MIDDLE LEVEL TEACHERS' PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Review of Related Literature

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Chapter 2

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Introduction

The middle schools of today represent the most common approach to the education of young adolescents, those students between the ages of 10 and 14. Today's middle schools face issues related to the implementation of the middle school concept as well as counter-movements opposed to the philosophy (Gross, 2002). Hough (1997) addressed how middle schools are commonly conceptualized.

> Middle school components are most often conceptualized as *teams of teachers* meeting during a *common planning time* to (among other things) develop *integrated curricula* and teach within the structure of a *flexible schedule* that allows for more in-depth study and experiential learning. *Advisory* programs are provided in an effort to establish positive relationships between young adolescents and adults, ensuring that students are known well by at least one adult. Students are encouraged to participate in *intramural* activities to build self-esteem and promote healthy lifestyles. *Exploratory* classes or enrichment experiences are provided to allow students a chance to experiment with novel subject matter and interest areas without fear of being penalized by a letter grade. And all of the above are accomplished within *small heterogeneous* learning *communities* that emphasize *cooperative* teaching strategies that capitalize on the social dimension of teaching and learning. (Hough, 1997, p.285)

Don and Sally Clark (1994) defined a middle school as

> A separate school designed to meet the special needs of young adolescents in an organizational structure that encompasses any combinations of grades five through nine, wherein developmentally appropriate curricula and programs are used to create learning experiences that are both relative and interactive. (Clark & Clark, 1994, p.6)

There have been a number of grade configurations for schools of all levels over the past two-hundred years, prior to the establishment of today's currently predominant 5-3-4 arrangement (McEwin, Dickinson, Jenkins, 2003; Lounsbury & Vars, 2003). Before the establishment of junior highs in the early to mid-twentieth century, the most common grade configuration pattern consisted of eight grades of elementary followed by three, and then eventually four years of high school. "The idea of a separate school for early adolescents evolved slowly and was based primarily on concerns about the perceived failures of the organization of elementary and secondary schools into eight and four grades, respectively" (Clark & Clark, 1993, p.448).

Interestingly, there may not have been any real "reason" for this arrangement/ configuration of grade levels. In discussing the 8-4 grade pattern Gruhn and Douglas (1956) noted, "…there is no evidence that there was any extensive discussion of the number of grades that are best for elementary school, nor were any experimental schools developed to try different types of grade arrangements" (p.5). Regardless of whether the grade configurations were purposeful or "just evolved" over the decades, the fact remains that the majority of young adolescents today received a significant portion of their educational experiences in schools established, at least ostensibly, to meet their needs.

To understand the evolution from the past to today's programs and practices, this review of literature was organized into two main sections: (1) the history of the middle school

movement, and (2) programs and practices associated with the middle school movement. Section one, the history of the middle school movement, begins in the 1880's with the work of the Committee of Ten and concludes with current-day calls for reform. Significant attention is given to the role, influence, and importance of *Turning Points 2000* and the political values of efficiency, equity, quality, and choice. Section two, the programs and practices section, is organized around the eight *Turning Points 2000* recommendations. Broadly defined these sub-sections are: (1) curriculum and assessment, (2) instructional practice, (3) expert teachers, (4) organizing relationships, (5) democratic governance, (6) safe and healthy schools, (7) engaging with parents and community, and (8) ensuring student success.

History of the Movement

Political Values

Fowler (2000) wrote that within the policy environment, ideas are "those values and thought systems located, not in the outer world, but in human minds" (p.106). The design, purpose, and reform of junior highs and middle schools represent a contest among the dominant ideas held about how best to educate adolescents. Over the one-hundred year history of the movement consistent themes emerge in the recommendations and implications for practice. These issues have been difficult to address because they rest on values which are competing against others (Stout, Tallerico, & Scribner, 1994). The four basic values around which tensions are found are: choice, efficiency, equity, and quality (excellence) (Wirt & Kirst, 2005; Stout et al., 1994; Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1989).

Values are important because they shape how people define problems of policy and constrain available policy solutions (Fowler, 2000). Drawing on the work of Marshall and

colleagues (1989), Wirt and Kirst (2005) classified and defined the four instrumental values of choice, efficiency, equity, and quality, as:

- Choice: legislated options for local constituencies in making decisions
- Efficiency: either economic mode, where there is a focus on minimizing costs while maximizing gains, *or*, accountability mode, where by superiors oversee and hence control subordinates' use of power
- Equity: equalizing or redistributing public resources to meet morally and societally defined human needs.
- Quality: use of public resources to match professionally determined standards of excellence proficiency, or ability. (p.240)

Fowler's (2000) classification of values encompasses the four identified by Wirt and Kirst (2005) but delineates among three types of values: social, democratic, and economic. The social values include order and individualism; the democratic values include liberty, equality (economic and political), and fraternity; and, the economic values include efficiency, economic growth, and quality. Fowler notes that, in general, Americans do not differ in their support for these values, but rather in how they prioritize them.

Values make up the ideologies of groups. "Alan Issak (1987) defines ideology as 'a fairly coherent set of values and beliefs about the way the social, economic, and political systems should be organized and operated and recommendations about how these values and beliefs should be put into effect' (p.133)" (cited in Fowler, 2000, p.123). In the American political landscape two ideologies dominant, conservatism and liberalism. Fowler (2000) provided insight as to the beliefs and emphases of Business Conservatism, Religious Conservatism, New Politics Liberalism, and Neoliberalism. A representation of Fowler's findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Beliefs and Emphases of Political Ideologies

Political Ideology	Beliefs	Emphases
Business Conservatism	Humans motivated purely by self-interest, especially economic and that material well-being is the central goal of society.	Efficiency Freedom
Religious Conservatism	Human beings are sinners who often fall short of God's will.	Order
New Politics Liberalism	Many of the problems in U.S. society result from a history of discrimination and oppression based on factors beyond individual control.	Equality Fraternity
Neoliberalism	Race and gender politics have alienated the working-class and largely ignored growing economic inequality; government has a role to play, deeply concerned about issues of equity.	Economic growth Fraternity * By moving toward these then Equity would be achieved

(Fowler, 2000, pp.124-127)

When considering the history of the junior high and middle school movement it becomes apparent that the four primary values are evident throughout. In the sections that follow attention will be to the history of the middle school movement as well as the influence of dominant values on the decisions and practices that were undertaken.

1890-1960: Origin, Establishment, and Institutionalization of the Junior High School

The first junior high school may have operated, at least by grade organizational pattern, as early as 1895 in Richmond, Indiana (Heironomus, 1940; Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1961; Toepfer, 1997). However, "Most middle level scholars agree that the first junior high schools were opened during the 1909-10 school year when Columbus, Ohio and Berkeley, California established junior high schools" (Clark & Clark, 1994, p.7). The development of the junior high school grew rapidly as a way of organizing education for adolescents. Larry Cuban (1992) identified the purposes of the reorganized secondary schools (junior high schools) as to "end waste in the graded school, rescue teenage boys and girls from dropping out in the eighth grade, and provide prevocational choices to uncertain youth" (p.231).

In 1872 Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University, was concerned with the increasing age and length of stay of Harvard's students (Gruhn & Douglas, 1956; Van Til et al., 1961). Eliot asked the question, "Can school programs be shortened and enriched?" (Van Til et al., 1961). Eliot's question sparked a debate and inquiry into the very nature of the organizational patterns of the educational system. Fundamentally, Eliot's question was one of efficiency and quality.

The 8-4 arrangement was being questioned as the most efficient manner to educate students. By seeking to shorten programs, Eliot and the Committee of Ten, were trying to achieve a more efficient educational system, predominantly for higher education institutions. One that would produce students who would be better prepared for higher education and would thus require less time for learning on college campuses. The disposition of the Committee of Ten was evident by the groups makeup: five college presidents, one college professor, two private school headmasters, one public high school principal, and the United States Commissioner of

Education" (Van Til et al., 1961). The membership of the Committee of Ten is provided in Table 2.

Issues of quality were also considered relevant because Eliot noted it was taking longer to "produce" the same type of graduate that European institutions of higher education were producing in a shorter time-span. To be competitive with European graduates, Eliot and the Committee of Ten determined public education required a change to enhance the quality of education students received. The question became how to achieve such an outcome.

Table 2

Members of the Committee of Ten

Member's Name	Position
Charles W. Eliot	President, Harvard University (*Chairman)*
William T. Harris	Commissioner of Education
James B. Angell	President, University of Michigan
John Tetlow	Head Master of the Girls' High School and the Girls' Latin School, Boston, MA
James M. Taylor	President, Vassar College
Oscar D. Robinson	High School Principal, Albany, NY
James H. Baker	President, University of Colorado
Richard H. Jesse	President, University of Missouri
James C. McKenzie	Headmaster of the Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, NJ
Henry C. King	Professor, Oberlin College

(National Educational Association, 1894, p.4)

The Committee of Ten identified and recommended educators (secondary and post-secondary) from around the country to serve on committees at subject specific conferences that

were to be held all on the same days at specific locations across the United States. While making recommendations the Conferences generally leaned toward the installation and use of five periods a week for instruction per content area. Upon review by the Committee of Ten it became apparent that there simply would not be enough time in the school day for all Conference recommendations to be strictly adhered to. As a result, the Committee chose to recommend four periods per week of instruction rather than five.

One of the major recommendations from The Committee of Ten was the introduction of subjects associated with high schools to students at a younger age. The Committee of Ten eventually recommended that the grade organization of schools be arranged in a 6-6 pattern (George, Stevenson, Thomason, Beane, 1992). The goal of moving two grades (7 and 8) from the elementary to the secondary level was recommended to produce more time for students to be engaged with academic subjects at an earlier age and therefore to be more prepared for entry into college at an earlier age.

The work of the Committee of Ten and the related sub-committees demonstrates the concern for the values of efficiency, quality, and equity for the education of adolescents. Part of the work delegated to the sub-committees was to determine the most appropriate scope and sequence for a given subject area. This allowed for a coordinated curriculum that did not place importance on the value of choice, whereby a local school or district could determine the curriculum appropriate to their needs. Rather this helped to ensure quality and equity in the curricular experiences of adolescent students. Efficiency remained the driving force behind the work of the Committee of Ten and the sub-committees. The primary issue was about having secondary schools be more efficient in preparing students for higher education. As a result, secondary level subjects and structures were transplanted onto 7th and 8th grade level students.

The work done by the Committee of Ten was further supported in 1899 by the Committee on College Entrance Requirements. This committee, as noted by Van Til and his colleagues (1961), "…argued that the proposed change would be good for young people of the stage involved, early adolescence. The Committee was more concerned for the best program here and now for children entering adolescence and less concerned for President Eliot's major interest in sending students to college earlier" (p. 9). This committee represented a primary focus on issues of quality, first and foremost, with little concern given to the value of efficiency so prevalent in the Committee of Ten.

While the Committee of Ten was undertaking its work and nearing the completion of its final report, a group comprised of school superintendents, The Committee of Fifteen, was also examining issues related to the education of adolescents, though focusing more on school reorganization. The Committee of Fifteen's purpose was to, "investigate the organization of school systems, the coordination of studies in primary and grammar schools, and the training of teachers" (Gruhn & Douglas, 1956, p.9). Whereas the Committee of Ten represented primarily the interests of institutions of higher education, the Committee of Fifteen, comprised of school superintendents from mostly large city districts, focused on the actual implementation and changing of practices at the district and building level.

This group's primary focus, like the Committee of Ten, was on issues of organizational efficiency and quality. Unlike the Committee of Ten, the Committee of Fifteen, "…was hesitant to cut the period of elementary education. The Committee of Fifteen chose the other possibility suggested by the Committee of Ten, namely, beginning some high school subjects earlier" (Van Til, et al., 1961, p.8). The distinction between cutting the length of the elementary level versus

instituting secondary approaches represents a difference in how best to refine educational arrangements for efficiency.

The most notable contribution of the Committee of Fifteen was that, "…it suggested that algebra begin in grades seven and eight and Latin in grade eight. The Committee of Fifteen suggested further that the earlier introduction of these subjects should be used to make the transition easier from elementary to the secondary school" (Gruhn & Douglas, 1961, p.10). The earlier introduction of subjects suggests that the Committee of Fifteen may have been driven more by issues of equity than the Committee of Ten. By having students experience the subject matter earlier, in order to ensure an easier transition, the Committee of Fifteen sought to equalize the educational experiences of students before they entered the high school.

A report issued in 1913 by the Committee on Economy of Time in Education provided a formal recommendation for the establishment of junior high schools, the first of its kind (George et al., 1992; Valentine, Clark, Hackmann, & Petzko, 2004), however, several junior highs had already been established (Gruhn & Douglas, 1956). Again the value of efficiency was being brought to bear on education. In keeping with Eliot's primary concern, the committee assumed it was taking too long for students to be educated.

The Committee on Economy of Time in Education agreed that a students' time period could be shortened and thus supported the move from an 8-4 configuration to a 6-6 pattern with a further division of the high school into two units, "(1) A junior high school of three years, extending from the twelfth to the fifteenth year; and (2) a senior high school, also of three years, covering the period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth years" (Baker, 1913, p.26).

Whereas previous groups and committees made recommendations on a global scale about efficient organizational structures and general guidelines for ensuring a quality curricular

experience for students, the Seven Cardinal Principles released in 1918 from the work of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education sought to provide a detailed account of the major components which, "should guide the reorganization and development of secondary education in the United States" (Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, 1918, p.5). The principles, or objectives as the committee referred to them, addressed the purposes of education. These principles included health, command of fundamental processes, worthy home-membership, vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure time, and ethical character (Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, 1918).

Of interest to this study and the eventual establishment of middle schools is how the Commission framed the purpose of these new junior highs and the values they represented contrasted to those proposed for high schools. With the release of the Cardinal Principles the value of choice was given credence as a viable purpose in educating young adolescents. The Commission stated,

> In the junior high period emphasis should be placed upon the attempt to help the pupil to explore his own aptitudes and to make at least provisional choice of the kinds of work to which he will devote himself. In the senior period emphasis should be given to training in the fields thus chosen. This distinction lies at the basis of the organization of the junior and senior high schools….In the junior high school there should be the gradual introduction of departmental instruction, some choice of subjects under guidance, promotion by subjects, prevocational courses, and a social organization that calls forth initiative and develops the sense of personal responsibility for the welfare of the group. (Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, 1918, pp.18-19)

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century junior highs were beginning to be established across the country. Thomas Briggs, a professor at the Teachers College at Columbia University, published a seminal work on junior highs, entitled *The Junior High School* (1920). Briggs was an early pioneer and advocate of the reform, having visited over sixty junior highs across the United States (Lawton, 1989). In this book Professor Briggs provided an analysis of the trends associated with junior highs as well as an overview of some characteristics associated with the new educational structure for adolescents.

Briggs (1920) noted the major purposes of junior highs were to provide students: (1) an earlier beginning for secondary school, (2) an earlier beginning to trade school, (3) and exploration. Essentially, Briggs described the purposes as being directed towards efficiency and choice. Briggs noted that the establishment of these junior highs was not always done simply because it was considered the most appropriate educational arrangement for adolescents.

> …the reorganization of schools on the 6-6, 6-3-3, or 6-2-4 plans was not always due primarily to a conception of definite programs for educational reforms. In some instances a superintendent had an outgrowth high-school building which was too good to destroy and yet not suited for all the elementary grades; in others there was a growth of population in a section of the city remote from the existing high school; in others still there was overcrowding that could best be relieved by a building in which pupils of the upper grades and the first year of the high school could be congregated. These and other similar conditions not infrequently were the cogent reasons for reorganization. (Briggs, 1920, p.33)

This description by Professor Briggs provides help in understanding the ambiguity in purpose that Cuban (1992) noted. It also supports the predominant value of efficiency of programs and facilities while at the same time suggesting no real orientation toward quality.

Briggs also identified claims for, and objections against, the idea of the junior high school. Claims in favor of the junior high school suggested these schools would (a) make administrative tasks easier; (b) improve curriculum and courses; (c) produce better teachers and teaching; (d) meet individual student needs better, and (e) keep students from dropping out (Briggs, 1920). From these five claims for we see the values of efficiency in "a" and "d," while the value of quality was present in "b," "c," and "d." Equity is also present in claim "b."

