oregon school districts preferred one of these arrangements over the other two. The differences were found not to be significant.

Two-thirds of the school districts who responded to the questionnaire indicated they participate in networks for the purpose of school improvement. Because there are several types of organizations that fall under the term "network," respondents were given descriptions of three types of networks and were asked to indicate which of these descriptions, if any, fit their organization. In response to this question, 38.7% indicated involvement in a network

districts for the purpose of sharing information and providing support for staff development or school improvement efforts. Membership in a collaborative arrangement or coalition for the purpose of sharing resources and expertise to accomplish a shared purpose was indicated by 23.6% of respondents. Another 35.5% indicated membership in a consortium or other formal arrangement involving school districts in efforts to promote some shared goal or purpose. Some districts responded affirmatively to more than one of these choices, giving a total of more than 100% when added to the 33.5% who indicated no involvement. This does indicate, however, that approximately two-thirds of the districts responding participate in some type of network for the purpose of facilitating staff development or school improvement.

Of the 64 districts not presently involved in networking, it was found that 40 of them (63%) indicated past involvement. Out of a total of 191 districts responding to the survey, 24 (12.6%) reported they have not participated in networking for staff development at any time, leaving a total of 167 (87.4%) of respondents indicating present or past involvement in networking for staff development or school improvement.

Question #3. Does size of district have an influence upon the decision to participate in networks as a means of improving schools?

The data show that in districts with an enrollment of from 2,000 to 3,000 or more students, networking is over twice as likely to occur than in smaller districts. The incidence of networking declines as the size of district decreases. School districts with fewer than 250 students are much less likely to network than larger districts, according to the data. Table III indicates the percentages of districts who do and do not network according to size. Using the Chi-Square statistical procedure, the student enrollments of districts involved in networking were compared with districts of the same sizes not involved. With four degrees of freedom, the expected Chi-Square at the .05 level would be 9.433; the obtained Chi-Square was 10.628, indicating significance at the .03 level. Therefore, Null Hypothesis A is rejected. The data indicate a significant relationship between the size of a district as measured by student enrollment and involvement in networking. Research Hypothesis A is accepted: There is a difference with respect to size among school districts who choose to network versus those who do not network. Table III gives a visual representation of the information obtained from these data. Implications of this finding will be discussed in Chapter V.

TABLE III
SIZE OF DISTRICTS COMPARED TO INVOLVEMENT IN
STAFF DEVELOPMENT NETWORKS

Size	3,000 or more	2,000- 3,000	750- 2,000	250- 750	Under 250
Network					
Yes	58.6	52.9	39.5	38.1	26.2
No	41.4	47.1	60.5	61.9	73.8
df=4	X=10.628	Significant at the .03 level			

Question #2. What characteristics do these networks have?
What are their purposes, structures, benefits, and problems?

According to Miles (1970), some of the purposes of networks include modernization of school districts, providing up-to-date information about educational practices, innovations and technology, and providing a balance in resources and power. This study attempts to determine the purposes of the networks to which Oregon school districts belong. Of districts indicating past or present involvement in networking, 83% of these networks had staff development as their primary purpose; 58.3% of these districts indicated their organizations had other purposes as well. These purposes included curriculum development, sharing of information, program evaluation, curriculum coordination, meeting state standards, sharing of consultants, teacher education, and political concerns. Other purposes mentioned were professional development, improved communications with the

private sector, development of school-industry partnerships, and broad-based support for grant applications. A complete list of purposes appears in Appendix B, p. 95.

Dalin (1977) stated that the purposes of networks should change with the needs of the districts involved. In this sample, 86.1% of the districts indicated that the purposes of their organization remained the same, while 13.9% indicated that changes in purposes had taken place during the network's existence. In this sample, purposes have remained the same in over four-fifths of the cases examined. Some of the respondents to the survey participate in the same network, so this figure does not indicate that over four-fifths of networks have kept the same purposes.

Review of the literature indicated that successful networking requires agreement on common purposes. This study has found that in more than half of the cases, the organization's purposes were determined by agreement of the members, while over a third were determined by need of one or more members. In only 14% of the cases studied, purposes were stated by a charter or other organizational document. Other determining factors cited by respondents were district goals, board goals, or professional encouragement. Table IV give a visual comparison of these figures.

TABLE IV
HOW PURPOSES WERE DETERMINED

Response	% of n
Stated in charter or organization document	13%
Agreement of membership	48%
Need of one or more members	31%
Other	7%

n=number of responses

One of the purposes of this dissertation is to determine what networks for school improvement exist in the state of Oregon. To obtain this information, participants who belong to networks were asked to give the name of their organization and to list its other members. A listing of these networks appears in Appendix C, p. 98. There were 29 networks named by participants in this survey. The districts participating in these networks number from 2 to 14, with 3 being the most frequently occurring number.

Networks may have one or more institutions of higher education as members. This type of network is defined in the literature as a Consortium (Moore, 1968). Seven institutions of higher education were listed in this sample as participating in consortia or networks. They appear in the listing of Oregon networks in Appendix C.

According to the responses received, membership of these networks was determined through a combination of

methods, with self-selection the most frequently mentioned (41.6%), followed by location (31.7%), as indicated in Table V.

TABLE V
SELECTION OF MEMBERS

Method of Selection	% of n
Self selection	41.6%
By location	31.7%
By invitation	15.8%
By election	4.0%
Other	6.0%

(Other methods of selecting members included nomination, application, appointment and assignment by position.)

n=number of districts responding

In 52.4% of the cases studied, the membership has remained static during the life of the network, while 47.6% have experienced changes in membership.

For the purpose of describing networks in the state of Oregon, the survey asked participants whether the networks to which they belonged were formal or informal, how membership was determined, how the organization is financed, and who does most of the work. These data were analyzed using the SPSS Program (Nie et al., 1975) and provide the basis for the following description of state-wide efforts to network.

Data obtained in the survey indicate that most network participants in the sample belong to informal networks

rather than those with a constitution and bylaws that govern the organization's operations. Only 27.9% of the participants described their networks as formal, while 72.1% described the networks to which they belong as informal, as indicated in Table VI.

TABLE VI
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

Responses	% of n
Formal	27.9%
Informal	72.1%

n=number of school districts responding

(Formal organizational structure is defined as one governed by a constitution and bylaws.)