Professor Calvin Davis (1924) from the University of Michigan, expanded on these purposes with what he termed the four "aims" of junior highs, these included: (1) to humanize the education of adolescents, (2) to economize school time, (3) to prevent unnecessary withdrawals, and (4) to further the cause of democracy in education. Davis provided a discussion about how the different time periods, in the development of the junior high school had different purposes, methods, and content. A representation of these three eras presented by Davis (1924) is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Davis' Periods and Influences

Time Period	Purposes	Methods	Content
1890-1900	The aim was to shorten the period of training for the college student who is preparing to enter the professional life.	The movement consisted of destructive criticism of the old order and vague reachings for something better to take its place.	Interest and discussion centered in topics relating to the external forms of school reorganization.
1900-1910	The aim was to hold more pupils of all types in the	The movement was characterized by the	Interests and discussion centered

	upper grades of the elementary school and in the high school, and particularly to make vocational provision for those who intended to go to work.	formulation of positive educational theories and of plans for putting them into operation.	in topics relating to the external forms of school reorganization.
1910-1924	The aim has been to discover the individual characteristics of pupils and to provide a more adequate education for each particular child in whatever grade of the school he may happen to be.	The movement has concerned itself with the practical application of theories, the analysis of processes, and the modification of administration in accordance with the results obtained.	Interest and discussion have centered in the subject matter, the methods of teaching, and the spirit behind the work.

(Davis, 1924, pp.28-29)

From the previous discussion of Davis' aims and identified purposes, methods, and content the influence and presence of certain values becomes more apparent. According to Davis' aims, equity was important for understanding the adolescent and preventing unnecessary withdrawals. Efficiency remained important with the aim of economizing time, while the importance of democratic (social) values was given credence as a major aim. Tracing the value disposition across the three time periods Davis examined, 1890-1900 was focused predominantly on issues of efficiency with a tinge of emphasis given to issues of quality. 1900-1910 represented the presence of equity and quality while maintaining efficiency; and, 1910-1920 saw an increase in issues of equity and quality, particularly about the technical work of teaching. The 1910-1920 period represented a focus on improving the quality of work and experiences students received from the schools they attended.

In addition to the purposes, methods, and content, Davis offered an account of the historical antecedents which led to the establishment of junior high schools from 1890 to 1910. Davis points out the changes in educational philosophy in Germany, France, and across Europe

and how those changes were in accordance with the progressives, both academicians and practitioners, in America at the time. Of the progressives, Davis (1924) remarked,

> The American progressives desired a genuine reform in aims, content, methods, and spirit. President William R. Harper, of the University of Chicago; President Nicholas Murray Butler, of Columbia University; Professor Paul H. Hanus, of Harvard University; Professor John Dewey, of the University of Chicago; and several of the leading superintendents and principals of schools, endorsed this policy. These men, imbued with a true missionary spirit, pushed the reform program forward on every appropriate occasion. The result was that the decade from 1900 to 1910 became a notable one in the annals of American education. (p.21)

Davis went on to illustrate what these reformers sought for public education.

> One and all of these committees subscribed to the principle of elimination from the course of study of many worn-out and unpractical subjects; a better articulation of the work offered in the several years; and a complete reorganization of the form of the public school system on the basis of a six-six arrangement of grades. (Davis, 1924, p.21)

Given our understanding of the influence of values in education and educational policy it appears as though Davis was correct in his assessment of the influence of some of the key figures and reform efforts of junior high education.

Leonard Koos (1927), a professor at the University of Minnesota, gave an account of the contexts within which junior highs were organized and provided evidence about the nature and purpose of junior high functions. Koos studied documents produced by junior high schools and school districts and examined the educational literature of the time to determine the functions of the junior high. The functions identified by Koos were: "(1) realizing a democratic school system

through, retention of pupils, economy of time, recognition of individual differences, exploration and guidance, and the beginnings of vocational education, (2) recognizing the nature of the child at adolescence, (3) providing conditions for better teaching, (4) securing better scholarship, (5) improving the disciplinary situation and socializing opportunities, (6) effecting financial economy, (7) relieving the building situation, (8) continuing the influence of the home, (9) hastening reform in grades above and below, (10) normalizing the size of classes, and (11) relieving the teachers" (Koos, 1927, p.19).

Koos' analysis of the eleven functions provides an understanding into the values and orientations for shaping the junior high. Considering all eleven functions shows the presence of the four main values of: choice (1), equity (1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11), efficiency (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11), and quality (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11). As Davis' showed, choice was still the least prevalent, but it was present. Quality was beginning to rival efficiency as the dominant value of importance to the movement. Connections are also evident to democratic and economic values throughout Koos' functions. Whereas the Committee of Ten and early educators were concerned with how to get students through school quicker and thus took an interest in how schools could be more efficient, Koos showed that by the 1920s issues of quality were beginning to gain in importance. As will be shown next, Koos' analysis provides additional insight into the growth of choice, via exploration programs, and a vocal resistance to pushing for job efficiency with adolescents.

After documenting the proposed functions Koos then evaluated the nature of each claim made by providing data to examine the proposed functions. From this review, Koos (1927) identified four aims and five functions of secondary schools. The four aims identified were: (1) civic responsibility, (2) health, (3) participate in and appreciate the arts and physical activity, (4)

job efficiency. The five functions were: (1) achieve a democratic education, (2) recognize individual differences, (3) exploration and guidance, (4) understanding of adolescence, (5) training in fundamental processes (core competencies)(Koos, 1927).

Koos also provided an excerpt from a previous publication in 1924 that discussed the similarities and differences between junior and senior highs. Koos noted that the aims for civic responsibility, health and recreation were the same, but that junior highs should not focus on job efficiency. The functions of democratic education, recognizing individual differences, and understanding of adolescence should be present at both levels, but exploration and guidance and training in fundamental processes should happen more intensely at the junior high level (Koos, 1924 cited in Koos 1927).

Koos' conceptions of the junior high can be capsulated as focusing on civic responsibility, health, recreational activity, democratic education, recognizing individual differences, and understanding adolescence, with more emphasis than senior highs on exploration, guidance, and fundamental processes, and with less emphasis on job efficiency.

Ralph Pringle (1937), a professor at Illinois State University, produced the next major publication on junior high schools, *The Junior High School: A Psychological Approach*. In this book Professor Pringle, in a manner similar to the earlier scholars, provided an historical perspective, conceptions, and a description of the content delivered. Pringle (1937) offered the following functions of a junior high: (1) recognition of the nature of the pupils, (2) student retention (preventing dropouts), (3) economy of the pupil's time, and (4) exploration and guidance. With Pringle's functions, the values of equity (recognition of pupils and retention), efficiency (economy of time), and choice (exploration) are evident. Pringle reiterated the presence of choice roughly ten years after Koos' publication also acknowledged the value.

William Gruhn, a professor at the University of Connecticut and Harl Douglas, a professor at the University of Colorado, provided the mostly widely known and comprehensive model of the junior high (Valentine et al., 2004). Gruhn and Douglass' (1947) six functions of the junior high school, which the author's took from the "best current thinking" (Gruhn & Douglass, 1956, p.31), included the following changing trends from the earlier conceptualizations. The six functions were: (1) integration, (2) exploration, (3) guidance, (4) differentiation, (5) socialization, and (6) articulation. Writing about the history of the middle school movement in 1993, Clark and Clark stated of Gruhn and Douglass' functions,

> Although it reflected some changes in the perceived functions of junior high schools, Gruhn and Douglass' listing continued to emphasize exploration and guidance, replaced the emphasis on grade-level retention and economy of time with a new emphasis on socializing experiences, placed greater importance on the function of differentiation (individual differences), and introduced the concept of integration. (Hansen & Hern, 1971; Van Til et al., 1961)(Clark & Clark, 1993, p.449)

The insight Gruhn and Douglass' functions provide is important for understanding the growth and change in the junior high movement. As has been shown, efficiency was the dominant value influencing junior high education. However, as Gruhn and Douglass' showed, by the mid-part of the 20th century there had been a fundamental shift in these values. Less emphasis was given to issues of efficiency and quality, while more was given to equity and choice. Viewing students as individuals that differed in their needs, interests, backgrounds, and ideas as learners represented a shift towards allowing more student choice and providing appropriate services (equity) to students given their own uniqueness.

By the 1960s publications about the functioning of junior highs were becoming more prevalent (Conant, 1960; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1961; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1961; Trump & Baynham, 1961; Van Til et al., 1961; Hughes & Manlove, 1963; Lounsbury & Varani, 1964). Lounsbury (1992) wrote of the era, "The inability of the junior high school to stay open, to establish an independent identity, and to fulfill some of its intended functions, while understandable, led to considerable criticism in the 1940s and 1950s" (p.9). Cuban (1992) cited six criticisms that Douglass (1945) directed toward junior highs: (1) departmentalization; (2) curriculum being too subject-centered; (3) teachers that were inadequately trained; (4) teaching similar to what occurred in high schools; (5) students organized into groups taking subjects together, and; (6) limiting student exploration of subjects. Much of the criticism leveled at junior highs appeared to be centered on issues of quality and student choice.

In 1961, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) published *The Junior High School We Need.* The report issued areas deemed necessary for providing good junior high schools. The recommendations were: (1) The local community must be an integral part of all planning for change, (2) Planning for change must be based on extensive and continuing local study, (3) Professional educators must accept their leadership responsibility as architects and interpreters of needed change in the junior high school, (4) Educational leadership must develop in staff members an understanding and acceptance of and an active interest in change (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1961). These recommendations show an interest in excellence (quality) of the school program, an excellence which should be highly determined at the local level (choice). Democratic themes of, "the local

level" and "acceptance of leadership" also relate to the democratic values of liberty and political equality.

In 1961 another publication, *Modern Education for the Junior High School Years*, by Van Til, Vars, and Lounsbury was published. This work provided a detailed analysis of the state of junior high schools in the early 1960s. The work encapsulates what life was like in junior highs of the era. In a summarization of the authors' research on the characteristics of junior high schools in the 1950s, Van Til and his colleagues (1961) found that junior highs: consisted of grades 7-9; with an average staff of 24 teachers, a principal, and an enrollment of 600 students; separate facility; daily schedule of six, fifty minute periods, lunch, and a homeroom period; basic subjects of English, social studies, math, science, home economics, industrial arts, music, art, and physical education; some classes grouped by ability, others randomly; students promoted by grade rather than by subject; teacher decision on what to teach; and, an organized guidance program. In the closing to the review on the state of junior high schools, the authors noted "the composite junior high school of the 1950s was similar to, yet different from, the junior high school of the 1920s. The junior high school has responded and presumably will continue to respond to changing demands" (Van Til et al., 1961, p.64).

1960-1990: The Middle School Movement

> Any educational organization serving children from ages 5 or 6 to about 18, ought to have three fairly distinct levels. One would be the level of childhood education which we have thought of as the elementary school. At the other extreme is adolescent education which we have usually defined as the job of the high school. In between childhood and adolescence, there is the need for a third level of education which would be middle

school education or education of the in-between group: the older child, the preadolescent, and the early adolescent. (Alexander, 1966, p.19)

The concept of the middle school as a separate idea from the prevalent notion of the junior high school appeared in the mid-1960s. The movement was spurred by growing concern about the ineffectiveness of the junior high (Eichhorn, 1968). The theme of ineffectiveness in this era was associated with efficiency, quality, choice, and equity.

"The period from 1964-1984 was described as the 'years of readiness—a necessary period for accumulation of an experiential background that has to precede major action'" (Lounsbury, 1984, p.171 cited in Kasak, 2004, p.234). Two of the seminal writers and early founders of the middle school concept during this time period were William Alexander and Donald Eichhorn. Eichhorn (1966), a school superintendent from Pennsylvania, published *The Middle School*, while Alexander, a professor at the University of Florida, and his colleagues (1968) published *The Emergent Middle School*. In the years to follow, Alexander would come to be regarded as the father of the middle school movement (McEwin, 1998).

In 1963 Alexander spoke at Cornell University at a conference on changes occurring and features remaining the same at the junior high level. In the speech Alexander made reference to a new type of school, a "middle school" to bridge the gaps between elementary and high school or between childhood and adolescence (Alexander, 1965) that would provide continuity for the education of students between the ages of 5 to 18 (Alexander, 1966). Little did the participants in the audience that day realize they were witnessing what has been recognized as the birth of the middle school (Rosenzweig, 1997; McEwin, 1998).

Two years later in 1965, William Alexander, writing with Emmett Williams a fellow professor at the University of Florida, shared the features of what a middle school model should

encompass. Alexander and Williams (1965) provided their suggestions as guidelines for middle schools as those which should: be designed to meet the needs of students; provide individualized instruction; give priority to intellectual components of the curriculum; place an emphasis on skills of continued learning; provide exploratory experiences; offer a health and physical education program; place an emphasis on values throughout; and, effectively use personnel (Alexander & Williams, 1965).

Alexander and Williams differentiated the curriculum into three phases that should be present in a middle school: learning skills, general studies, and personal development (Alexander & Williams, 1965). The learning skills phase can be thought of as the basics which all students must acquire, general studies referred to a deeper understanding of common core pieces of information, while personal development was based upon students having the opportunity to explore their own personal interests.

These early thinkers of the middle school perceived a fluid boundary through which students would progress. The authors proposed a shift from the rigid boundaries of class and subject matter commonly found in the junior highs. Instead, Alexander & Williams (1965) suggested, "Most children would remain in the middle school for a period of four years; however, some might be ready to move into the upper or high school after three years, and some might need to remain in the middle school for a fifth year" (p.222). In Alexander and Williams' statement we see an early conceptualization of performance-based organization rather than a traditional operationalization of the school years.

In 1966, speaking at what might have been the first conference on middle schools (McEwin, 1998), William Alexander delivered a speech that provided the guidelines and phases mentioned above, as well as three factors deemed important for moving away from the junior

high school towards the establishment of the middle school: continuity in the educational program experienced by students; the growing knowledge base on human development; and, practices of the junior high (both positive and negative) (Alexander, 1966).

From the beginning of the conceptualization of the middle school that Alexander provided we see less emphasis on issues of efficiency and greater emphasis on the issues of equity, choice, and quality. The difference between the junior high and middle school models centered on how the values of equity, choice, and quality were operationalized in school programs.

The middle school concept supported and brought attention and focus to the values of equity and choice. From the early admonitions of Alexander to the present day literature, the middle school concept focuses on the real and perceived needs of students, both as individuals and as groups. From this student-centered focus we see programs and organizational structures initiated to meet the needs of students. Equity in this instance then, is about ensuring that all students are provided with all the available resources necessary to ensure their success. Choice is manifested through exposing students to a wide variety of programs and activities. Exploratory programs and authentic, integrated forms of curriculum represent practices that have surfaced as methods to promote the value of choice.

In *The Emergent Middle School*, Alexander and his colleagues (1968) sought to provide educators with an understanding of this new type of school. They articulated the basis for its establishment, necessary features, methods of evaluation, reports of research, and examples of middle school methods. *The Emergent Middle School* presented a comprehensive view for scholars and practitioners of the context, research, evidence, ideas, examples, and recommendations for the development and establishment of a new type of middle school. In

defining how the emergent middle school was different from junior highs and other schools serving adolescence at the time, Alexander and his colleagues provided clarity of the middle school concept,

> …it is a school providing a program planned for a range of older children, preadolescents, and early adolescents that builds upon the elementary school program for earlier childhood and in turn is built upon by the high school's program for adolescents….Thus, the emergent middle school may be best thought of as a phase and program of schooling bridging but differing from the childhood and adolescent phases and programs. (Alexander, et al., 1968, p.5).

Alexander found three forms of rationale when studying why practitioners formed middle schools. These rationales for the formation of middle schools were:

> (1) To provide a program especially adapted to the wide range of individual differences and special needs of the 'in-between-ager';
>
> (2) To create a school ladder arrangement that promotes continuity of education from school entrance to exit;
>
> (3) To facilitate through a new organization, the introduction of needed innovations in curriculum and instruction. (Alexander et al., 1968, p.11)

These three rationales provided evidence of the values that shaped the modern middle school. By providing programs for a range of skills, practitioners were seeking to promote equity among all students in the school. Through a continuity of programs attention was given to efficiency, but not as it had traditionally been approached. With the continuity of programs, practitioners and researchers were trying to deliver a coherent educational program to students in a manner as

efficient as possible. Addressing issues of innovations leads to the value of quality, as programs need to improve to provide better quality.

The Emergent Middle School framed the issue of the need for the new middle school along a number of fronts. Alexander and his colleagues (1968) provided insight by addressing: a) the knowledge base on adolescence to conceptualize the middle school, b) the inequities of the junior high schools including the fragmented curriculum, teacher specialization, departmental structure, limited exploratory program, and the lack of articulation c) curricular issues of the middle school, including personal development, skills for continued learning, and organized knowledge, d) what teaching in the middle school would be like, e) organizational and staffing issues, f) need for school evaluation, g) how to begin moving toward the new middle school concept, and h) national trends of middle schools via survey results.