Some networks have a paid director or other staff person who directs network activities, while in other organizations, all work is done by members in addition to their regular school district responsibilities. Table VII indicates that only 30.8% of respondents to the survey belong to networks that have a director, while 69.2% belong to networks that do not have a director. Implications of this finding will be discussed in the following chapter.

TABLE VII
NETWORK MANAGEMENT

Response	% of n
Paid Director	30.8%
No paid director	69.2%

n= number of districts responding

TABLE VIII
HOW WORK GETS DONE

Response	% of n
By members of the group	90.3%
By people outside the group	9.7%

n=number of district responding

Participating school districts provide most of the financial support for the networks to which they belong and do most of the organization's work themselves. Tables VIII and IX provide information from which these conclusions were drawn.

TABLE IX

FUNDING

Response	% of n
Dues or assessments	12.6%
Grants or aid	15.7%
Self-supporting	7.3%
School district support	37.7%
Other	6.8%
(Some school districts indicated no need for funds)	

n=number of districts responding

Question #4. Is there a difference between the benefits, problems, and need for assistance experienced by small districts as compared to large ones?

In order to answer question 4, districts having 750 or more students were considered large districts, and those having fewer than 750 were considered small districts. The number of responses in the large district category was 64 out of a possible 88, or 73%. In the small district category, 56 out of 96 possible responses were received, giving a 53% return. Chi-Square comparisons were calculated to determine whether these two groups differed in respect to the frequency of responses regarding benefits, problems, and desire for assistance.

The review of the literature indicated many benefits that may result from participation in networking. This study attempts to determine what benefits, if any, are realized by Oregon school districts participating in

networks, and to determine whether these differ with respect to district size. Improved effectiveness was the benefit mentioned most frequently by respondents (78.6%), followed by cost sharing (65.2%). Other benefits mentioned included psychological support (42.9%), political benefits (25.9%), financial support for special education, and affiliation for the purpose of obtaining consultant services. Many respondents checked more than one response, indicating that participation in networking benefits its members in multiple ways.

When the data are grouped into large and small districts, there are some notable differences in perceived benefits, as shown in Appendix D, p. 104. Chi-Square was the statistic used to compare the responses on each question with respect to size in order to determine whether any of these choices were significant. Reduced cost of staff development through resource sharing was perceived to be approximately equally beneficial with respect to size, with 56.3% of the large districts and 58.9% of the small districts choosing this response. When asked whether increased effectiveness of staff development efforts through sharing of information among school districts was a benefit of networking, 78.1% of the large districts and 60.7% of the small districts responded affirmatively. This is significant at the .03 level. Psychological support for individual members resulting in increased job effectiveness was indicated

by 45.3% of large districts and 28.6% of small districts, not a significant difference. Political benefits realized through participation in a network were seen as benefits to 26.6% of large districts responding, and 19.6% of small districts, which indicates no significance over expected responses. Research Hypothesis B is accepted in relationship to the following: sharing of resources for staff development and increased effectiveness through sharing of information are seen as benefits by significantly more large districts than small ones.

District spokespersons were asked to indicate what problems their districts had encountered in networking. The most frequently mentioned problem was funding, (43.2%), although conflicting work priorities (36.4%) and conflicting goals (35.2%) were mentioned by numerous participants also. Organizational problems were mentioned by 15.9%, and 14.8% mentioned other problems such as conflicting schedules and more work than time and resources available. Divided into large and small districts, the data indicate that 15.6% of large districts responding had organizational problems while only 3.6% of the small districts considered this to be a problem (See Appendix E, p. 106). The resulting Chi-Square is significant at the .02 level, indicating that significantly more large school districts experienced organizational problems. Funding problems were cited by 37.5% of large districts, and 23.2% of small districts, not

significantly different than expected. Conflicting priorities relating to goals were mentioned as problems in 18.8% of large districts responding and 28.8% of small districts. Again, this is not significantly different than expected. Conflicting work priorities were experienced by 31.3% of large districts, and 19.6% of small ones, indicating that a greater number of large districts consider this a problem than do small districts, although this difference is not statistically significant. Funding was mentioned most frequently as a problem of the school districts studied, but no other problem was mentioned by more than one-third of respondents. It is interesting to note that there was a greater number of responses on questions relating to benefits than to problems connected with networking.

When asked whether they would like to have some kind of assistance provided for networks, 61.5% of networking school districts responded affirmatively, while 38.5% would prefer no assistance. When asked what kind of assistance was needed, funding or incentives for networking was the most frequently desired assistance (64.4%). Providing information on effective staff development and school improvement practices was considered desirable by 49.2% of respondents. Providing a linkage to facilitate communications among districts participating in networking was preferred by the same percentage. Management assistance and facilitating

network operations was seen as desirable by 18.6% of respondents.

When asked whether they would like to have assistance for networking efforts, 53.1% of the affirmative responses came from large districts and only 32.1% from small districts. Examination of the data indicates an equal distribution of yes and no responses from small districts, and twice as many yes as no responses from large ones. A Chi-Square comparison of size of district by assistance versus no assistance indicates significance at the .05 level. Large districts, then, are significantly more likely to want assistance in networking as compared to small districts.

In order to find out whether there is a difference between the type of assistance large districts want and that which small districts want, a comparison of responses was made in relationship to district size. Information on effective staff development and school improvement practices was seen as desirable by 25% of large districts and only 17.9% of small districts. This was not significantly different from what was expected. Funding or other incentives are desired by 34.4% of large and 25% of small districts. Again, this is not statistically significant. A communications linkage for networks wishing to share information on common interests was cited by 34.4% of large districts, and only 8.9% of small districts. These responses differ from

the expected at the .0009 level, when lack of response is considered a negative answer. Management assistance or otherwise facilitating network operations was seen as desirable by 14.1% of large districts, and only 1.8% of the small districts, statistically significant at the .03 level when corrected (See Appendix F, p. 107).

Null Hypothesis B is rejected in favor of Research Hypothesis B: There is a difference between school districts with respect to size in relationship to benefits, problems, and assistance desired in networking. This information should be helpful to those who would like to encourage or assist school districts in their efforts to network. This is addressed in the next chapter.

RESULTS OF THE CASE STUDIES

In Chapter II, case studies and descriptions of several successful networks were presented. In an effort to more fully describe how the process of networking helps to improve schools, it is useful to look in depth at several existing networks in the state. For this purpose, three were chosen as examples of efforts presently in existence. They are: Project ACT, a network in the Portland Metropolitan Area; The Valley Educational Consortium of school districts in the Willamette Valley; and the Central Oregon Network, a cooperative organization of small school districts in Central Oregon. Descriptions of these networks will help to demonstrate how networking is helping school districts in

the state. Information was gained through examination of printed material and through personal interviews with participants of these networks.

Project ACT

Project ACT (Administrative Consultation and Training) is a consortium consisting of ten school districts in the Portland Metropolitan area in conjunction with Portland State University. The purpose of this consortium was originally to provide administrative consultation and training for school districts in order to implement Public Law 94-142, a law guaranteeing equal rights for handicapped children. As needs changed, training turned to other areas, such as dealing with declining enrollments and funds, as well as offering courses for teacher improvement for involved school districts.

This consortium began in 1976 with a federal grant which was renewed several times. During the original funding period there was a full-time director and secretary to carry out consortium business, and several assistants, the number depending upon need and funds available. As funds became scarce, activities such as administrative seminars and conferences have provided income to continue the consortium's business.

As a result of these activities, a committee, the Council for Instructional Improvement, developed into a

separate consortium with a focus on teacher training. This group is less formal than Project ACT, does not have a director, and conducts its work through informal meetings and volunteer work. There is a linkage with this group, as with the parent organization, with Portland State University.

Through discussions and questionnaires, it was possible to discover some of the benefits participants gain through membership to Project ACT. Sharing of information across district lines is one of the greatest benefits mentioned, as is psychological support for members gained through meeting with the group on a regular basis. In addition, teacher training and administrative workshops have been made available to members and other districts in the area. Funds for special projects were forthcoming when grant monies were available, enabling some districts to initiate school improvement projects beyond the scope of district financing.

Participants of Project ACT indicated there are problems connected with networking as well as benefits. Sending representatives to attend monthly meeting and to volunteer time as needed to conduct consortium activities requires a time commitment from participating members. In addition, conflicting goals arise from the fact that the member districts are diverse with respect to size and type of student

population served. Lack of funds has become a problem recently, as well as organizational problems resulting from this fact. The consortium continues to function despite these problems, however, indicating its benefits continue to outweigh the disadvantages mentioned above.

Valley Educational Consortium

The Valley Educational Consortium (VEC) has been in existence since the early 1970's. It is composed of 11 area school districts, 4 educational service districts, Western Oregon State College, and the Teaching Research Division of the Oregon State System of Higher Education. The consortium involves all school districts in Polk, Benton, Linn, Marion and Yamhill counties as associate members.

The purpose of this consortium is to assist member school districts in improvement of school curriculum and programs, and to assist in the development of the teacher training program at Western Oregon State College.

VEC has a formal charter and is headed by a board of directors made up of the chief executive officers of member institutions. It has a director, a program coordinator, and several committees composed of administrators from member districts.

The purpose of the original organization was to assist districts in meeting state minimum standards, and to fulfill Public Law 94-142. These purposes have changed as the needs

of member districts have changed. Recent projects include designing a comprehensive approach to school improvement, and development of a series of student competencies which formed the basis for proposed state-wide competencies for all Oregon students.

Most of the work of the consortium is done by teachers and administrators employed by member districts, sometimes on paid leave from their school districts, but many times in addition to their regular duties. Products of this work include curriculum in math, science, and other subject areas, as well as a set of competencies for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. These products have served not only member districts, but have been shared with other districts and state agencies as well.

Central Oregon Network

The Central Oregon Network is an example of a network that began informally through the efforts of the Deschutes Educational Service District (ESD) and superintendents and curriculum directors of all school districts in Crook, Jefferson and Deschutes counties to keep abreast of activities in the area and to work together on staff development projects. It has grown into a more formal organization that has meetings scheduled by the Deschutes County ESD. The purpose of these meetings is to assist districts in compliance with the Oregon Plan for Excellence, and to coordinate

activities that may be of benefit to more than one district. An example of one of these activities is the Artists in the Schools program, which serves all districts in the area. The coordination of this program is handled by the Central Oregon Arts Commission, an outgrowth of the cooperative efforts of area curriculum directors. This network also provides information to area school districts regarding state department regulations and assists them in compliance. These activities are not unique; they take place in networks throughout the state, and are more common than the large, formal consortia and cooperative efforts described previously. They provide a vital function in helping small school districts improve education through curriculum and staff development efforts and through providing a forum for cooperative activities that can benefit all members.

SUMMARY

The data demonstrated that many Oregon school districts participate in networking for staff development and school improvement. Some of these networks are formal, and have a paid director, although most of them are informal with no director. These networks connect large and small school districts with each other and with institutions of higher education. Participating member districts support most of these efforts and their employees do most of the work.

Networking provides multiple benefits for participating districts, and is seen as having many more benefits than problems. Large school districts are more likely to participate in networks than small ones, although small districts may stand to gain more from their participation.

Although assistance for their efforts to network is desired by many districts, the type of assistance desired by large districts is different from that desired by small districts. This information should be helpful to those who would like to assist school districts in their efforts to improve schools through networks.

Implications of the data are discussed in Chapter V, and conclusions are drawn that may help school districts find ways to improve their school improvement and staff development efforts through networking.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following findings, implications and recommendations are based upon analysis of questionnaires, interviews, and printed material regarding the efforts of Oregon school districts to network for the purpose of school improvement. Out of a total of 306 school districts in the state, 191 survey responses were received. These responses provided the information upon which a description of the Oregon networks is based, and from which some implications are drawn that may assist others wishing to facilitate such networking. In addition, information gained through interviews and printed documents was analyzed and will provide further descriptions of three networks within the state.

SUMMARY

The data indicated that networking is widely used by Oregon school districts in their efforts to provide for staff development and to improve education. Networks exist throughout the state, and provide linkages among the majority of school districts. This study attempted to describe these networks and how they function to assist school districts, and to identify the reasons why school district

representatives continue to engage in the practice of networking.

DISCUSSION

Research Question #1; Findings and Implications: What efforts to network for the purpose of staff development or school improvement are underway in the state of Oregon?