Eichhorn (1966) noted the importance of considering the student when thinking about the development of an appropriate educational environment. To describe this stage of life, commonly referred to as adolescence for some students and pre-pubescence for others, Eichhorn coined two terms which would come to define children between the ages of 10-14 in middle school settings (transescent) and the phase of development (transescence). Transescence was defined as "the stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence" (Eichhorn, 1966, p.3). Transescent was developed to describe the student and would replace what Alexander termed the in-betweener or the in-between-ager. Braddock and McPartland (1993) called the proposal of the use of the term transescence, a "quirk of judgment" (p.150).

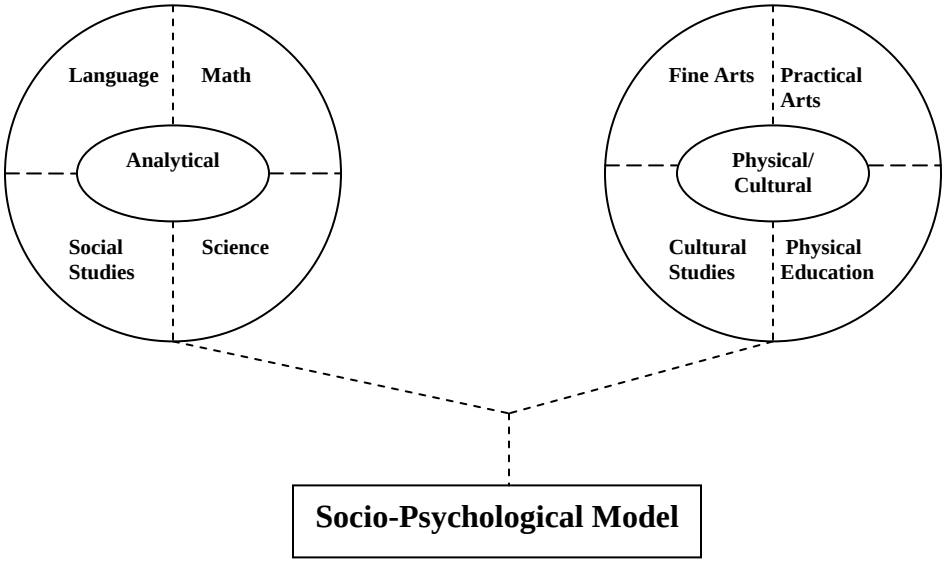
What Eichhorn provided, which proved to be important for middle school education for years to come, was to develop a model to explain the background and rationale for the

establishment of middle schools. Eichhorn (1966) used a socio-psychological model to explain and understand the education of transescents and then translated the model into the middle school model. Eichhorn pointed out that the development of the middle school model came about as a result of isomorphic pressures and tendencies from the socio-psychological model. In other words, the middle school model was built upon the foundation of the socio-psychological model.

The remainder of Eichhorn's book goes on to explain the functions of each section of the models. The models are provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Eichhorn's Model



Eichhorn's models have six areas that influence the areas the transescent interacts with. The six areas were: physical, emotional, intellectual, economical, political, and sociological. The majority of Eichhorn's book gives focus about issues related to physical growth, mental growth, and cultural influences during transescence. Eichhorn combines the forces of sociology, economics and political interests within the cultural component.

What was different about Eichhorn's approach to transescence was how the transescent was viewed as a person and a student and subsequently, what that shift in approach would mean in a middle school setting. As the quote from Eichhorn (1987) illustrates, this was a much different epistemological approach to the education of 10-14 year olds than the purported model that junior highs provided.

> The learning environment suggested by the nature of transescence is one of flexibility—permitting students much freedom of action. Flexibility should foster independence in learning pursuits, but it does not imply that these need be by chaos or a lack of restrictions. Certainly, administrative controls are necessary to insure student welfare, safety, and learning processes, but it must be remembered that the nature of the transescent is best served in an atmosphere of minimized rigidity. (p.58)

Eichhorn also suggested two organizational arrangements, the analytical and the physical-cultural, for the type of curriculum that should be present in a middle school. Both arrangements were built upon the foundation of the socio-psychological model. The analytical comprised the disciplines of language, mathematics, social studies, and science. The physical-cultural comprised the disciplines of fine arts, practical arts, physical education, and cultural studies. Eichhorn's work shows the importance given to democratic concepts of freedom and liberty while recognizing that order must still be maintained.

By the early 1970s middle schools were beginning to become a more featured approach to the education of young adolescents. In sheer numbers alone the 5-6-7-8 and 6-7-8 grade configuration (the two patterns most commonly associated with middle schools) accounted for 23% (2,434) of all middle level schools in 1971 (Valentine and Goodman, 2005). The structure and arrangement of the middle school was becoming more common, and as a result there was a

growing need for educating school personnel and the public at large about this new type of school.

The Middle School We Need (1975) published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (the same publishers of *The Junior High We Need* (ASCD, 1961), previously cited) provided a description of, and rationale for, the new middle school. Drawing largely on the work of Eichhorn and Alexander, the book provided an illustration of components and programmatic features of this new schooling arrangement. The book was consistent with previous work on middle schools by providing a rationale for the school, the adolescent learner, and the changes undergone during transescence. In an interesting bit of foreshadowing of issues to come in the future and issues that were being dealt with at the time, the authors' noted similarities between the programs of junior highs and middle schools and how features from the high school were pushed down on them.

> Many alleged characteristics of the senior high have 'contaminated' the junior high—a departmentalized subject-matter curriculum, interscholastic activities, sophisticated early socialization activities, and college and vocational preparation. And now it appears that many middle schools have continued these same sins by simply moving the junior high's structure, program, and schedule down a grade or two….Thus, it should come as no surprise that the only real differences between many middle schools and junior highs have been in name and grade organization. (ASCD, 1975, pp.3-4)

This would be an issue that middle school advocates and educators would continue to struggle with for many years (Valentine, Clark, Irvin, Keefe, & Melton, 1993; MacIver & Epstein, 1991; Valentine, Clark, Nickerson, & Keefe, 1981).

With the emergence of middle schools across the country and publications specifically addressing middle school issues such as textbooks (e.g. Hansen & Hern, 1971) and middle school facilities (e.g. Murphy, 1965) a national association dedicated to middle schools was soon formed.

In 1973, the National Middle School Association (NMSA) was founded from an existing regional organization known as the Midwest Middle School Association (National Middle School Association, 1998). "The National Middle School Association is the only national education association that focuses exclusively on the education of young adolescents" (Valentine et al., 2004, p.6). One hundred and twenty-five people were present at the conference of the Midwest Middle School Association, 45 of whom passed the motion to become a national organization in 1973 (NMSA, 1998), currently the membership of NMSA stands at over 30,000 (NMSA, 2005).

> By the mid-1970s it seemed clear that this middle school idea had struck a chord and would not be a passing fancy as were so many other innovations introduced in the post-World War II era. Middle schools sprung up like mushrooms after a rain; professional literature was suddenly flooded with articles purporting the advantages of the 6-8 middle school over the 7-9 junior high. (Lipka, Lounsbury, Toepfer, Vars, Alessi, Kridel, 1998, p.8)

It was also recognized that more research was needed on what it was that made middle schools unique (Wiles & Thomason, 1975).

Lounsbury (1992) identified three factors that contributed to the acceptance of middle schools over junior high schools: 1) dissatisfaction with the junior high school as it evolved, 2) the Sputnik-induced obsession with academic master, particularly in mathematics and science,

and 3) the recognition that young people were indeed maturing physically earlier (p.10). Gatewood (1977) identified positive indicators that the middle school movement was headed in the right direction. These included "successful development of national and state middle school organizations…a quality journal, and successful annual conferences….Another important development by 1976 had been the growing recognition of middle schools at the state and university levels through new certification requirements for middle school teachers and the concomitant development of pre-service teacher education programs" (pp.8-9).

Gatewood (1977) also noted something that would continue to the present day to be an issue for middle schools, "The middle school has a future only if what happens behind classroom doors recognizes a special program for a youngster with unique needs and characteristics in the transitional years between childhood and adolescence" (p.10). Cuban (1992) noted that the main reason given by principals in the late 1970s for instituting a middle school was to, "design a program geared specifically to the social, psychological, moral, and intellectual needs of early adolescents" (p.243).

During this same period, William Alexander (1977) noted that the question would not so much be will the middle school survive, but rather in what form would it take: standardized or student-centered. Alexander (1977) also described the forces that were affecting the goal of developing student-centered schools. The forces Alexander (1977) identified are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Forces Identified by Alexander Affecting the Goal of Student-Centered Schools

Force Number	Away from Goal	Towards Goal
1	Lack of middle school teacher certification	Preservice and inservice middle school teacher education

2	Lack of leadership training for middle school education	Preservice and inservice leadership training for middle school education
3	Lack of community involvement in planning and operating middle schools	Community participation in planning and operating middle schools
4	Inadequate budget for a middle school program	Carefully developed budget to meet priorities in middle school program
5	Failure to define and/or use statement of school goals	Plan for stating, using, and redefining school goals
6	Evaluation/accreditation of middle schools by elementary/junior high school criteria	Evaluation of middle schools by flexible guidelines for middle schools
7	Planning of middle school programs without consultation of elementary and high school representatives	Planning of education from school entry to exit by representatives of all levels
8	Lack of systematic evaluation of middle school programs and their elements	Plan of middle school program evaluation, providing frequent feedback from students, parents, and others
9	Lack of an adequate curriculum plan for each middle school	Personnel and time for planning each school's curriculum
10	Lack of comprehensive data regarding the school's curriculum	System for gathering and using data about the school's population
11	Little communication and sharing among middle schools	Leagues, clearinghouses, exchanges for middle schools
12	Short-term, inadequate reorganization without fundamental focus on goal	Long-term preplanning and continuing planning, evaluation, and re-planning toward goal

(Alexander, 1977, pp.43-44)

Moeller and Valentine (1981) identified programmatic characteristics of middle schools at the beginning of the 1980s through a review of the literature, subsequent grouping of concepts

and a survey of experts. Moeller and Valentine's findings were organized into seven broad characteristics with related educational program components: (1) the learning environment; (2) curriculum and course offerings; (3) strategies and modes of learning; (4) scheduling; (5) reporting of student progress; (6) guidance program; and, (7) personnel. The characteristics and the subsequent components of each are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

Programmatic Characteristics of Ideal Middle Schools

Characteristic	Components
Learning Environment	Interdisciplinary teaming
	Multi-grade level teaming
	Large-small group instruction
	Variety of learning atmospheres
	Child centered and subject centered program
	De-emphasis on sophisticated social activities
	Program designed for non-specialization
	Environment providing for transition
	Controlled academic competition
	Special parent programs
	Club program (during day)
	Opportunity for student movement
Curriculum & Course Offerings	Basic skills program
	Developmental reading program
	Forced choice exploratory courses
	Co-curricular program
	Enrichment
	Remediation
	Independent study
	Physical education program
	Health
	Intra-murals (during day)
	Sex education
	Career awareness program
	Values clarification
	Outdoor education program
	Broad exploratory courses in all subjects
	Elective exploratory
	Self and Group awareness program
	Student government

	Exploratory music program Unified arts
Strategies & Modes of Learning	Continuous progress program Multi-text approach Multi-learning activities Hands-on approach in science Independent study/Individualized instruction Large-small group instruction Interdisciplinary units (involving basic skills & exploratory) Student involvement in the planning/evaluation of learning activities Community is used as a resource Identify learning modalities Emphasis on inquiry approach Common planning time for team Materials prepared on basis of cognitive development Contracting
Scheduling	Block schedule Subjects offered for various periods of time Schedule allows teachers to group and regroup students
Reporting of Student Progress	Students are graded on basis of their own ability Parent conferences Students involved in self-evaluation Parental participation in students' progress reporting Comments included on grade cards Telephone contact with parents
Guidance Program	Teacher as key person in guidance program Student advisory program Group guidance activities Counselors working in classrooms Counselors as consultants Homebased teachers Small group counseling by counselor Training for teachers in counseling skills Team referrals Students working with students
Personnel Involved in Teaching Students	Staffing Parent volunteer program Support staff Principal and/or assistant principal involved in classrooms Community resources

	Counselor Reading aides Older students Middle school prepared teachers

(Moeller & Valentine, 1981, pp. 27 & 30)

The characteristics identified by Moeller and Valentine (1981) represent all four of the major values. Issues of equity and quality appeared to be the most prevalent. Equity was addressed by the wide-range of modes for differentiating based on students needs as individuals. Choice remained relevant with exploratory programs, while efficiency was present with the variety of options available to meet student needs.

In 1982 the National Middle School Association published a position paper on the necessary characteristics of an effective middle school. Publication of this document was a major event in the middle school movement. Not since the movement's origins in the 1960s had the major issues of middle school education been succinctly addressed and widely disseminated.

> However, following the introduction of the middle school in the 1960s, no single comprehensive statement appeared to crystallize the educational beliefs inherent in this emerging educational reform effort….Recognizing the needs for clarification and direction, John Swaim, the 1980 president of National Middle School Association, appointed a committee to prepare a position paper….Following its release, this paper had a far-reaching impact on middle level education. It quickly became the most frequently cited statement about the education of young adolescents and was reprinted seven times to meet the demands for its content. (National Middle School Association, 2003, p.ix)

The document, *This We Believe* (National Middle School Association, 1982), provided a rationale, definition, and foundational elements of a middle school. The primary rationale for the middle school was based on the students that attended the schools. The authors noted the vast

differences and changes occurring in students physical, social, emotional, and intellectual characteristics. The characteristics of the students between the ages of 10-14, students Eichhorn termed transescents, were the basic rationale for why a middle school was necessary, appropriate, and relevant for transescent learners. In defining a middle school, the authors kept with the idea of maintaining a student focus. "Simply stated, the middle school is an educational response to the needs and characteristics of youngsters during transescence, and as such, deals with the full range of intellectual and developmental needs" (NMSA, 1982, p.9). The continued conceptualization of the middle school in 1982 was again, primarily about the student and their needs.

To provide direction for middle-level educators the authors outlined the features of a middle school which helped in meeting student needs. The features, termed elements, were similar to what Alexander and his colleagues (1968) termed programs. The essential elements of a middle school included:

1. Educators knowledgeable about and committed to transescents
2. A balanced curriculum based on transescent needs
3. A range of organizational arrangements
4. Varied instructional strategies
5. A full exploratory program
6. Comprehensive advising and counseling
7. Continuous progress for students
8. Evaluation procedures compatible with nature of transescents
9. Cooperative planning
10. Positive school climate (NMSA, 1982).

This We Believe (1982) pointed out that a middle school was not simply an amalgamation of these ten characteristics. Rather, the parts were intertwined in a reciprocal fashion.

> Just as the whole is more than the sum of its parts, so an effective middle school is more than the sum of ten relatively discrete elements, no matter how essential. The school is a social organism, and each element impacts all the others, either positively or negatively. (NMSA, 1982, p.16)

This We Believe (1982) also provided what would become synonymous with the National Middle School Association and the further iterations of the document itself; a list of what the Association believed about middle-level education. Beginning in 1982 and continuing into 2006, the National Middle School Association proclaims the organization's beliefs about the education of young adolescents through *This We Believe.* The four iterations of *This We Believe* are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

This We Believe Components of Statements from 1982, 1992, 1995, 2003

This We Believe (NMSA,1982, pp.18-19)	*This We Believe* (NMSA,1992, pp.26-27)	*This We Believe* (NMSA,1995, p.11)	*This We Believe* (NMSA,2003, p. 7)
● The middle school is an educational response to the needs and characteristics of youngsters during transescence and, as such, deals with the full range of intellectual and developmental needs. ● Young people going through the rapid growth and extensive maturation that occurs in early adolescence need an educational program that is distinctively different from either the elementary or the	● The middle school is an educational response to the needs and characteristics of youngsters during the transition from childhood to full adolescence and, as such, deals with the full range of intellectual and developmental needs. ● Young people going through the rapid growth and extensive maturation that occurs in early adolescence need an educational program that is distinctively different from either the elementary or the	Developmentally responsive middle level schools are characterized by: ● Educators committed to young adolescents ● A shared vision ● High expectations for all ● An adult advocate for every student ● Family and community partnerships ● A positive school	Successful schools for young adolescents are characterized by a culture that includes ● Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so ● Courageous, collaborative leadership ● A shared vision that guides decisions ● An inviting, supportive, and safe environment

secondary model. ● Existing programs for this age group have all too often lacked focus on transescent characteristics and needs. ● Educators, school board members, parents, and citizens generally need to become more cognizant of this age group and what an effective educational program for this group requires. ● No other age level is of more enduring importance because the determinants of one's behavior as an adult, self-concept, learning interests and skills, and values largely are formed in this period of life. ● The developmental diversity of this age group makes it especially difficult to organize an educational program that adequately meets the needs of all. ● The academic needs of middle school students are affected greatly by their physical, social, and emotional needs which also must be addressed directly in the school program.	secondary model. ● Existing programs for this age group have all too often lacked focus on young adolescent characteristics and needs. ● Educators, school board members, parents, and citizens generally need to become more cognizant of this age group and what an effective educational program for this group requires. ● No other age level is of more enduring importance because the determinants of one's behavior as an adult, self-concept, learning interests and skills, and values largely are formed in this period of life. ● The developmental diversity of this age group makes it especially difficult to organize an educational program that adequately meets the needs of all. ● The academic needs of middle school students are affected greatly by their physical, social, and emotional needs which also must be addressed directly in the school program.	climate Therefore, developmentally responsive middle schools provide: ● Curriculum that is challenging, integrative, and exploratory ● Varied teaching and learning approaches ● Assessment and evaluation that promote learning ● Flexible organizational structures ● Programs and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety ● Comprehensive guidance and support services	● High expectations for every member of the learning community ● Students and teachers engaged in active learning ● An adult advocate for every student ● School-initiated family and community partnerships. Therefore, successful schools for young adolescents provide ● Curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory ● Multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to their diversity ● Assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning ● Organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning ● School-wide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety ● Multifaceted guidance and support services.