The data indicated that well over half of Oregon school districts have participated in networks for the purpose of staff development or school improvement. There are at least 41 separate networks for these purposes spread throughout the state linking large and small school districts that have common purposes. These networks span the state, although the largest ones cluster along the more populated Willamette Valley corridor. Many networks are composed of two or three school districts, but others have as many as twelve or more members. These members usually represent school districts within a 50-mile radius of each other. There are networks for school improvement within a reasonable distance of almost every school district in Oregon (See Appendix C).

There were three types of networks mentioned in the survey; some school districts indicated membership in more than one type. These will be discussed separately in order to highlight the differences among types of networks in the state.

Over a third of responding school districts belong to networks or other loosely coordinated effort involving other school districts expressly for the purpose of sharing information and providing support for its members. This type of arrangement would be more likely to be informal, without by-laws and a constitution, and would not have a director. Networks like this can help school districts by providing an information linkage with neighboring districts, and by making collaborative staff development and other cooperative projects possible through resource sharing.

Another third of districts responding indicated involvement in a consortium or other formal arrangement involving school districts in efforts to promote some shared goal or purpose. A consortium is a much more structured arrangement than the network described above, and probably would have a director and a constitution or bylaws. By definition, a consortium includes one or more institutions of higher education that may provide leadership, information and organizational expertise (Goodlad, 1977). All of the State Institutions of Higher Education and several private and community colleges in Oregon participate in consortia. Many networks have Educational Service Districts (ESDs) as well as institutions of higher education as participants. (See Appendix C for a partial listing.) Most of these linkages involve school districts within a nearby

radius of participating college or university. They represent an effort on the part of these institutions to reach beyond the campus and to interact with school districts in other than traditional ways. This can provide an avenue for two-way communication and facilitate joint problem solving as indicated by Goodlad (1976). The university can fulfill the added role of providing expert assistance and information, and can avail itself of the opportunity of having environment in which to train teachers on site through cooperative school-university arrangements.

The kind of network to which the remaining one-fourth of respondents belong is a "collaborative effort or coalition for the purpose of sharing resources and expertise to accomplish a shared purpose" (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1979). Educational Service Districts (ESDs) often participate in these collaborative arrangements in Oregon. Examination of the data indicates that 17 of the networks studied include one or more Educational Service Districts. In keeping with their role, these institutions assist school districts in their efforts to collaborate, although it is not apparent that all ESDs participate in networks. The ESD's participation is particularly important in areas far from colleges and universities, where information and training may be more difficult to come by. These institutions can fill the role of organizer and catalyzer for a network, broker for cooperative services for districts

provide better staff development and other services at a lower cost than school districts could obtain independently. There are many efforts such as these to join together institutions with similar needs to solve problems and to extend their effectiveness, as can be observed in the partial listing in Appendix C.

These networks are within the reach of most school districts who might wish to participate in such efforts. It is hoped that participation will increase as the effectiveness of networking becomes more evident.

Research Question #2; Findings and Implications: What characteristics do these networks have? What are their purposes, structures, benefits, and problems?

Purposes. Dalin (1977) found that networks tend to serve multiple purposes, and that these tend to shift as the needs of participants change. The data indicated that most networks within the state have staff development as their primary purpose and that their purposes have remained the same throughout the existence of the organization. Although many of these organizations have staff development as their purposes, over half of them have other purposes as well. It seems apparent that although networks in Oregon fulfill multiple purposes for school districts, staff development continues to be their primary purpose.

For most of the networks studied, the purposes were arrived at through agreement of the membership, and are based on the needs of one or more members. In only a few cases, the purposes were stated in the organization's charter or other document.

Dalin (1977) stated that networks only continue to exist as long as the need for them exists. Over half of the districts responding to the survey are members of networks that have been in existence four years or more, indicating that the need for them continues.

Structures. Miles (1979) indicated that networks can be formal or informal in structure. The data indicated that most of the districts surveyed belonged to informal networks, while only a few belonged to formal ones. A formal organization was described in the questionnaire as one having a constitution or bylaws to govern its operations. Another indication of formality is whether or not there is a paid director. Fewer than a third of the districts surveyed belonged to formal networks with paid directors. Miles' theory indicates that informal organizations are more likely to meet the needs of education than formal ones because they are flexible and more responsive to change. The data seem to corroborate this theory in that there are more than twice as many informal as formal networks in the population surveyed.

Benefits. Many theorists in the literature speculated about the benefits of networks. One of the purposes of this survey was to determine what benefits prompt school districts to become involved in networking. Almost all districts surveyed indicated increased effectiveness of school improvement and staff development efforts through sharing of information as being significant benefits of networking. Cost savings through sharing of resources was mentioned by many districts as a great benefit; districts in a network can cut down on wasteful duplication of services. Participants in networks can gain psychological support from other members of the group. Administrative jobs are often lonely, and companionship and support of colleagues is welcome. There are also political benefits in belonging to a network that can provide broad-based support through joint efforts. Appendix D gives a visual representation of the benefits realized through networking by the sample surveyed. This may provide information upon which we can base generalizations about what prompts other school districts to participate in networks.

Miles (1979), Dalin (1977) and others express concern about the problems that occur in the process of networking. The present study attempts to identify some of these concerns in an effort to help participants minimize or alleviate them if possible, with the following conclusions.

Funding was the greatest problem to the group surveyed, but this does not represent a consensus. Some groups can function with little or no funds, while others seem to require funds to keep going. Project Act is an example of a network that was able to continue its existence even after funds were discontinued. There are probably many such groups functioning in the state.

Conflicting work priorities are a problem for some school districts participating in networks. Most participants are school administrators, who have a number of other responsibilities they must attend to. Juggling these duties and finding time for network meetings and activities sometimes means that members meet on their own time, often for lunch or breakfast.

Goal conflicts seem to be inevitable in networks. Large districts have different concerns than small districts; some districts are more interested in political and policy issues, while others may be interested in staff development. Although these are problems, they are not of great concern to the majority of districts that participate in networks, so apparently these problems get worked out to the satisfaction of most members.

Organizational problems only affected a small number of participants. Although this is a small number, this is a potential problem area, as mentioned by Miles (1977). He advises that the less structure a network has the more

likely it is to succeed, due to the flexibility of this type of organization. Less structured organizations were referred to as informal networks in the data, and more structured as formal networks. Evidence indicates that there are more informal than formal networks in the State of Oregon, which may provide a partial answer as to why there are few organizational problems.

Respondents indicated that providing funding was the type of assistance most needed by the networks in which they participated, although information on successful networking practices and a communications linkage to facilitate networking was also desirable. Management assistance and other types of help were only mentioned by a small number of respondents. This demonstrates Miles' (1977) theory that perhaps the best way to help networks is to encourage linkages, but to refrain from too much involvement. He cautions that interfering with networking efforts that have proven to be successful, may result in causing problems rather than solving them.

Research Question #3; Findings and Implications: Does size of district have an influence upon the decision to participate in networks as a means of improving schools?

The data indicate a significant relationship between size of district and involvement in networks for staff development. Using the Chi-Square statistical procedure with 4 degrees of freedom, there is a difference at the .03

level of significance indicating a relationship between size of district and participation in networks. Visual inspection of the data reveals that large districts are far more likely to belong to networks than small districts, with the likelihood of participation decreasing as size of district decreases. Small districts comprise the largest group in the state and seem to be the ones that could benefit the most from resource sharing and cost savings, yet they are the least likely to participate in networks. For this reason, further examination of this data was considered important to find out whether there are differences between the benefits, problems and need for assistance as seen by districts of different sizes. The following research question attempts to address this need.

Question #4; Findings and Implications: Is there a difference between the benefits, problems, and need for assistance experienced by small districts as compared to large ones?

Data were recorded into two categories in order to answer the above question. Large districts were considered to be those with 750 or more students, while districts of below 750 students were considered small districts. Crosstabulations of the data were made, and Chi-Square comparisons were made to find out whether there was a relationship between size of district and benefits, problems and desire for assistance.

Although there were differences between the benefits seen in networking in relationship to district size, the only significant response was increased effectiveness of staff development and school improvement efforts through sharing of information. This variable was statistically significant, indicating that this effect is much more important to small school districts than it is to large ones. Considering the cost of providing these efforts, this is not surprising. Appendix D provides a visual representation of the comparison between large and small districts. It indicates that small districts enjoy the same benefits as larger ones, and that increased effectiveness and cost sharing are the most desirable benefits.

A visual representation of problems large and small districts experience is included (Appendix E) to provide further explanation of the differences between the two groups. It is noted that funding problems and conflicting work priorities affect more large districts than small ones. The major problem for small districts is conflicting goals. This may be explained by the fact that small districts have different goals than large districts. There can be many problem areas in networking, but these do not seem to be related to size, with the exception of organizational problems, as mentioned earlier.

The remaining question to answer is whether there is a difference between the desire for assistance as seen by dis-

tricts of different sizes. Visual inspection of the data in Appendix F indicates that large districts are more likely to want assistance than small districts. The only area where a statistically significant difference exists is management assistance, which is considered significantly less desirable by small districts than by large ones. This may be answered by the fact that small districts are more likely to participate in informal networks, which by definition would require less management than formal networks.

CONCLUSIONS

Networking is a viable way for school districts to increase their effectiveness and reduce the cost of staff development and school improvement efforts. In this time of diminished resources and demands from the public that educators provide better services at lower cost, it offers school districts a partial solution to this problem. Education cannot be cost effective if schools continue to duplicate services, nor should schools go their own way, disregarding the needs of their neighbors.

Networking is not an easy solution. It requires a great deal of cooperation, and a time commitment as well. However, if school districts will make these accommodations, they can reap many benefits. Participants in networks not only gain the benefits of increased effectiveness and cost savings for their districts, they also gain psychological support from other members of the network. With all of the

pressures facing school administrators, this serendipitous benefit may be one reason they continue to find the time to meet, to communicate, and to cooperate with each other, in spite of busy schedules.

Although there are differences among the needs, benefits and problems experienced by small and large districts, they are not great in most cases. Networks can provide a forum for districts of different sizes to communicate and to help each other. Through network participation, ESDs can facilitate this process, and can increase the likelihood that the services they provide are relevant to the needs of participating school districts. This is a natural extension of the function of the ESD, and should become a part of the operations of each ESD in the state of Oregon.

Institutions of higher education can become more aware of the needs of local school districts through network participation. This should help them to develop improved teacher training programs and increase the effectiveness of inservice education through closer communications and cooperation with school districts. In return, colleges and universities can function to provide needed information on school effectiveness and staff development to school districts, and can function as a facilitator for school improvement and collaborative efforts. This would strengthen the ties between school and university, and benefit all organizations concerned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Participation in networks can help schools become more effective through cooperative staff development programs and networks for school improvement. This study shows that the benefits of networking outweigh the problems, and that this practice is effective and widespread in the state of Oregon. School districts that do not participate in networks should become aware of the opportunities that are available to them through networking, and consider participating in a network in their area. ESDs should realize that this is a way to increase their effectiveness and begin to facilitate networks in their area. School districts that choose to network need to realize that networking requires a time commitment and a desire to work together for the good of all concerned. Districts that are willing to make this commitment can increase school effectiveness and reduce costs while gaining the support of neighboring school districts. Institutions of higher education should continue to provide the support they do in these networks, and should realize that there are many networks in Oregon that do not have access to their expertise. They could help more schools to improve by extending their services into these areas through extension activities in outlying communities.

Those who would like to facilitate networking should pay special attention to the needs of the particular school districts participating in the network. Small districts have

different problems and needs than larger ones, and may need special encouragement to spend the time and effort required in networking. Funding seems to be one way this encouragement could be provided. It seem essential that small districts avail themselves of the opportunities to gain the available benefits that cooperation and communication can provide participants of a network. There does not seem to be a need for separate networks for large and small school districts because the commonalities of networking far outweigh the differences accounted for by size. However, it is important for large and small districts to keep each others' needs in mind when making decisions on what projects to undertake and how to organize the network to be most effective for those involved.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Although this study does provide some information on how networking can be helpful in education, other questions remain. It would be useful for school districts seeking to engage in networking to have more information about how to organize such a group, and what pitfalls they might expect in doing so. In addition, it would be good to have more information about the roles ESDs are playing in networks in the state of Oregon, and how they might become more effective. Additional studies of this kind in other localities could provide information about whether this phenomenon is

Oregon or the Northwest, or whether the practice of networking to improve education is widespread.

The data encountered in the process of doing research for this study indicated there are many cases of school-industry collaboration. Further information on this type of collaboration could provide the basis for a study that would be helpful to school districts in their efforts to increase their effectiveness and lower costs through this kind of effort.