The four versions of *This We Believe* presented in Table 6 represent the philosophical changes the movement has been through. The early versions (1982 & 1992) focused heavily on the concepts of students as individuals, and the developmental differences inherent with adolescents

and how middle schools are designed to respond to and meet the diversity of needs. Little attention given to the specifics of what such programs might look like in a middle school setting. The values represented in the first two versions show that equity and quality remained important to the middle school concept from 1982 to 1992.

Beginning with the 1995 version, we see a shift away from the treatise about the nature of adolescents and their development to more specific characterizations of what the middle school would look like. Issues of equity and quality were still present but were joined by the social value of fraternity (commitment to adolescents, shared vision, partnerships, etc.) while understating notions of order (positive school climate).

The 2003, and most current, iteration of *This We Believe* retained many of the same features, and values, from the 1995 version but had noticeable refinements. The characteristics were clearer to understand. Quality was evident in the expectation that teachers were prepared to work with the age-level and possessed high expectations for every learner. Fraternity was present again with even more emphasis placed on the development and establishment of relationships. "Boyd (1984) suggests that of the democratic values, fraternity is the one to which Americans pay the least attention" (cited in Fowler, 2000, pp.113-114). The presence of fraternity in the middle school concept represented a shift in the movement.

In 1985, the National Association for Secondary School Principals published *An Agenda for Excellence at the Middle Level*, which provided middle level schools 12 dimensions to address for student success. To quote from the Agenda, "this agenda addresses the elements of schooling that must receive the highest priority attention" (NASSP, 1985, p. 2). The twelve dimensions middle schools were recommended to address were: core values, culture and climate,

student development, curriculum, learning and instruction, school organization, technology, teachers, transitions, principals, connections, and client centeredness.

Clark and Clark (1994) noted that the *Agenda* focused on a number of areas disregarded, or at the very least, overlooked by the previous writers associated with the middle school movement. They identified the overlooked issues as those related to school culture, climate, connections with external agencies/actors/parents, and the focus of child centeredness schools and practices.

As the 1980s drew to a close, the concept of reforming middle level schools became ever more a priority for educators and policy makers across the country. Dorman, Lipsitz, and Verner (1985) noted of the implementation of middle-level education practices, "Unfortunately there is a considerable lack of fit between what we know about young adolescents and what we do with them five days a week in schools" (p.46). This echoes a quote from Edmonds (1979), "The great problem in schooling is that we know how to teach in ways that can keep some children from learning almost anything…" (p.22). MacIver and Epstein (1991) pointed out that regarding the components of middle school philosophy, "the combined benefits of using several responsive practices simultaneously are larger than the benefits of using any one practice by itself" (p.611). As the 1980s drew to a close the middle level concept was becoming more refined and sophisticated in how best to educate adolescents.

Alexander and McEwin (1989) provided what they termed, "evidence of progress" and "evidence of lack of progress," the middle school movement had and hadn't made from 1968 to 1988. Notable findings related to "evidence of progress" were: that middle schools had remained relatively small (under 600 students), there had been an increase in the percent of schools using interdisciplinary teaming, and an increase in schools offering more interest-exploring and

interest-developing curricular offerings. Findings related as "evidence of lack of progress" included: failure to provide physical education on a daily basis, continuation of secondary-level schedules, and traditional forms of grading by letter (A-B-C).

Clark and Clark (1987) synthesized the findings from three studies on the opinions of teachers and parents in contrast to an academics-only focus, which was founded primarily in *A Nation at Risk* and the "effective schools" work of the early 1980s. Clark and Clark (1987) suggested that in order to "preserve the concept of middle level schools designed to meet the unique needs of early adolescents" (p.26) a middle level principal should:

1. Resist implementing recommendations of national reports without sufficient study and research
2. Be cautious about generalizing the effective schools research and accepting it as viable for the middle level school
3. Carefully examine any recommendation that proposes to eliminate everything but the basics
4. Acquaint yourself with the developmental needs of young adolescents
5. Become knowledgeable of successful middle level programs
6. Be cognizant that school improvement is a complex process that requires systematic planning
7. Include in program development, active parent and teacher participation. (p.26)

Calls for middle school reform became evident with the publication of two reports that focused on reforming middle schools in the late 1980s: one from California, *Caught in the Middle* and the other sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation, *Turning Points*. Evident in these two reports was the call for reform because the middle schools had become the last place to

"catch" students before they dropped out of school. "For many students the middle grades represent the last chance to develop a sense of academic purpose and personal commitment to educational goals" (California State Department of Education, 1987, p.v). The calls for reform were similar to that of the early-twentieth century, when as a matter of quality, junior high schools were recommended as a method to ensure that students didn't leave school early (drop out).

Caught in the Middle (California Department of Education, 1987) focused on determining what constituted effective schooling for middle school students. The report provided 22 principles to guide quality education for middle level students. The principles were organized around the themes of: a) curriculum and instruction for academic excellence, b) realizing student potential along intellectual, social, emotional, and physical dimensions, c) organizing and structuring new learning environments, d) teacher and administrator preparation, and e) leadership and the development of partnerships for purposes of reform.

Noticeable from the work of the California State Department of Education (1987) was how many ideas previously espoused in the literature were given a specific focus for the application at the middle school level. Whereas *This We Believe* (1982) spoke in global terms about meeting the needs of middle school students, *Caught in the Middle* specifically stated that middle schools should address issues such as academic coaching and providing equal access. As a result, it provided a much more pointed set of recommendations for school leaders to follow when seeking to apply the concepts of reform to middle school settings. The document provided specific recommendations around issues of school quality.

1989-2005: Turning Points and the Middle School in the Twenty-first Century

In 1989 the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (CCAD) issued recommendations for the education of young adolescents. The Council was established as a Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents in 1987, "with the mission of examining firsthand new approaches to fostering the education and healthy development of young adolescents" (Valentine et al., 2004, p.7). The report was released in a time of economic uncertainty and population change (Lesko, 1994). Across the United States, the response to the recommendations was overwhelmingly positive (Jackson, 1990). The report turned out to be one of the most influential documents in the history of middle school education, as well as the beginning of formal reform-oriented approaches to middle level education. *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989) provided a framework for understanding middle school education as well as recommendations to support the renewal of middle schools.

The work of the Carnegie Council, built upon the foundational elements established by prominent writers such as Alexander, Eichhorn, and the work of the National Middle School Association, expanded the thinking of middle level educators in a number of ways. The most identifiably different component that the Carnegie Council brought to middle school reform was the expansion of building relationships beyond the school itself. To quote the Council,

> The report reinforces an emerging movement, still relatively unrecognized by policymakers, to build support for and educate young adolescents through new relationships between schools, families, and health and community institutions (CCAD, 1989, p.13).

In arguing for the rationale behind reforming middle level schools, the Council made many of the same claims of previous contributors to the middle school movement, most notably the importance of helping students. The Council stated,

> Many middle grade schools today fall far short of meeting the critical educational, health, and social needs of millions of young adolescents. Many youth now leave the middle grades unprepared for what lies ahead of them. A fundamental transformation of the education of young adolescents is urgently required. (CCAD, 1990, p.10)

Similar to *Caught in the Middle*, *Turning Points* called for middle schools to provide for students in a way that would ensure their success later in life. The *Turning Points* approach focused on the changing times in which students were living, as well as giving more emphasis to creating relationships within and beyond the school for purposes of adolescent intellectual, physical, and social well-being. To quote the Council,

> The emerging adolescent is caught in turbulence, a fascinated but perplexed observer of the biological, psychological, and social changes swirling all around. In groping for a solid path toward a worthwhile adult life, adolescents can grasp the middle school as the crucial and reliable handle. Now, the middle grade school must change, and change substantially, to cope with the requirements of a new era—to give its students a decent chance in life and help them fulfill their youthful promise. This is a daunting task but a feasible one. This report will be a great help to those who wish to make this goal a practical reality. (CCAD, 1989, p.14)

To help in framing who would benefit from the proposed recommendations for middle level schools, the Task Force provided a vision of a hypothetical fifteen-year old that had been through such a school as the type espoused. The fifteen-year old would be, “an intellectually

reflective person; a person en route to a lifetime of meaningful work; a good citizen; a caring and ethical individual, and; a healthy person" (CCAD, 1989, p.15). According to the Task Force, this "typical" student could be thought of as the ultimate goal of middle school education. The Task Force then issued their recommendations to schools in order to produce such a student.

The components recommended from *Turning Points* were organized in eight areas with recommendations for the implementation of each area. The components included: creating a community for learning, teaching a core of common knowledge, ensuring success for all students, empowering teachers and administrators, preparing teachers for the middle grades, improving academic performance through better health and fitness, reengaging families in the education of young adolescents, and connecting schools with communities (CCAD, 1989). The components with definitions and descriptors are provided in Table 7

Table 7

Turning Points Recommendations

Component	Definition	Descriptors
Creating a community for learning	"School should be a place where close, trusting relationships with adults and peers create a climate for students' personal growth and intellectual development" (CCAD, 1989, p.37).	Create smaller learning environments Form teams of teachers and students Assign an adult advisor for every student
Teaching a core of common knowledge	"Every student in the middle grades should learn to think critically through mastery of an appropriate body of knowledge, lead a healthy life, behave ethically and lawfully, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic society" (CCAD, 1989, p.42).	Teach young adolescents to think critically Teach young adolescents to develop healthy lifestyles Teaching young adolescents to be active citizens Integrating subject matter across disciplines Teaching students to learn as well as to test successfully

Ensuring success for all students	"All young adolescents should have the opportunity to succeed in every aspect of the middle grade program, regardless of previous achievement or the pace at which they learn" (CCAD, 1989, p.49).	Group students for learning Provide flexible scheduling Expand opportunities for learning
Empowering teachers and administrators	"Decisions concerning the experiences of middle grade students should be made by the adults who know them best" (CCAD, 1989, p.54).	Give teachers greater influence in the classroom Establish building governance committees Designate leaders for the teaching process
Preparing teachers for the middle grades	"Teachers in middle grade schools should be selected and specially educated to teach young adolescents" (CCAD, 1989, p.58).	Develop expert teachers for young adolescents
Improving academic performance through better health and fitness	"Young adolescents must be healthy in order to learn" (CCAD, 1989, p.60).	Ensure access to health services Establish schools as health-promoting environments
Reengaging families in the education of young adolescents	"Families and middle grade schools must be allied through trust and respect if young adolescents are to succeed in school" (CCAD, 1989, p.66).	Offer parents meaningful roles in school governance Keep parents informed Offer families opportunities to support learning at home and at school
Connecting schools with communities	"Schools and community organizations should share responsibility for each middle grade student's success" (CCAD, 1989, p.70).	Provide opportunities for youth service Ensure student access to health and social services Support the middle grade education program Augment resources for teachers and students Expand career and guidance for students

Turning Points also provided recommendations that practitioners could implement in their schools to be more in keeping with middle school philosophy (Erb, 2000). Erb (2000) identified the influences the *Turning Points* model could hold for middle school reform. By compiling research on the recommendations, Erb (2000) identified the following outcomes as a result of restructured middle-level schools using the recommendations. These outcomes positively influenced teacher job satisfaction, improved school and classroom climate, enhanced student support, and an increase in student achievement (Erb, 2000). Studies have also shown that it is possible to translate practices and approaches (such as *Turning Points*) that are based on research into practice at the school and district level (Adey, 1997).

It is important to recognize the relationship between the *Turning Points* recommendations and the Carnegie Foundation as the sponsoring agency. Ideologically, the Carnegie Foundation has been described as liberal (Fowler, 2000, p.169). Lagemann (1987) wrote of the Carnegie Foundation

> …the history of the Carnegie Corporation crosses and even merges with the history of many other institutions, including other foundations, and is inseparable from ideas, national trends, and both national and international events that have touched American society generally (p.205).

Lagemann also noted that even though, historically, the foundation has not always shaped policy.

> …they have played a central role in shaping the politics of knowledge, their efforts have often been vital in determining which intellectual resources and which social groups would be brought to bear in defining the issues and questions that policymakers would address. (1987, p.220)

The *Turning Points* recommendations surfaced the trend of fraternity that was previously noted in the 1995 work of the National Middle School Association's *This We Believe*. Issues of equity took on a moral tone as did the importance of quality across the adolescents' middle school experience.

A report released at the time of the *Turning Points* recommendations provided insight to the status of middle level practices at the beginning of the 1990s. Epstein and MacIver (1990) reported four conclusions from their research on 2,400 schools.

1. Most schools that contain grade 7 have not yet developed educational programs based on recommended practices for the middle grades
2. Some practices are more prominent in certain types of middle grades schools than in others.
3. Regardless of grade span, good practices make stronger programs (group advisory; interdisciplinary teams; articulation practices; remedial instruction; goals for higher level thinking skills).
4. There is much more to be learned. (Epstein & MacIver, 1990, pp.73-75)

As has been shown previously, some of the concepts advocated for in the *Turning Points* recommendations were not new to education at this level "…long-standing perceptions of what schools should provide students in the middle grades remain fundamentally unaltered….Over the years, some of these recommendations have found their way into practice, albeit in limited, diluted, or even adulterated forms and often for only short periods of time" (Oakes, Hunter-Quartz, Gong, Guiton, & Lipton, 1993, p.462). The issue was that while many of the middle school concepts which had been advocated for and repeatedly surfaced, the complete system for the education of young adolescents, through developmentally-responsive practices had yet to

take shape. Why would the reforms of the late twentieth century be any different than previous attempts to reform middle level education?

Jeannie Oakes and her colleagues (1993) provided two reasons as to why the reforms advocated for in the late 1980s and early 1990s might have a different outcome. Oakes and her colleagues optimism was grounded on the belief that the communities of learning being proposed in that era would be both inclusive (fraternity) and socially just (equity). Fraternity was surfacing as an important component from the *Turning Points* recommendation, while the issue of social justice as equity was assuming a more moral position than had previously occurred.

Oakes and her colleagues (1993) noted that changes still needed to occur at the building-level on a one-by-one basis. Suggestions were provided on how schools and districts could help foster such change. These suggestions included: taking a comprehensive approach, creating communities of inquiry, encouraging constructive conflict, and providing scaffolding for changing schools (Oakes et al., 1993).

By all accounts, throughout the 1990s, the middle school movement had a tremendous amount of success (Kasak, 2004). Some authors suggested perhaps too much success (Williamson & Johnston, 1996). Attention was drawn to the isomorphic tendencies middle schools displayed, as well as the thinking on middle schools, which had become more focused on orthodoxy than on being responsive to client needs.

> As the middle level school matured, it misplaced its focus on meeting the needs of early adolescent learners and instead became enveloped by a shroud of orthodoxy—the need to conform to an established doctrine that dictated programs, procedures, and organizational structure. Researchers and practitioners examined middle level schools to identify practices most effective with middle level students. This resulted in lists of

> characteristics, essential features, elements of schooling, and one national association's publication of the 10 essential elements of the "true" middle level school. These characteristics, while initially helpful in examining middle level practices, distracted educators from focusing on the needs of students in their own school. Educators became obsessed with finding the right program, the one correct curriculum, the appropriate team arrangement, and the correct block schedule. (Williamson & Johnston, 1996, p.1)

Writing to the issue of middle level reform and the mismatch between student needs and school practices, Hawkins and Graham (1997) noted that, "at the middle school level, children run headlong into the hardened school culture, for which the adults in charge have designed a system that is predicated on maintaining order" (p.278.).

Johnston and Williamson (1996) provided recommendations for middle level schools to move from the path of orthodoxy to responsiveness. These transitions would be echoed in later publications on middle school reform, most notably *Turning Points 2000* and *This We Believe (2003)* by paying much greater attention to the organization of relationships (fraternity) for students attending middle level schools and the necessity of providing quality instruction (quality/excellence) in the beginnings of the standards-based movement (reduction of choice). The six recommended shifts identified by Johnston and Williamson (1996) were about moving from:

1. Interdisciplinary Teaming to Learning Communities
2. Adviser-Advisee Programs to Restructured Adult-Student Relationships
3. Block Schedule to Using Time as a Resource
4. Interdisciplinary Units to Rigorous and Authentic, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

5. Parent Participation to Parents as Active Partners

6. Testing to Accountability and Program Evaluation.

In the early nineties George and Shewey (1994) conducted a study of exemplary middle schools. With usable data from 108 schools, George and Shewey noted the length of time the middle level programs had been in existence. One-third of the sample was less than five years and two-thirds were more than five years in existence. George and Shewey (1994) found that schools were implementing the concepts of middle schools more fully than previous studies had documented. The authors found a strong commitment to interdisciplinary teaming, flexible scheduling arrangements, and flexible grouping patterns with an emphasis on heterogeneous practices of grouping. However, they found less progress in the development of long-term relationships, and in the articulation of programs with corresponding high schools. The study asked middle schools that had been in existence longer than five years to "indicate whether certain program components had been an important part of their school. Then, respondents were asked to reflect on the causes related to the presence or absence of those programs, and to estimate the long term effects of the presence or absence of those programs on school outcomes" (George & Shewey, 1994, pp.66-67). In all, twenty components were included. The findings for the 20 components are listed in Table 8. All responses ended with the stem "…has/have contributed to the long-term effectiveness of our middle school program."

Table 8

Findings from George and Shewey (1994)

Component	Mostly yes	Mostly no	No response
Flexible (perhaps block) scheduling in the master schedule…	73%	18%	9%
A real school philosophy widely shared by the staff based on characteristics and needs of	87%	7%	6%

developing adolescents…			
A foreign language program as an integral part of the curriculum…	43%	45%	10%
A building and facilities designed especially for the middle school…	43%	48%	9%
A strong student recognition program provided through interdisciplinary teams…	84%	6%	9%
Flexible grouping strategies, primarily heterogeneous, …	85%	12%	3%
A strong parent program that encourages both involvement and support for all parents…	68%	25%	7%
An interdisciplinary team organization where teachers share students, space, and schedule, …	85%	6%	9%
Active instruction based on the learning styles of developing early adolescents…	66%	25%	7%
Articulating with high schools that have also developed programs based on aspects of the middle school concept…	19%	64%	16%
A regular and systematic process for evaluating the middle school program…	71%	19%	9%
Team leaders that play an important role in school and teacher leadership…	81%	10%	9%
A curriculum characterized by both a core academic focus and a broad range of exploratory activities…	73%	12%	13%
A smooth and continuous transition from elementary to middle school…	76%	15%	9%
A continuous program of staff development, and school improvement providing a steady stream of teachers and administrators trained and committed to educating the early adolescent…	62%	28%	10%

A shared decision-making model which is formal, systematic, and provides authentic collaboration between and among teachers, administrators, parents, and students…	73%	15%	12%
An extracurricular program based on the needs of early adolescents, providing regular success experiences for all students…	72%	15%	13%
Interdisciplinary curriculum and instruction involving teachers from a variety of disciplines	63%	25%	12%
Organizational arrangements which encourage long-term teacher-student relationships…	30%	58%	12%
A teacher-based guidance, advisory program…	54%	31%	12%

In conclusion, the authors noted the following about the implementation of the middle school concept:

> We believe that the available evidence suggests that practitioners can, with confidence, continue to expect the implementation of middle schools to result in improved academic achievement, more positive personal development, and enhanced group citizenship for the students involved. But it isn't guaranteed, and it won't be easy. (George & Shewey, 1994, p.116)

Changes and reform are often difficult to implement because of the culture of the school. "If changes are to be successful, then initiators must understand how the culture will accept the proposed innovation and where the culture itself needs modification" (Corbett, Firestone, Rossman, 1987, p.57). Strahan, Cooper, and Ward (2001) found that by using leadership teams that focus on using data for purposes of program evaluation aimed at reform, schools can begin to change the culture of the school and practices present within.

Educational reform, as Mirel (1994) found from his study of school reform in one Illinois school district, is always political. Leithwood, Steinbach, and Jantzi (2002) noted that when calls for reform occur they are more likely to be successful when schools view it more as an issue of commitment rather than of one where they are being controlled or required to conform. Wehlage, Smith, and Lipman (1992) have acknowledged four themes, all related to the value of fraternity, prevalent in the restructuring movement:

1. Nature of student experiences in the school
2. Professional life of teachers
3. School governance, management, and leadership
4. Drawing on community resources.

However, Wehlage and his colleagues (1992) note that a major concern with the restructuring movement was with the lack of emphasis in the area of pedagogy, "The major problem with some of the restructuring rhetoric, for example, has been the failure to address issues about the substance of what is taught and how the most valuable kinds of knowledge and skills can be successfully conveyed to students" (p.53). For restructuring to be successful for student success, restructuring must be, "directed at the school's core cultural beliefs and values affecting the quality of students' experiences and teachers' worklives, the modification of mere organizational structures will have little payoff in terms of better outcomes for students" (Wehlage et al., 1992, p.54). In the latter part of the 1990s, the middle school movement began to identify some of these core tenets directed at school restructuring.

Questions of the effectiveness of middle schools continued into the beginning of the twenty-first century. With the presence of, and move towards, standards-based education and more accountability for schools, middle schools were being blamed with not providing an

adequate education for young adolescents. It was thought that the middle school concept and philosophy were to blame for the poor performance of young adolescents on standard measures of accountability. Middle school advocates however, cautioned against blaming the middle school concept as the reason for poor performance. Once again the value of quality/excellence assumes a role in the discourse of educational policy.

Advocates suggested that success might be lacking because the middle school philosophy was not appropriately in place. Lounsbury (2000) commented on the issue, "The purported academic failure of the middle school, it should be noted, is due to the fact that the tenets of the middle school have not been sufficiently implemented—not that these tenets have been implemented" (p.193). This notion was supported empirically by Pamperien (1997) and Valentine, Alspaugh, Carr, and Pamperien (1998). They found that students moving through a "true" middle school performed at least as well as students attending a junior high, and actually scored higher in the area of science. Lounsbury also voiced concern about the emphasis on academic content (as evidenced by the accountability and standards-based movement and measured by high-stakes testing), and the impetus to revert the middle school movement back toward junior high practices. "The push to bully middle schools and teachers into raising test scores, in fact, will move us back to the very practices that made the junior high school a failure" (Lounsbury, 2000, p.193).

Lipsitz, Mizell, Jackson, and Austin (1997) identified specific characteristics of high-performing schools and the goals for reform at the middle-level. "High-performing schools for young adolescents are (1) developmentally responsive, (2) academically excellent, and (3) socially equitable" (Lipsitz et al., 1997, p.534). This call for reform came from not only external sources, but from those within the middle school movement itself. Reformers of the 1990s were

recognizing what other scholars in the middle school movement had noted previously, a mismatch between what is known as best practice and what is actually practiced in the education of adolescents. Nearly twenty-years earlier Valentine and Clark (1981) recognized this issue, "Even the most casual observer of middle-level education can see that what the literature, the research, and the experts suggest as appropriate, and middle-level programs as they are currently implemented are not the same" (p.5). Lipsitz and her colleagues described why some middle school reform efforts had not been effective in the mid-nineties:

> For several years, large numbers of middle-level schools have been "poised" for reform, but many have not moved off this plateau and taken the critical next step to develop students who perform well academically, with the intellectual wherewithal to improve their life conditions. (Lipsitz et al., 1997, p.535)

This inability to "move off of the plateau" was echoed by Dickinson (2001) with what he termed the "arrested development" of the middle school movement. Dickinson provided insight into elements that had influenced the state of middle-level education and the inability to perform the purported purpose.

1. The incremental stage implementation model used by middle schools to implement the concept.
2. The lack of teacher education programs and licensure that focus on the middle school level.
3. The lack of middle school principal preparation.
4. The inability to balance good places for young adolescents to learn with challenging and involving work in those good places.
5. The parade of self-serving consultants.

6. The absence of significant and qualified researchers from the dialogue about creating middle schools.
7. The lack of attention to curriculum and the hesitancy to implement integrated curriculum.
8. The failure of national content organizations to focus on the middle school level.
9. The failure of the National Middle School Association to fully realize leadership for the middle school level.
10. The absence of research, until recently, to sustain the middle school concept.
11. Our overall misunderstanding of the original concept as a total ecology of schooling. (Dickinson, 2001, pp.5-14)

Beginning in the later-part of the 1990s and continuing to the present day, the middle school movement began to undergo refinement of the mission of the movement. Across the nation standards-driven expectations were becoming the form and focus of academic success. The middle school, with a long-standing tradition of focus on the whole student was being challenged as academically deficient. Middle level reformers recognized the importance of academic preparation as a feature of educating adolescents, while still meeting the physical, social, and emotional needs of students. This was more a shift in emphasis than a new revelation. The middle level reforms were beginning to recognize and address the value of quality as a worthwhile pursuit.

In 1997 the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, a national "advocacy/think-tank" alliance emerged in support of middle level reform. The National Forum developed, "…out of a sense of urgency that middle-grades school improvement had stalled,

amid a flurry of descending test scores, increasing reports of school violence, and heated debates about the nature and purpose of middle-grades education. All agreed that nothing short of collective and concerted action could result in high-performing middle-grades schools and students" (National Forum, 2005, p.1).

The Forum is comprised of "over 60 educators, researchers, national associations, and officers of professional organizations and foundations committed to promoting the academic performance and healthy development of young adolescents" (National Forum, 2005, p.1). Organizations represented in the National Forum include: the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Success for All, Lily Foundation, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), State & Federal Depts. of Ed., National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), National Staff Development Council (NSDC), Kellogg Foundation, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Middle School Association (NMSA), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and the Annenberg Institute.

To foster a deeper understanding of best middle level school practices and reform, the National Forum recognizes "Schools to Watch." Four broad principles, or criteria, were developed to define a School to Watch. They are: academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structures and processes. There is an obvious direct relationship between the criteria and the policy values noted throughout this review of literature. The work of the National Forum indicated a movement directed at reform. The next phase of middle level reform came in the form of *Turning Points 2000.*

Turning Points 2000 was written by Anthony Jackson, at the time of publication, director of the Disney Learning Partnership and former program officer at the Carnegie Corporation, and

Gayle Davis, a former national director of Carnegie's Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative and professor at the University of Maryland. Jackson clarified the differences between the original and revised versions of *Turning Points*:

> To a large extent, Turning Points 2000 is an affirmation and an extension of the original Turning Points model. Turning Points 2000, however, places greater emphasis on teaching and learning and the principal's role in ensuring that the focus of the reform efforts is directed toward improving curriculum, assessment, and instruction…it takes an even deeper look at how teachers and administrators can work together to create an instructional program that is concept based, standards based, infused throughout the curriculum, and geared toward helping kids build their intellectual capacities. (Jackson & Davis, 2000b, p.60)

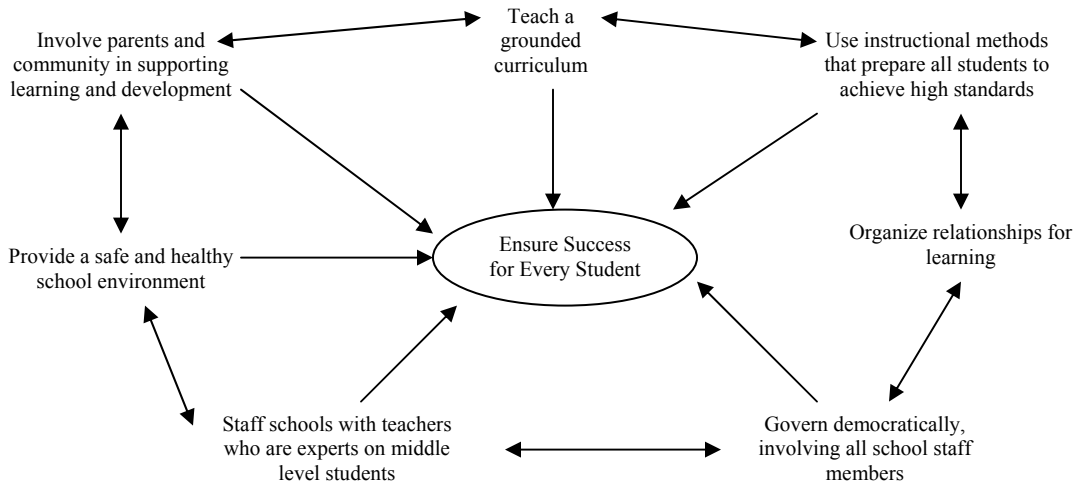
The original *Turning Points* focused on the changing times within which students were living, giving emphasis to creating relationships within and beyond the school for purposes of adolescent well-being (intellectually, physically, and socially). *Turning Points 2000* focused more on the academic preparation of students. Jackson was quick to point out that the interest in academics should not be to the detriment of the whole student.

> Because of the nature of the state of middle grades reform right now, you tend to get drawn into discussions around, "Well shouldn't it all be about academics?" Well, yes, it definitely should, but we're also talking about helping to form, helping to support whole children who are going to go out there and be whole adults and have an effect on all of society. That vision reflects the essence of wholeness. It's not just about us being intellects and reflective, it's also about being good citizens, about being ethical. (Jackson & Davis, 2000b, p.63)

One key change between the two Turning Points documents was the shift to the interdependence of the concepts in the *Turning Points 2000* design (Jackson & Davis, 2000b), with each tenet directed at ensuring the success of each student. *Turning Points 2000* called for moving the focus of the other reform elements towards ensuring the success of the student. In the original *Turning Points* design "ensuring student success" had been one of the eight recommendations. However, *Turning Points 2000* pointedly spoke to the need to see that all practices were directed toward the student, thus providing a focus for the model. Teacher certification was another significant change in the *Turning Points 2000* model. A visual representation of the *Turning Points 2000* design is provided in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Turning Points 2000 Design



(Jackson & Davis, 2000, p.25)

The movement of ensuring student success to the center of the model represented an important shift for middle school education. Ensuring student success was concerned with issues

of equity. By having all elements focus on student success the model demonstrates the importance placed on the value of equity. Notions of excellence and quality were addressed in the 2000 version, with attention being paid to standards-based curriculum and instruction to prepare students for assessments. Fraternity remained important in the 2000 version as well. Choice as a value was virtually eliminated with the model focusing on excellence for all and similar intellectual experiences as opposed to the more exploratory orientation of the middle school concept of Alexander through the 1990s. Issues of efficiency were really not prevalent in the *Turning Points 2000* model.

A comprehensive school reform (CSR) model, Turning Points: Transforming Middle Schools (National Turning Points Center, 2001), has also been established based upon the foundational elements of the *Turning Points* model. The Turning Points CSR Model is guided by six practices related to the *Turning Points* recommendations.