The shifting emphasis on the part of colleges and universities to become more consumer-oriented makes it important to have information about how networks can and do assist colleges and universities to be more responsive to the needs of the community. Although alluded to in this study, this could provide a basis for focused research on how institutions of higher education are using networking to do this. It is hoped that further information on collaboration in education can be provided to school districts, colleges and universities and that this will encourage more institutions to join in cooperative efforts to increase their effectiveness and improve schools.

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APPENDIX A

David Douglas School District
1500 S. E. 130th Street
Portland, Oregon 97233
April 18, 1985

Dear Colleague,

As you are well aware, Oregon school districts are currently facing a crisis affecting our ability to continue to provide high quality instruction in our schools. Funds for staff development and/or school improvement efforts are severely limited, so Oregon school districts must be innovative in obtaining needed resources.

I need your assistance in determining how Oregon school districts are meeting this challenge. The study I have undertaken with the cooperation of Portland State University and the Oregon Department of Education attempts to document such efforts. If you would take a few minutes to complete the accompanying survey, the resulting information could be made available to those wishing to facilitate school improvement in the state. I will be happy to send you a copy of the results if you include your name, title and address.

I am enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience, and would appreciate having your response by April 30th. Thank you for your cooperation and your interest in furthering our knowledge about networks for staff development in the state of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Vida S. Taylor
Staff Development Specialist
David Douglas School District

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you the person in your district responsible for staff development and/or school improvement efforts such as inservice, instructional improvement, and/or curriculum development activities?
☐ yes
☐ no (If not, please pass this on to the person who has this responsibility in your district.)
2. Please supply the following information:
 - a. Size of district: Average daily membership in Jan. '85:
☐ 3,000 or larger
☐ 2,000-3,000
☐ 750-2,000
☐ 250-750
☐ less than 250
 - b. Type of district:
☐ Unified
☐ Elementary
☐ Secondary
 - c. Number of schools in district:
☐ 20 or more
☐ 13-20
☐ 7-12
☐ 2-6
☐ 1
 - d. Name of District: _____
3. Is your district currently involved in staff development and/or school improvement efforts?
☐ yes
☐ no
4. Does your school/district participate in any of the following types of groups in an effort to facilitate staff development/school improvement efforts?
 Please check the description that best fits your group:
 - ☐ a. Network or other loosely coordinated effort involving other school districts expressly for the purpose of sharing information and providing support.
 - ☐ b. Collaborative effort or coalition for the purpose of sharing resources and expertise to accomplish a shared purpose.
 - ☐ c. Consortium or other formal arrangement involving school districts in efforts to promote some shared goal or purpose.
 - ☐ d. None of the above

5. If not currently involved in such an effort, has your district/school been involved in one in the past?
_____ yes (if yes, please continue with survey.)
_____ no (if no, discontinue at this point and return questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.

6. Is the PRIMARY purpose of the group staff development and/or school improvement?
_____ yes
_____ no

7. Has this purpose remained the same throughout the existence of the group?
_____ yes
_____ no

8. Are there other purposes as well?
_____ yes
_____ no
_____ If yes, please name these purposes.

9. How were these purposes determined?
_____ a. Stated in charter or other organization document.
_____ b. Agreement of membership
_____ c. Need of one or more members
_____ d. Other (Please state)

10. Please name the organizations involved:
a. School districts:

b. Institution(s) of higher education:

11. How were the members selected?
_____ a. Self selection
_____ b. By location
_____ c. By invitation of one or more members
_____ d. By election of the entire group
_____ f. Other (please specify)

12. How long has this group been in existence?
_____ under one year
_____ 1-3 years
_____ 4-6 years
_____ 7 or more years

13. Has the membership of the group remained the same throughout it's existence?
 ____ yes
 ____ no
14. Is there a formal organizational structure such as a constitution and/or bylaws that govern the operation of the group?
 ____ yes
 ____ no
15. If so, is there a paid director or manager who oversees the operations of the group?
 ____ yes
 ____ no
16. How does most of the work within the group get done? Choose the best answer:
 ____ a. Work is done by individuals employed by member organizations.
 ____ b. Parties outside the organization are hired to carry out some of the work.
 ____ c. Individuals given release time by member organizations.
 ____ d. Other (please supply)
17. How are funds raised for the operation of the group and its activities? Choose the best answer:
 ____ a. Generated through dues and/or assessments.
 ____ b. Generated through grants and/or aid.
 ____ c. Self-supporting through contributions and/or activities.
 ____ d. Normal school district revenues/cost sharing
 ____ e. other (please state)
18. What do you see as the major benefits of belonging to such a group? Check one or more:
 ____ a. Reduced cost of staff development/school improvement efforts through resource sharing.
 ____ b. Increased effectiveness of staff development school improvement efforts through sharing of information among organizations.
 ____ c. Psychological support for individual members belonging to such a group increases their ability to be effective in their jobs.
 ____ d. Political benefits realized through participation in such a group effort.
 ____ e. Other: please state.

19. What major problems has the group faced since its inception?

- ☐ a. Organizational problems.
- ☐ b. Funding problems.
- ☐ c. Conflicting priorities relating to goals.
- ☐ d. Conflicting work priorities
- ☐ e. Other (please state)

20. Would you like to have some kind of assistance provided in Oregon for groups like the one to which you belong?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

21. If yes, what kind of assistance would you see as being needed?

- ☐ a. Provide information on effective staff development/school improvement practices.
- ☐ b. Provide funding or other incentives.
- ☐ c. Provide a communications linkage so organizations can communicate regarding their common interests.
- ☐ d. Provide management assistance or otherwise facilitate operations.
- ☐ e. Other (please state).

22. What is the name of the organization to which you belong?

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your cooperation has greatly assisted me in obtaining information about networks for school improvement in Oregon. Please

return survey to: Vida S. Taylor
David Douglas School Dist.
1500 S. E. 130th Ave.
Portland, Oregon 97233

If you would like to have a report of information gathered by this survey, please include your name, title and address below:

APPENDIX B

PURPOSES OF NETWORKING

Professional development
Improved communications with the private sector
Development of school-industry partnership
Broad-based support for grant applications
Curriculum development (5)
Sharing of information
Program evaluation
Curriculum coordination (4)
Political
Meeting state standards (2)
Sharing consultants
Teacher education
Access to support and expertise beyond means of small districts
Better management systems development
Federal laws and regulations
Deal with communications problems
Coordinate efforts in county
Communications improvement
Problem solving
Motivation
School improvement
Instructional improvement

Shared programs

Funding; Laws

Advise teacher education programs

APPENDIX C

OREGON NETWORKS FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Network Name	School Dist Involved	IHES Involved	ESDS Involved
Action Alliance for Excellence in Education (A ² E ²)	Corvallis Lebanon Albany Philomath Sweet Home Crow Foot	Linn- Benton CC WOSC	Linn-Benton
BEST	Eugene Springfield Bethel	Lane CC	
The Big 3	Yamhill Grade Carlton Yamhil U-H	Linfield College	
Cascade Consortium Marion County	West Stayton		
Central Oregon Superintendents	Bend Sisters Jefferson Co. Redmond Prineville		Deschutes Crook Co.
Clatsop Consortium	Astoria	Clatsop CC	Clatsop
Columbia County Curriculum Comm.	All School Districts in Columbia Co.		
94-142 Consortium	Huntington Pine Eagle Burnt River Baker		
Council for Instructional Improvement (CII)	Tigard Portland David Douglas Lake Oswego Estacada Beaverton Vancouver Portland State Parkrose N. Clackamas	PSU Lewis & Clark Coll.	

Network Name	School Dist Involved	IHES Involved	ESDS Involved
Columbia County Curriculum Comm.	All Columbia Co. Districts	U of Portland	
Douglas County Curriculum Council	Reedsport S. Umpqua		Douglas
Douglas County Superintendents	Riddle Winston- Dillard All Districts in Co.		
ITIP Network	Coos Bay North Bend Coquille Myrtle Point Bandon		Coos
Lane County Curriculum Council Eugene 4J Cadre	Eugene Siuslaw Blackly Bethel Springfield	U of Oregon Lane CC	Lane
Lebanon Area Network	All Districts in Area		
Metro Area Staff Development (NREL)	Redlands Gladstone Estacada Reynolds	Lewis & Clark Coll.	Multnomah
OMSI Science Consortium	Lake Oswego Beaverton West Linn Oregon City N. Clackamas	Lewis & Clark Coll.	
Oregon Small School Association	Approximately 100 Small School Dists.	U of Oregon WOSC EOSC	Clackamas
Peer Coaching	Tigard Carus Parkrose Centennial Oregon City	U of Oregon	

Network Name	School Dist Involved	IHES Involved	ESDS Involved
Practical Research for Developing Education (PRIDE)	Bandon Myrtle Creek All Districts in Coos Co.	U of Oregon SWOCC	Coos Bay
Administrative Consultation and Training (Project ACT)	Portland David Douglas Parkrose Estacada Lake Oswego N. Clackamas Beaverton Boring Evergreen Tigard West Linn	Lewis & Clark Coll. PSU	
Rural Based Teacher Education Program	All Grant Co. Districts	EOSC	Grant
Southern Oregon Research and Development (S.O.R.D.)	Jackson Co. Medford Butte Falls Josephine Co. Central Point Ashland Eagle Point Phoenix-Talent	SOSC	Jackson
Silverton Area Consortium	Monitor Silverton 7J Silverton 4C Bethany Central Howell Silver Crest Victor Point Evergreen #10		
Sherman County School Improvement	Wasco South Sherman Rufus Sherman High		
Umatilla Network	Hermiston Stanfield Pilot Rock Morrow Co.	BMCC EOSC	Umatilla

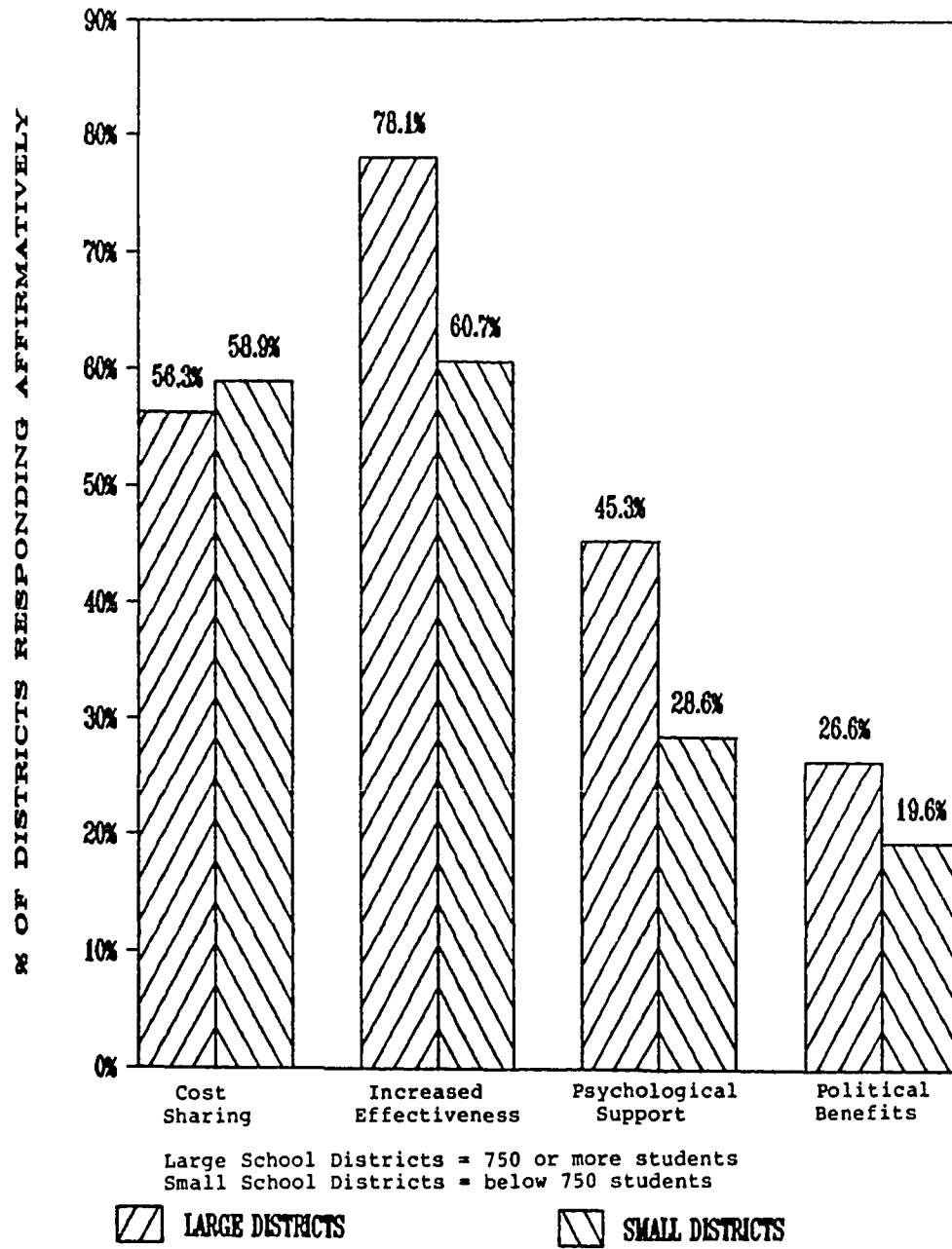
Network Name	School Dist Involved	IHES Involved	ESDS Involved
Union County Superintendents	Imbler Junction Cty. Elgin Cove Union North Powder	EOSC Lane CC U of Oregon	Union
Valley Educational Consortium (VEC)	Estacada Woodburn Willamina Stayton Mt. Angel Sheridan Dallas Carlton Elem Cascade UHS Dayton Monmouth Independence Central Silverton	Linn- Benton CC WOSC OSU	Linn-Benton Marion Polk Yamhill
None	Cottrell Bull Run		
None	North Plains Farmington View Groner Reedsville		
None	Weiser Malheur Annex		
None	Carus Clarkes Mulino Schuebel		
None	Boring Damascus Gresham High Gresham Grade		Multnomah
None	Ninety-one Canby		Clackamas
None	Helix Athena-Weston	EOSC	