> It focuses on creating a professional collaborative culture and using data-based inquiry to improve teaching and learning for all students. Turning Points seeks to create high-performing schools, especially those serving high percentages of low-income students and students of color. The design is driven by one overarching goal—ensuring success for every student. (National Turning Points Center, 2001, pp.3-4)

The six practices and recommended strategies of the Turning Points CSR Model are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Principles and Strategies of the Turning Points CSR Model

Practices	Strategies
Improving Learning, Teaching, and Assessment for All Students	Set standards that clearly and publicly identify what students should know and be able to do at each grade level

	Create an explicit goal of closing the achievement gap between white students and students of color and between low-income and more affluent students, and set in place the necessary instruction and academic support Develop curriculum, framed around essential questions, that assists students in meeting high standards Promote habits of mind and intellectual inquiry that span all disciplines Utilize a wide range of instructional strategies and approaches to meet the needs of all students Adopt effective, intensive approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy to all students Develop authentic and reliable assessments, with clear performance criteria, to ensure that students know how well they are doing and what they need to work on
Building Leadership Capacity and a Professional Collaborative Culture	Look collaboratively at student and teacher work with colleagues to assess student progress and improve instruction and learning Create a democratic school community, including shared decision making through a representative leadership team and involving all faculty in making high-impact decisions affecting student learning Develop leadership skills and practices among administrators and teachers Establish regular common planning time to talk about learning and teaching
	Embed professional development in the daily life of the school, through practices…that explore important classroom questions Build the faculty's capacity to look constructively and critically at student and teacher work

	Set a vision for the school that is based on the Turning Points principles and on what students should know and be able to do upon exiting the school
Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making	Collect and analyze multiple sources of data, including the Self-Study Survey, in which data is disaggregated by race, gender, and income status Use the *Benchmarks to Becoming a Turning Points School* to examine the differences between vision and reality Inquire into areas for improvement that most impact learning, teaching, and assessment, identify causes of problems, and develop solutions Set annual, measurable goals for improving learning, teaching, and assessment
Creating a School Culture to Support High Achievement and Personal Development	Learning Communities • Foster school norms of decency, trust, and respect • Establish small learning communities with common planning time for faculty teams and longer blocks of learning time for students • Ensure that students develop strong, caring relationships with adults in the school Grouping • Eliminate tracking and rigid ability grouping to ensure greater equity in learning opportunities and results • Lower student-teacher ratios (with a goal of each teacher being responsible for no more than 80 students) Supporting Student Development
	• Build family and community partnerships, including greater involvement in decision making and students' learning • Foster opportunities for students to develop character, creativity, and health • Provide academic support to those students who need it

	• Build positive relationships among students from diverse backgrounds
Networking with Like-minded Schools	Network meetings for teams from schools Annual summer institute on Turning Points practices with a strong focus on improving learning, teaching, and assessment "Critical friends" visits with partner schools to provide feedback on key issues of learning, teaching, and assessment Lab visits to observe classrooms and teachers exhibiting exemplary Turning Points practices Annual national leadership conference
Developing District Capacity to Support School Change	Building the district capacity to better support whole school change Collaborating with the district to pursue means of flexibility and autonomy that allow the school to be more innovative Collaborating with the district on professional development, research and evaluation, and advocacy for middle grades reform

(National Turning Points Center, 2001, pp.11-17)

Research has been conducted on the Turning Points CSR Model. Feldman and Ouimette (2004) conducted a qualitative study with four schools involved in the Turning Points CSR model. From this study the authors reached three conclusions, termed themes and lessons, from the schools that were engaged with the model.

1. The critical role of professional collaboration and shared leadership.
2. The importance of staying focused on a few clear goals for teaching and learning, avoiding the pitfalls of overload and complexity.
3. The power of a common framework and local innovation and adaptation. (p.13)

Just as the middle school movement was ushering in *Turning Points 2000,* an issue facing the middle school movement and the academic preparation of students in an era of increasing accountability became apparent: the relationship between the components of middle school philosophy and student achievement, the primary focus of this study. In a summary of research on the question as to whether middle schools result in higher student achievement than junior high schools, the National Middle School Association (1997) listed the following conclusions:

- The issue is complex because many factors affect each study.
- Schools which implement more Turning Points recommendations show greatest gains in student outcomes.
- The aim is equitable high achievement for all types of students.
- The interrelationships of many factors affect student outcomes.
- There is a strong link between socioeconomic status and achievement. (p.3)

Lipsitz and her colleagues (1997) provided insight about what a school looks like that is ready to focus on the performance of its students.

> The indicators of schools that are ready to focus on student performance include a well-articulated vision of middle-level schooling, clear goals for what students should know and be able to do, the capacity for self-assessment, an atmosphere of accountability, and access to skilled help with planning, reflection, and practice. (p.540)

It has been recognized that simply changing structures alone may not change the practices in the school. The changes a school undertakes are not meaningful if they are only structural in nature; they need to translate into the classroom experiences of students through curriculum and instruction (Van Tassel-Baska, Hall, & Bailey, 1996). Elmore (1995a) stated, “changes in structures are weakly related to changes in teaching practice, and therefore structural change

does not necessarily lead to changes in teaching, learning, and student performance" (p.25). Improvement is "the shaping of a set of proven practices and their collective deployment for a common end" (Elmore, 2002, p.13).

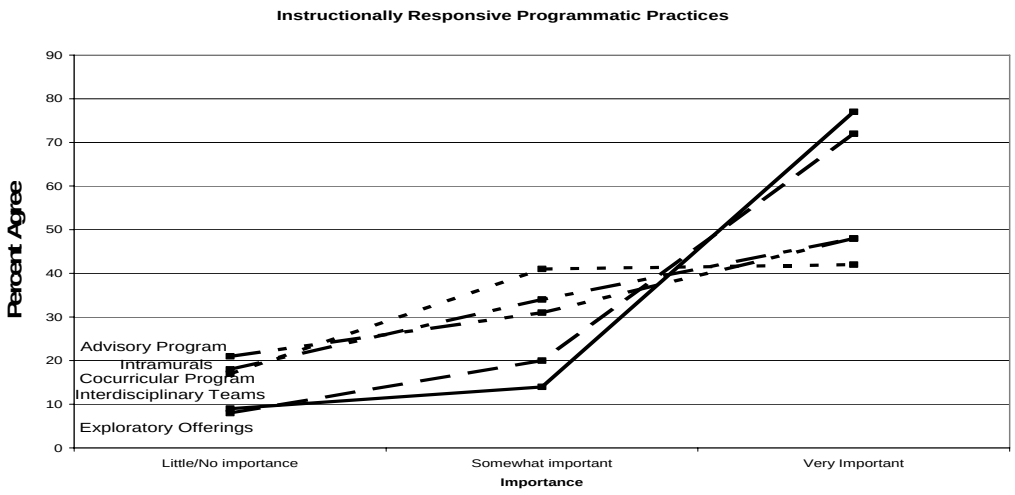
Some assume that for change to occur, the building principal should and must be the one individual to carry out the change. However, a study by Heller and Firestone (1995) found that instead of having one principal change agent, a leader that stood out as the figurehead of change, schools that underwent change were marked by a redundancy in leadership functions and change management functions. "Perhaps the most significant practical implication of our findings is the challenge to the 'commonsense' view that someone has to be in charge to make change happen" (Heller & Firestone, 1995, p.84). Heller and Firestone's findings hold marked importance for recognizing the role that teacher leadership can play in bringing about, fostering, and monitoring change.

In 2002 Valentine and his colleagues surveyed principals across the country on a variety of issues, including the *Turning Points* recommendations. The researchers found that of the eight original recommendations, "Fifty-one percent of the principals believed that 'creating a community of learning' was the most important recommendation, with a mean ranking of 2.24 (more significant than any other ranking)" (Valentine et al., 2002, p.126).

Valentine and his colleagues (2002) asked principals around the country to provide their opinion about practices identified by experts as developmentally responsive for middle level students. Interdisciplinary teaming and exploratory course offerings had the highest importance placed upon them. The data reported by Valentine and his colleagues are reported in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Middle Level Practices, Level of Importance



(Valentine et al., 2002, p.75)

Louis (2000) described what middle schools would have to do to make the *Turning Points* recommendations a reality, "In order to achieve this transformation toward the *Turning Points* vision of middle grades education, schools must address not only the need for new skills and knowledge, but also their embedded dysfunctional learning habits" (p.24). Surprisingly, there have been relatively few studies that have examined the implementation and adoption of middle school philosophy and the influence on student outcomes, or to place it in the context of Louis' dysfunctional habits, the "things we should do and the things we should not do." Three notable works which have undertaken this form of investigation are: Lee and Smith (1993), Felner, Jackson, Kasak, Mulhall, Brand and Flowers (1997), and Russell (1997). All three studies shed insight into the role of implementing and sustaining middle school reform and the appropriateness of the programs to the school site. Simply adding more structures or programs alone will not lead to reform; rather the process must be grounded and viewed as comprehensive and integrative.

Lee and Smith (1993) conducted a quantitative study as the call for standards-based reforms were beginning to resonate for public education. Lee and Smith's study sought to

understand restructuring and its effect on how instruction was organized, how teachers were organized to deliver the instruction, and school size. Two hypotheses were generated to ascertain the effects of school restructuring.

> H1: Young adolescents who attend schools in which their educational experiences are more restructured are positively affected in several domains.
>
> H2: Students who are enrolled in restructured schools are more engaged with academic work and are less likely to engage in behaviors that put them at risk of failing or dropping out of school. (p.169)

Drawing on data collected through the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) the authors drew a sub-sample from the total respondents and obtained a sample of 377 schools (public, Catholic, and independent) enrolling 8,845 students for the study. Lee and Smith (1993) used four measures of restructuring that led to more similarities in student experiences: (a) reduced departmentalization; (b) heterogeneously grouping; (c) team teaching; and, (d) an index of restructuring, which was a sum of 16 items, including student outcomes, academic achievement, engagement in academic work, and at-risk behaviors to analyze and identify a school as one in which significant restructuring had occurred. Hierarchical linear modeling was used as method of data analysis.

Lee and Smith (1993) found a number of important results for middle school practice: smaller schools tended to be more restructured; heterogeneous grouping was more likely to occur in homogeneous schools; "the academic engagement of minority and White students is similar, once SES and academic background are controlled" (p.176); students with a stronger academic background were less involved with at-risk behaviors; "schools with less rigid departmental structures evidence both higher achievement and less social-class differentiation" (p.177); the

higher the students SES the higher the engagement with academics; "students were more engaged with academic work in more restructured schools" (p.178). From these results, Lee and Smith (1993) drew the following conclusions:

- Elements of restructuring are positively associated with the academic achievement and engagement with schooling of American eighth graders.
- Students who attended schools that encourage team teaching evidenced higher achievement.
- Students who attended school with more elements of restructuring were more engaged in academic work, but also engaged in more at-risk behaviors.
- Early adolescents fare better in schools in which their age group is not isolated and they are likely to demonstrate higher achievement and more engagement with academics in smaller schools. (p.180)

Felner, Jackson, Kasak, Mulhall, Brand and Flowers (1997) conducted a study of 31 schools seeking to "assess and evaluate the process of implementation of the recommendations of *Turning Points* for middle-grades reform, as well as their impact on students' academic achievement, social/emotional development, and behavioral adjustment" (p.532). Schools were classified as high, partial, and low-implementation sites, and were "demographically comparable in terms of size, percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-priced lunch, and per-pupil expenditures" (p.543). Two research questions guided the study:

1. As participating schools move from more traditional structures, norms, and instructional practices to increasing levels of comprehensiveness and fidelity in their *Turning Points* recommendations, are there parallel changes in students' levels of health, well-being, and socio/emotional functioning; academic achievement and progress; experiences of the

school climate and functioning; levels of resources and support from important others outside of the school setting; and involvement with parents and community? (p.532)

2. In what ways, within and across participating schools, do variations in the levels and forms of the implementation of *Turning Points* recommendations relate to outcomes for groups of students at varying levels of risk for academic difficulties and other problematic developmental outcomes? (p.532)

The sample for the study was drawn from schools participating in a reform initiative in Illinois. Data from the first three years of the study were used. The study found: (1) that the level of implementation of the reform was important for the reform; (2) that students in schools classified as having high implementation performed better than those in non- and partially-implemented schools; (3) student behavior problems are less of a problem in the more high-implementation schools, and; (4) students feel safer and more secure at high-implementation schools (Felner et al., 1997). The authors were quick to point out that even those schools identified as having high levels of implementation are still not "transformed". A quote from the authors illustrates this point:

> …there are clear patterns of interdependence among the implementation elements that may require additional consideration by those involved in school reform efforts if we are to fully realize the benefits of middle-grades restructuring (Felner et al., 1997, p.547).

Russell (1997) studied 10 middle-level schools to see if certain middle-level programs had an influence on student achievement in selected content areas. Drawing on the work of Alexander and George (1981) and MacIver and Epstein (1993) to identify essential concepts, Russell investigated the middle school components of: interdisciplinary teaming/block scheduling; advisor/advisee program; exploratory curriculum; developmentally appropriate

teaching strategies; transition/articulation practices, and; appropriate required curriculum/learning skills.

Using a quantitative design, Russell surveyed teachers and administrators across 10 middle school sites, and examined 6th and 8th grade student achievement scores for the cohort of eighth grade students in the buildings. Russell's study included responses from 381 educators and student achievement results for 2,373 students while controlling for student's gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and 6th grade achievement scores.

The study differentiated, by the use of descriptive statistics, the 10 participating schools into high (1), medium (8), and low (1) implementation sites. Multiple regression was used as the analytic technique on the six middle school components as separate independent variables and eighth grade student achievement as the dependent measure. Sixth grade achievement scores, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status were used as mediating variables, thus allowing the assessment of the influence of the selected middle school components on the dependent variable, eighth grade student achievement.

The study found that advisory had the highest level of implementation while developmentally appropriate teaching strategies and exploratory curriculum were among the lowest levels of implementation at the schools. From the multiple regression the study accounted for 72 to 83 percent of the variance (R Square) in eighth grade student achievement. Of importance from this study, Russell (1997) found, "Each of the six middle-level program concepts and the overall category related significantly with at least one achievement score" (p.182). These findings are important to list in detail.

- Appropriate Required Curriculum related positively to the reading, mathematics, and composite battery scores.

- Interdisciplinary Teaming related positively to the reading and mathematics scores.
- Developmentally Appropriate Teaching Strategies related positively to mathematics and the composite battery scores.
- Advisor/Advisee related negatively to the language arts and composite battery scores.
- Overall, Middle Level, Transition/Articulation, and Exploratory Curriculum each related positively to the mathematics score. (pp.182-183)

These three studies all support the conclusions of Newmann and Wehlage (1995) from the work of the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools. If the restructuring of schools is to be successful, it must be based on: student learning, authentic pedagogy, school organizational capacity, and external support.

Summary of Political Values

In the relatively short history of the junior high and middle school movements, four values have been evident. Some values have, at times, received more emphasis than others, but generally the values have had moments of high visibility followed by less. The values have assumed different interpretations for issues of practice and policy. What is representative of quality/excellence in one era may not seem relevant for quality/excellence in another era.

In general, the establishment of the junior high movement was concerned with issues of efficiency and quality. The importance of efficiency ebbed into the 1920s as the movement experienced more attention to issues of quality of program for students and choice for students' decisions about program offerings. Choice persisted as an important value until the standards-based reform efforts of the 1990s, where it has nearly disappeared.

The middle school movement, from inception to current status, focused on defining quality/excellence and determining how best to achieve such excellence. The movement has also

retained the emphasis on equity started by the junior high movement and actually given it a larger role of importance as evident by its central location in the *Turning Points 2000* model and as a core criterion for the National Forum.

The variables analyzed in this study were designed from the guiding principles of *Turning Points 2000.* Therefore, the remaining sections of this review of literature are organized around the eight *Turning Points 2000* guiding principles. A deep understanding of those principles and the programs and practices associated with each is essential to the interpretation of the findings of this study presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5. For that reason, a detailed discussion of each principle, rather than brevity, was a goal in the preparation of the remaining sections of this literature review.

Curriculum and Assessment

This section of the literature review is organized around *Turning Points 2000* Recommendation #1: Teach a curriculum grounded in rigorous, public academic standards for what students should know and be able to do, relevant to the concerns of adolescents and based on how students learn best (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p.23). The section will include relevant literature on: (1) curriculum (historical antecedents and the modern era), (2) alignment, and (3) assessment.

Curriculum, Historical Antecedents

A school's curriculum is the basic foundational element of its relation to the environment. The environment encompasses the students that receive the curriculum, the parents whose students receive the curriculum, the community which elects board members to approve and

provide oversight to the curriculum, and the larger society which relies upon the students the curriculum provides. Brazee (1997) noted this phenomenon when he wrote that, "Historically, curriculum has been developed by adults working with one agenda or another for such purposes as inculcating American culture, raising test scores, and teaching basic skills" (p.187). Curriculum refers to the material that is to be taught, instruction is the process for delivering the curriculum, and assessment is the method for determining the degree of learning that resulted from the instruction and the curriculum. To quote Gross (2002), "Simply, curriculum may be considered to be the learning agenda, instruction involves the ways that agenda is shared, and assessment raises the question of the extent to which the agenda affected learners" (p. x).

The idea of curriculum in middle level schools can be traced to the earliest calls for the establishment of the junior high schools (Toepfer, 1997), with the original conceptions sharing a similarity to modern considerations (Beane, 1997). Curriculum effects, and is effected, by instruction and assessment in a symbiotic relationship. A change in any one of these three areas affects the other two. Keeping the interrelationship in mind then, when looking at the history of middle-level curriculum, we must also keep in mind issues of instruction and assessment. These three elements make up components of pedagogy teachers and building principals must consider when thinking through issues of practice.

Gross (2002) provided an excellent account of the forces that shaped what is now seen in middle-level curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and Toepfer (1997) provided a detailed description of the historical timeline through which middle-level curriculum advanced. Gross (2002) attributes curricular precedent to the focus on the unique needs and interests of adolescents through connecting disciplines to the Social Meliorists that then led to the ideas of John Dewey. Instruction was informed by the work of Hall, Piaget, Erickson, and Vygotsky,

whose contributions led the middle school movement to the approaches of cooperative learning, team teaching, hands-on learning, interdisciplinary approaches, and thematic units (Gross, 2002). Gross attributed the present thinking on assessment to the American Herbartians, who believed the point of instruction was to develop a well-rounded individual, thus influencing the middle school movement towards thematic units and interdisciplinary work.

In the 1930s a study was undertaken that was unparalleled in education research, the Eight Year Study (Lipka, Lounsbury, Toepfer, Vars, Alessi, & Kridel, 1998). The Eight Year Study was a consequence of perceived and identified inadequacies in the education of secondary school students. The Study proposed to allow close to 30 schools to have waivers from traditional requirements (Carnegie Units) for their students to attend college. "Admission for these students would be on recommendation, accompanied by a full, recorded history of the students' activities and performance (Lipka et al., 1998, p.5). From this reform, initiated by the schools and with the oversight of the commission, 12 implications for middle level education arose:

1. Focus on personal-social needs of students
2. Cooperative teacher-student planning
3. Balancing student concerns and societal demands
4. Using areas of concern to structure scope and sequence
5. Teacher-guidance
6. Interdisciplinary teaming
7. Integrative curriculum
8. Comprehensive evaluation
9. Research before and after changes

10. Involving parents and other stakeholders

11. Democratic values

12. The change process (Lipka et al., 1998).

As junior highs began to gain in popularity around the country, so did the thoughts behind junior high curriculum. Recall that the junior high school was formed as a way to separate younger from older adolescents, recognizing that the younger students needed a different experience than their older counterparts. In so doing, it would appear then that the original conception of junior high curriculum would be very much in keeping with modern day recommendations for middle school students. A foundational aspect of junior high curriculum in the 1920s was the importance of core courses (Toepfer, 1997). Of this time period Toepfer (1997) noted:

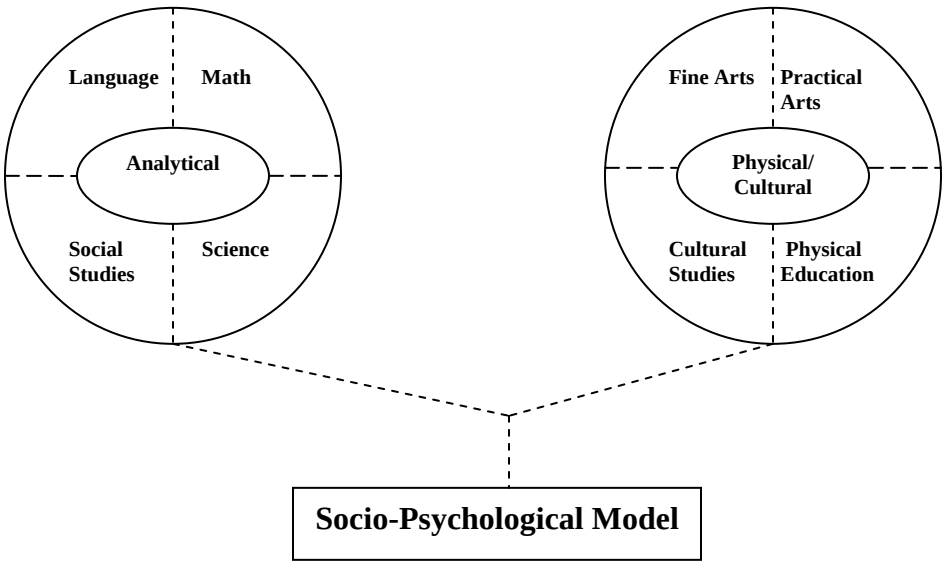
- "Glass (1924) reinforced the importance of maintaining the junior high school's general education role and resisted attempts to specialize education prior to the high school" (p.167).
- "Briggs (1920) saw the purpose of exploratory experiences as allowing students to 'try-out' specific areas and interests to see what their interests might be,…" (p.168).
- "Koos (1927) saw junior high learning experiences as helping students decide on areas of specialization they might select in high school" (p.168).
- "Gruhn and Douglas (1947) extensively discussed the curriculum implications of these six functions which they identified: articulation, differentiation, exploration, guidance, integration, and socialization" (pp.168-169).

Interestingly as the 1960s arrived and the middle school began to emerge, two primary founders of the movement, Donald Eichhorn and William Alexander, used curriculum to help

frame their conceptions of what a middle school could be. Eichhorn's conception, the Socio-Psychological Model, was grounded in two different models, the physical/cultural and the analytical. To quote Eichhorn (1966), "The physical-cultural curriculum provides appreciable interrelatedness in the areas of the fine arts, practical arts, physical education, and the cultural facets of the social studies" (p.67). "In the analytical curriculum emphasis has been placed principally on thought processes. As such, the curriculum has been conceptualized within the boundaries of the general content areas of mathematics, science, language, and social studies" (p.74). A visual representation of Eichhorn's (1966, p.65) Socio-Psychological Model is provided in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Eichhorn's Model



The curricular model proposed by William Alexander and his colleagues (Alexander et al., 1968) consisted of three areas: personal development, skills for continued learning, and organized knowledge. Features of the personal development area included counseling and referral, development of values, health and physical development, and individual interests. Skills for continued learning were viewed as a purposeful attempt by the school's faculty to identify and improve key skills necessary for student's academic careers. Skills for continued learning demonstrated the importance of integration and interdisciplinary approaches when working with students on the development of core competencies. The third component, the area of organized knowledge, dealt directly with the traditional conception of core knowledge still ever-present in middle school curricula across the United States.

Curriculum at the middle-level, according to middle school philosophy, should be unique and authentic for students experiencing it. The difficulty for middle-level educators comes from finding a match between this authentic, integrated curriculum and calls for a standards-based curriculum (skill oriented). While authentic and standards-based curriculum are not opposing, integration of the two types has been difficult for middle-level practitioners. Schoenfeld (2002) notes that in mathematics procedural skills do not have to be sacrificed by teaching for understanding, they are not exclusive. The issue of what middle-level curriculum is has been one of the most difficult for educators at the middle level to grapple with since the movement's inception. For example, while middle school philosophy proposes, and educators are using, curriculum integration, the usefulness of the approach may be drawn into question. O'Steen and his colleagues state, "…clear and compelling theoretical support and rationale exist for using curriculum integration in middle level education. However, practicing educators are experiencing mixed results as they apply this curricular approach in their classrooms" (O'steen, Cuper, Spires,

Beal, & Pope, 2002, p.17). Beane (1993), one of the foremost scholars on middle school curriculum, stated that "the question of what should the middle school curriculum be" is one of the most important facing the movement.

Curriculum, Modern Era

The standards-based reform movement of the 1990s impacted middle level education. As the standards-based movement evolved, the focus of the movement on designing quality standards and then having students meet such standards has in some ways been forgotten or lost, and instead replaced by a focus on achievement (Hatch, 2000). Elmore (2000) stated that the logic of standards-based reform is straightforward, "schools and school systems should be held accountable for their contribution to student learning" (p.4). However, Ogawa, Sandholtz, Martinez-Flores, and Scribner (2003) found that even within a single school district, members of the school organization have different perspectives on how standards are viewed.

Valentine and his colleagues (2002), writing from research conducted as part of a national study, stated the following about curriculum at the middle level at the beginning of the twentieth century:

> The curricula of middle level schools appeared to be more appropriate in 2000 than ever before in the history of middle level education. Essentially, almost all middle level schools provided a comprehensive set of required learning experiences in math, science, social studies, language arts, reading, and physical education. Most provided a variety of exploratory and elective opportunities in the fine and performing arts and in industrial, technical, and consumer sciences. The curriculum was typically delivered in a subject-centered manner through a departmentalized or interdisciplinary-team design. Service

learning and character education were relatively new programs that are beginning to gain footholds in the landscape of middle level curriculum. (Valentine et al., 2002, p.143)

Curriculum can take many different forms in middle schools. Pate (2005) identified the following as possible curriculum models to be used in middle schools: contracts, learning centers, web-based, subject-centered, parallel, interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary, service-learning, and curriculum integration. Powell and Allen (2001) identified three types of alternative curriculum structures: subject-centered, interdisciplinary, and integrated. An alternative curriculum structure was defined as "how subject matter is organized and taught to young adolescents" (p.117).

The concept of exploration for adolescents has been prevalent throughout the thinking about educating the middle level aged student. Exploratory programs are designed to allow students an opportunity to explore subject areas and content to which they might otherwise not have exposure (Brazee, 2000). Exploration supports the discovery of self, others, and environment for adolescents (Compton & Hawn, 1993). From the beginning to the end of the twentieth-century exploratory has undergone a shift in what it means to the educational experiences of young adolescents.

Compton and Hawn (1993) defined exploration as, "the conscious effort of a school to provide opportunities for students to discover, in a fairly threat-free setting, their strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes, and potential future curriculum choices" (p.16). George and Alexander (1993) stated, "the original intent of the exploratory program was to have relatively brief, introductory courses for beginners, with longer, more intensive courses available another year for those interested" (p.73). However, as the twentieth century drew to a close with middle schools facing increasing pressures for the improvement of academic achievement in the core

areas, exploratory programs began to be "pushed to the margins" (Waks, 2002, p.32) in favor of the academic excellence and the back-to-basics movement (Compton & Hawn, 1993).

This was most evident in *Turning Points 2000* (Jackson & Davis, 2000) where exploratory was virtually taken out of the equation of middle-level education. "The heart of middle-level education, as conceived in *Turning Points 2000*, is no longer exploration, but academic excellence, the attainment of academic objectives that curriculum experts already agreed upon in advance" (Waks, 2002, p.34).

Another major shift in thinking about middle level curriculum in contemporary times can be attributed primarily to the work of James Beane in the early 1990s. Beane (1993) presented eight guidelines for middle school curriculum: (1) focus on general education; (2) the central purpose…helping early adolescents explore self and social meanings at this time in their lives; (3) respect the dignity of early adolescents; (4) firmly grounded in democracy; (5) honor diversity; (6) of great personal and social significance; (7) lifelike and lively, and; (8) enhance knowledge and skills for all young people (pp.17-21). From Beane's conception the curriculum should benefit the students and be driven by issues of concern and interest to the students. Unfortunately, as Brazee (1997) noted "middle schools continue to give young adolescents answers to questions they never asked or even care about" (p.192).

Beane (1993) also identified eight forces influencing middle school curriculum: (1) the characteristics of early adolescence; (2) curriculum mandates; (3) expectations of parents and the society as a whole; (4) structures of tradition; (5) interests of subject area specialists at all levels; (6) theories and proposals about middle level reform itself; (7) concerns and interests of local educators; and, (8) expectations of particular early adolescents in local schools. Beane (1997) noted the forces at work for and against middle-level curriculum.

> Tensions continue over whether the curriculum ought to emphasize general or specialized education, academic or life-centered purposes, concerns of young adolescents or desires of adults, mastery of discipline-based knowledge or thematic-based problem-solving, or preparation for future education or responsiveness to present situations. (p.205)

The philosophy and approach that middle-level curriculum took throughout the 1990s was influenced by the larger movement of school reform and calls for more authentic forms of pedagogy. Authentic pedagogy can be thought of as emphasizing that "all instructional activities must be rooted in a primary concern for high standards of intellectual quality" (Newmann, Marks, & Gamoran, 1995, p.1). An illustration of standards of authentic pedagogy as identified by Newmann and his colleagues (1995) is provided in Table 10. The authors delineate between authentic pedagogy, encompassing assessment tasks and classroom instruction, and authentic academic performance.

Table 10

Standards for Authentic Pedagogy and Student Academic Performance

Authentic Pedagogy	Authentic Academic Performance
Assessment Tasks	Standard 1: Analysis
Standard 1: Organization of Information	Standard 2: Disciplinary Concepts
Standard 2: Consideration of Alternatives	Standard 3: Elaborated Written Communications
Standard 3: Disciplinary Content	
Standard 4: Disciplinary Process	
Standard 5: Elaborated Written Communication	
Standard 6: Problem Connected to the World	
Standard 7: Audience Beyond the School	
Classroom Instruction	
Standard 1: Higher-Order Thinking	
Standard 2: Substantive Conversation	
Standard 3: Deep Knowledge	
Standard 4: Connections to the World Beyond the Classroom	

(Newmann, Marks, & Gamoran, 1995, p.2)

In a quantitative study designed to evaluate the criteria provided in Table 26, Newmann and his colleagues found that authentic pedagogy appeared to improve student performance in math and science for the grade levels involved. They also concluded that while authentic pedagogy is beneficial for all students it proved to be even more helpful for students already performing at high levels.

Curriculum Alignment

Alignment is a term often used to describe the interconnectedness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The concept of alignment is "…the desired convergence between a system's expectations, as expressed in its course documents and recommendations for teaching and learning, and what is actually mandated for assessment" (Barnes, Clarke, & Stephens, 2000, p.625). "Alignment is the core idea in systemic, standards-based reform" (Smith & O'Day, 1991, cited in Porter, 2002). Cohen (1987) described instructional alignment as "…the extent to which stimulus conditions match among three instructional components: intended outcomes, instructional processes, and instructional assessment" (p.16). The complexity that surrounds the idea of alignment in practice can be quite daunting.

> Alignment is not a yes-or-no question; rather, it consists of a number of dimensions that collectively tell the story of the degree of match between the expectations states have for students' performance and the measure used to gauge whether students are meeting those expectations. (Rothman, Slattery, Vranek, & Resnick, 2002, p.10)

Alignment of curriculum, assessment, and instruction can be either vertical or horizontal.

> Achievement can be more or less aligned to instruction, instruction to district standards and assessments, and district standards and assessments to state standards and assessments. These are all examples of vertical alignment. Horizontal alignment is a measure of the consistency of standards and assessments within a district or state—that is, the degree to which these policy instruments deliver a coherent set of expectations to teachers. (Porter, 2002, pp.4-5)

It has been suggested that alignment needs to be improved (Webb, 1999; Olson, 2003). Schools and school districts are expected to have the curricula aligned. However, state

departments or any other sponsoring agencies also have a responsibility and an expectation for alignment present in their pedagogical systems. In an analysis of the alignment of curricular standards and assessments from four states, Webb (1999) sought to develop and refine a process to allow for analyzing the relationship among the facets. Webb (1999) also provided a framework to aid in understanding the components common in curricular frameworks as well as the level of specificity. Going from the most general to the most specific these components are: standards, goals, and objectives. In a concluding remark from the development of an alignment process and subsequent analysis of four states documents, Webb (1999) noted the following:

> Based on the analyses performed, clear differences among the states were evident, along with common issues faced by all. A high percentage of standards and assessments across the four states failed to achieve depth-of-knowledge consistency. In general, too high a frequency of items were below the depth-of-knowledge level of the corresponding objectives for there to be alignment. (p.36)

This point about the lack-of-depth in the questions being asked of students was echoed in a 2002 study conducted by Rothman and his colleagues, where they specifically stated:

> With few exceptions, the collections of items that make up the tests that we examined do not do a good job of assessing the full range of standards and objectives that states have laid out for their students (p.33).

Or, it could be as Cohen (1987) stated, "lack of excellence in American schools is not caused by ineffective teaching, but mostly by misaligning what teachers teach, what they intend to teach, and what they assess as having been taught" (p.19).

In concluding this section on curriculum it is important to point out that Erb and Stevenson (1998) noted the interrelated nature of curricular reform as stressed in the *Turning*

Points recommendations. “Curricular reform can only be implemented and sustained if other elements such as ‘creating small communities for learning,’ ‘empowering teachers and administrators,’ and ‘staffing middle grades schools with teachers who are experts at teaching young adolescence’ are also implemented” (Erb & Stevenson, 1998, p.69).