Network Name	School Dist Involved	IHES Involved	ESDS Involved
None	Phoenix-Talent Central Point Medford Eagle Point		
None	Schuebel Molalla Elem Rural Dell Butte Creek Mulino		Clackamas
None	Clarkes Mulino Schuebel Carus Elem		
None	Lake Klamath Jackson Bend	SOSC	
None	Sutherlin Oakland		Douglas
None	Monroe Elem Alpine Elem Irish Bend Morrow Co. Hermiston		

APPENDIX D

BENEFITS OF NETWORKING

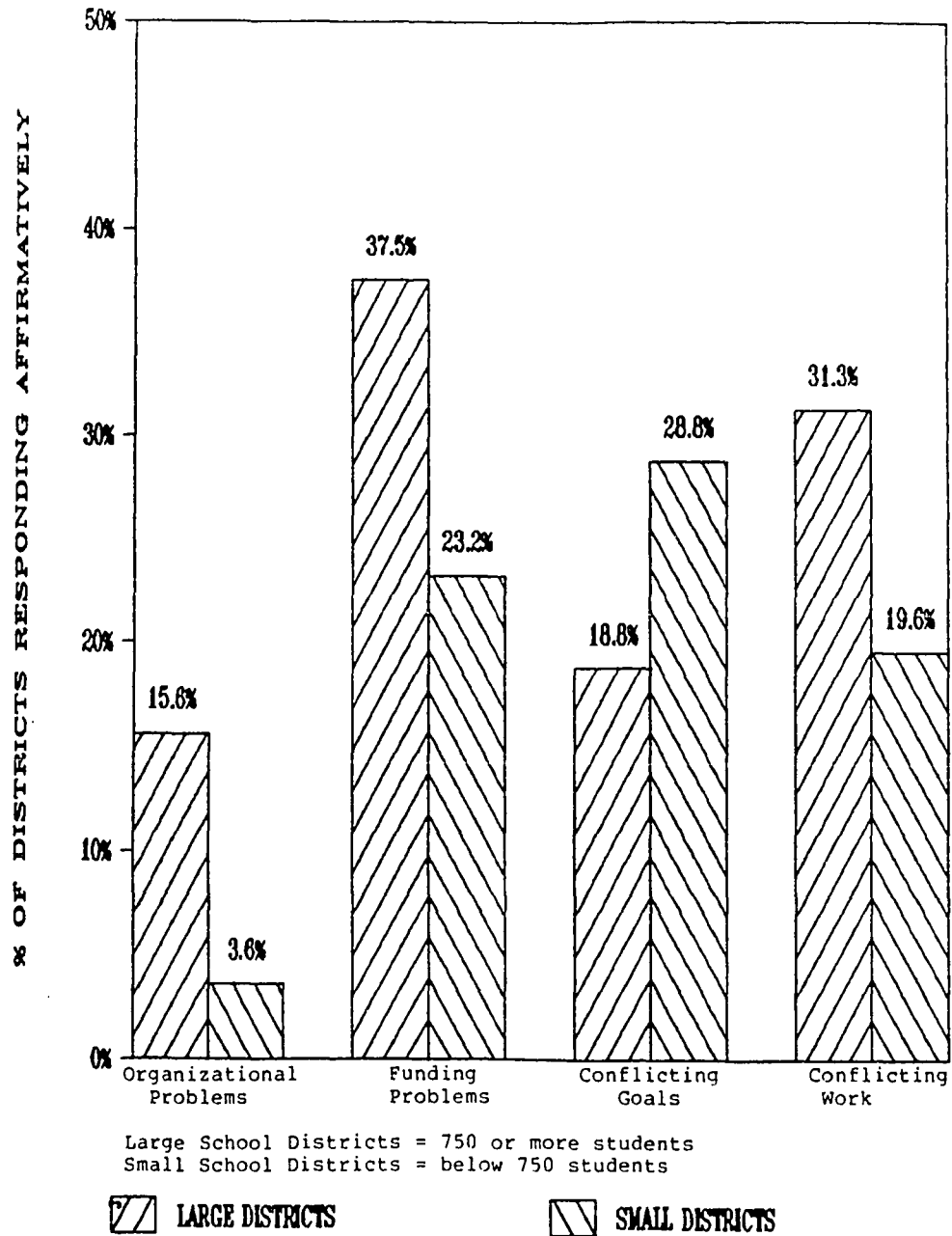
BY SIZE OF DISTRICT



APPENDIX E

PROBLEMS IN NETWORKING

BY SIZE OF DISTRICT



APPENDIX F

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE DESIRED

BY SIZE OF DISTRICT