Assessment

Assessment is critical to the process of evaluating the success of curriculum and instruction that are standards-based. Writing on the importance of assessment, Barnes, Clarke, and Stephens (2000) noted the following from two studies conducted in Australia related to assessment, “attempts at curriculum reform are likely to be futile unless accompanied by matching assessment reform; and, assessment can be the engine of curriculum reform, or the principal impediment to its implementation” (p.623). The 1990s saw the emergence of a new era in assessment, the likes of which had not been seen in close to seventy years (Stiggins, 1991). This new era was shaped by an examination of new issues, including accountability for attaining outcomes, reexamining outcomes, and having more assessment options available (Stiggins, 1991).

Many times the thoughts and concerns of parents and community members’ about standards-based education are not heard. Placier, Walker, and Foster (2002) detailed the development of the Missouri Show-Me Standards and noted that while educators may not recognize the importance and issues related to the language of standards, politicians do. In 2003, The Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning Center (McREL) conducted a study to investigate how stakeholders viewed standards-based education. Data were collected from 60 participants in the Kansas City, Missouri area. From the findings, four themes emerged: “(1) Standards are meaningless without tests, but accountability should be based on more than just

test scores, (2) True accountability makes schools more responsive to parents and communities, not to outside officials, (3) Parents and students are a crucial yet often missing part of most accountability systems, and (4) The biggest problems with public schools have little to do with standards or academics" (Goodwin, 2003, p.2).

Missouri has received recognition for the rigor of its state achievement test, the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP), for the level of proficiency required of students, placing it only behind South Carolina and Maine (Peterson & Hess, 2005) as a quality assessment tool. Simply instituting an assessment system alone will not increase student achievement (Barton, 2001); instead, areas such as professional development and organizational support must be addressed if achievement is to improve, tests will not do it on their own (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p.32). Missouri's statewide assessment system, the MAP, has been until 2006, testing students in "milepost grades" (Stecher & Barron, 2001). Milepost testing is "the focus of accountability testing on selected grades…rather than on all grades" (Stecher & Barron, 2001, p.260). By using milepost-testing patterns, questions about the differences between tested versus non-tested grades arise, particularly with regard to the influence of high-stakes testing on curricular and instructional practices (Stecher & Barron, 2001). In an analysis of how milepost-testing influenced instructional practices in Kentucky, Stecher & Barron (2001) found that there was variation between tested and non-tested grades, as well as differences based on what was being tested, in addition to unintended consequences of the practice. In their concluding section, Stecher & Barron (2001) stated,

> The results of this study suggest that generalizability of performance is not the only criterion on which test-based accountability should be judged. It is also important to look

at the system's effect on practice and to establish whether the system is leading teachers (at) all grade levels to make good curricular decisions. (p.279)

In Missouri, the mileposts test grades through the spring of 2005, were at grades 3, 7, and 11 for Communication Arts and grades 4, 8, and 10 for Mathematics.

Researchers have examined and identified a number of appropriate strategies that authentically assess individual student performance. Clark and Clark (2000) identified four elements that help ensure that assessments accomplish their purposes:

1. Middle level students know what they are supposed to be learning, have regular feedback on their accomplishments, and have the opportunity to reflect on their work.
2. Parents know what their children can do and are familiar with the school's expectations so they can provide assistance and encouragement.
3. Teachers and administrators know what students can do and what needs to be done to help students become more proficient.
4. Decision makers have reliable information about learning and achievement to make informed decisions. (p.202)

Instructional Methods

This section of the literature review is organized around *Turning Points 2000* Recommendation #2: Use instructional methods designed to prepare all students to achieve higher standards and become lifelong learners (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p.23).

The role of instruction has been recognized as a crucial factor in a school's ability to influence student achievement (Marzano & Pickering, 2003). Teachers at the classroom level are the primary deliverers of instruction. Unfortunately, MacIver (1990) documents that the instruction for middle school students may not be the most effective or appropriate. "The typical

organization of instruction in schools that enroll young adolescents interferes with the development of close, trusting relationships between students and teachers" (p.458).

When students enter the middle school setting they bring with them background, prior knowledge/achievement, and a host of experiences that have influenced and shaped their careers in education. Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) found from their quantitative study that, "…adolescents' decisions to engage in learning or not in the classroom depend in some measure on whether they feel able to meet the challenges presented them, whether they see purpose and value in classroom activities, and whether they feel safe and cared for by others in the setting" (p.454). Prior successes and difficulties shape these students, ranging from preparation prior to the entrance of kindergarten (Lee & Burkam, 2002), placement in remedial reading programs (D'Agostino & Murphy, 2004), and transitional experiences into the middle school setting (Barber & Olsen, 2004). Elmore (1995b) identified what he termed "emerging ideas on best practice" for learning and teaching. Six ideas were identified with a sufficient research base behind them to substantiate their importance:

1. The object of teaching is to nurture understanding.
2. Understanding occurs in the context of specific bodies of knowledge.
3. Understanding requires the active construction of knowledge by learners.
4. Understanding requires the development of 'basic' and 'higher order' knowledge simultaneously.
5. Learners differ substantially in the experience, the cognitive predispositions, and the competencies they bring to specific bodies of knowledge.
6. Learning is a social, as well as an individual, process.

The quality of instruction that students receive in the classroom setting is critical in their mastery of the subject matter. “The purpose of school instruction is to provide learning conditions that are optimal for all students” (Tenenbaum, 1986, p.105). Schools must determine how to provide the most appropriate settings to ensure that students have the opportunity for mastery. In a quantitative study using an experimental design to examine the effects of different instructional practices on student achievement/mastery of content, Tenenbaum (1986) compared student results after they had been placed in a treatment group of one of three interventions: enhanced group instructional conditions, mastery learning, and conventional instruction. Tenenbaum (1986) stated the following: “Under enhanced group instructional conditions, 74% of the students attained mastery (80% or higher), whereas under mastery learning 57% of the students attained this criterion. Under conventional instruction, however, only 17% of the students reached this level of achievement” (Tenenbaum, 1986, p.112). Tenenbaum (1986) noted that the findings indicated that, “when group instruction improves, the level of predictability of subsequent achievement by prior achievement is reduced to nearly zero” (p.113). From Tennenbaum’s work we see the important impact of the teacher in students’ mastery of content.

Accordingly, teachers must be prepared to meet students’ needs and know how to do so. Darling-Hammond (2000) stated, “Substantial evidence from prior reform efforts indicates that changes in course taking, curriculum content, testing, or textbooks make little difference if teachers do not know how to use these tools well and how to diagnose their students’ learning needs” (p.38).

Time is an element that schools have focused on for producing desired effects with student learning. However, simply adding more time for classroom instruction may not be enough. Just as important is the quality of what occurs within a given period of time. Yair (2000)

in a quantitative, experimental design, adopting a stratified sample, used Experience Sampling Method (ESM) to gauge the amount of student engagement during the course of a week. Students were given wristwatches, which beeped eight times a day, "When beeped, the students were requested to answer a short questionnaire about their experiences at the time of the beep. The students were asked about the activity they were engaged in, their mood at the time of the beep, and their level of engagement" (Yair, 2000, p.492).

Yair (2000) found that the amount of time students are actively engaged is less than had previously been thought. The age of the student, the content, and the active participation by the student all contributed in determining how engaged the students were in their coursework. On stating the conclusions from the study, Yair (2000) addressed active engagement versus traditional methods.

> The findings have vividly shown that active instructional methods and strategies elicit remarkably high student-reported engagement. In contrast, teacher-centered and individualized approaches—which superficially control students' engagement with instruction—actually produce the highest rates of student-reported disengagement. The current investigation also shows that the most prevalent instructional methods in many American classrooms are those that produce the lowest rates of productive time. (p.504)

The relevance and usefulness of homework is an issue at all levels of K-12 education, and the middle level is no different. Harris Cooper (1989) synthesized the research on homework, including purported positive effects, concerns against it, as well as a number of valuable insights on the topic. Of interest from Cooper's work is the finding on the relationship between homework and grade level. "Homework has substantial positive effects on the achievement of high school students. Junior high students also benefit from homework but only about half as

much. For elementary school students the effect of homework on achievement is trivial, if it exists at all" (Copper, 1989, p.89).

The amount of homework per night to be effective for junior high students was between one to two hours a night (Cooper, 1989). Cooper (1989) also suggested that homework should be both mandatory and exploratory for junior high aged students, assignments should not be individualized, and that parents' roles be kept to a minimum. Parents can help their students with homework by helping the child to get organized, encouraging good study skills, talking about the assignment with the child, watching for frustration and giving praise (Lehr & Osborn, 2002). Others view homework as important when considering the discretionary time that students have available to them, and that clearly required homework to be held to higher standards while at the same time requiring more would help students (Walberg, Paschal, & Weinstein, 1985).

As the instructional leader of a school, the building principal plays a significant role. Andrews and Soder (1987) found that the achievement of "…students in strong-leader schools were significantly greater both in total reading and total mathematics than those of students in schools rated as having average or weak leaders" (p.10). Quinn (2002) used multiple regressions to analyze the relationship between teacher perception of instructional leadership and school-wide instructional practices. Studying four scales of instructional leadership, he found that the variable instructional resource explained the most variance in teaching practices. "Higher levels of Active Learning/Active Teaching occur in schools where the principal serves as an instructional resource" (p.461).

A focus on literacy at the middle level is a rather new phenomenon in comparison to the elementary level. Historically, reading was focused on predominantly at the earlier, elementary-level grades, whereupon struggling students would receive remediation in the development of

necessary skills to be competent readers. However, it has been found that reading is a developmental process where skills are acquired along a continuum (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999).

Moore and his colleagues identified 7 principles associated with adolescent literacy. These were: (1) access to a wide variety of reading material that they can and want to read; (2) instruction that builds both the skill and desire to read increasingly complex materials; (3) assessment that shows them their strengths as well as their needs and that guides their teachers to design instruction that will best help them grow as readers; (4) teachers who model and provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension and study strategies across the curriculum; (5) reading specialists; (6) teachers who understand the complexities of individual adolescent readers; (7) homes, communities, and a nation that will support their efforts (Moore et al., 1999).

Lee and Croninger (1994) conducted a study to examine literacy development of adolescents. Lee and Croninger's examination compared poor to middle class adolescents in the areas of home and school conditions, levels of home and school support, and differences explained via school supports. Regarding elements of support for the enhancement of literacy that can come from the home, the study found "Many of the home supports we have considered in this study are subject to change, and much of the impetus for change can (and should) come from the school" (Lee & Croninger, 1994, p.311). Promising practices include urging parents to hold high expectations, increasing reading materials in the home, and family discussions about educational experiences and plans. In a concluding statement, Lee and Croninger (1994) provided insight about the characteristics of more effective literacy practices in middle level schools:

> Middle-grade schools where learning is undifferentiated by ability or social background, where high-level instruction is the norm, where students and teachers are socially engaged in cooperative endeavors toward learning—these seem to be schools with high levels of literacy development and where learning is distributed equitably. (Lee & Croninger, 1994, p.319)

Expert Teachers

This section of the literature review is organized around *Turning Points 2000* Recommendation #3: Staff middle grades schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents, and engage teachers in ongoing, targeted professional development opportunities (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p.23). The section will include relevant literature on: (1) teachers prepared for the middle level, and (2) professional development.

Teachers Prepared for the Middle Level

Darling-Hammond, Cheung, and Frelow (2002) identified two forces that have influenced the status of the teaching workforce over the last ten years: (1) calls and efforts for strengthening the preparation of teachers, and (2) the demand for more teachers across the country. Rowan (1994) examined teaching as a profession, comparing it with other types of work individuals perform, specifically professional, technical, and managerial occupations; occupations in the arts; skilled trade; clerical and sales occupations; and, unskilled labor occupations. Rowan stated that it is important to account for the type of work done when comparing occupations and the features that make up such occupations.

Rowan found that the language skills required in teaching were complex enough to move it toward the professional end of the occupational continuum. While at the same time, Rowan provided two specific examples of how teaching could improve its social standing by making the

occupation more complex: "First, the work of teachers would become more complex if teachers performed different functions with respect to data, people, or things. A second approach…would be to increase the levels of educational development or specific vocational preparation required for teaching" (Rowan, 1994, pp.12-13).

More must be done to increase the quality of teaching occurring in public schools in the United States beyond simply raising teacher pay. Darling-Hammond (2000) wrote,

> Policies that jointly raise salaries and standards may offer particularly high leverage on teaching quality. It is interesting to note that, like states that introduced testing without making investments in teaching, those that have raised salaries alone, without raising standards for preparation and licensing or investing in professional development, seem not to have realized the benefits of improved student outcomes. (p.24)

Darling-Hammond (2000), in a review of state policies related to teacher quality and subsequent analysis of a national dataset, confirmed the importance of teachers in effecting student achievement. Specifically, she found that,

- Student characteristics such as poverty, non-English language status, and minority status are negatively correlated with student outcomes, and usually significantly so.
- Student characteristics are generally not significantly correlated with state per-pupil spending or with teachers' salary schedules.
- Teacher quality characteristics such as certification status and degree in the field to be taught are very significantly and positively correlated with student outcomes.
- Per-pupil spending shows a significant positive relationship with student outcomes in 4th grade reading in both years, but no relationship with student outcomes in mathematics.

- Other school resources, such as pupil-teacher ratios, class sizes, and the proportion of all school staff who are teachers, show very weak and rarely significant relationships to student achievement when they are aggregated to the state level. (pp.26-27)

Teacher selection is not left solely to the staff at the school building site. Hiring is often heavily influenced, if not determined at the district level. The district certainly has a role to play in the hiring of quality teachers in staffing schools. Uncertified teachers should not be hired if a district has a commitment to a quality teaching staff. Darling-Hammond (2000) found that "…the extent to which districts maintain rigorous hiring standards is a highly significant predictor of the proportions of teachers who are uncertified. It is also a strong predictor of the proportions of new and veteran teachers who are fully certified" (p.34).

Expert teachers are different from good or average teachers. They do things differently and they do so at specific times. Moskowitz and Hayman (1976) examined the differences between "best" teachers (as identified by students), typical teachers (randomly selected), and new teachers (first year teachers). Using observations, coding, and then quantifying the results, the researchers found that the "best" middle school teachers were consciously starting to build relationships from the first day forward, as well as establishing routines and expectations; and maintaining control throughout the year. Two interesting insights from this study were the importance of control as perceived for effectiveness, by both the students and teachers, and immediately setting a tone at the beginning of the year. The traits identified in the study are listed in Table 11.

Table 11

Behaviors of Best, Typical, and New Teachers

Pattern	Best	Typical	New
First day…orienting	Dealing with student	Dealing with student	Little use of humor

and climate-setting behaviors	feelings Initiating relationships Use of humor	feelings	
Middle of year…reinforcing behaviors	Use students' ideas more than others Value developing student contributions Praise increasingly more than new and increase the amounts		
End of year…control, discipline, feedback	Increased student excitement and involvement	Used criticism	Did not gain more control, difficulties grew
Throughout the year…motivating behaviors	Used criticism Used indirect feedback Talked more as the year went on Smiled considerably more, most on the first day & end of year Used more behaviors listed than new teachers Indirect or motivating behaviors		Didn't increase student excitement and involvement Used criticism more than other two Used less indirect feedback than best Talked less as the year went on Consecutive direct or controlling behavior

(Mayrowitz & Hayman, 1976, pp.285-288)

As the middle school movement has grown, so have calls for the licensure and preparation of educators to work with adolescents. There is no real uniformity across the United

States in the preparation of middle-level teachers or in a sufficient number of candidates. McEwin and Dickinson (1997) identified this as a "major barrier to the full implementation of developmentally responsive middle level schooling since at least the turn of the century" (p.223). While the number of programs offering middle-level teacher preparation has increased, they are still behind the number of middle-level schools (McEwin & Dickinson, 1997). It is also known that teacher preparation programs differ in quality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). McEwin and Dickinson (1997) identified eight components of middle-level teacher preparation that require special attention at the middle level:

- Thorough study of early adolescence and the needs of young adolescents,
- A comprehensive study of middle level philosophy and organization,
- A thorough study of middle level curriculum,
- An intensive focus on planning, teaching, and assessment using developmentally and culturally responsive practices,
- Early and continuing middle level field experiences,
- Study and practice in the collaborative role of middle level teachers in working with colleagues, families, and community members,
- Preparation in two or more broad teaching fields, and
- A collaborative teacher preparation partnership between faculty at middle level schools and university-based middle level teacher educators.

Mertens, Flowers, and Mulhall (2002) conducted a quantitative study to examine the influence of teacher preparation on interdisciplinary team and classroom practices. Using self-study data from core, classroom, middle grades teachers the study found numerous implications

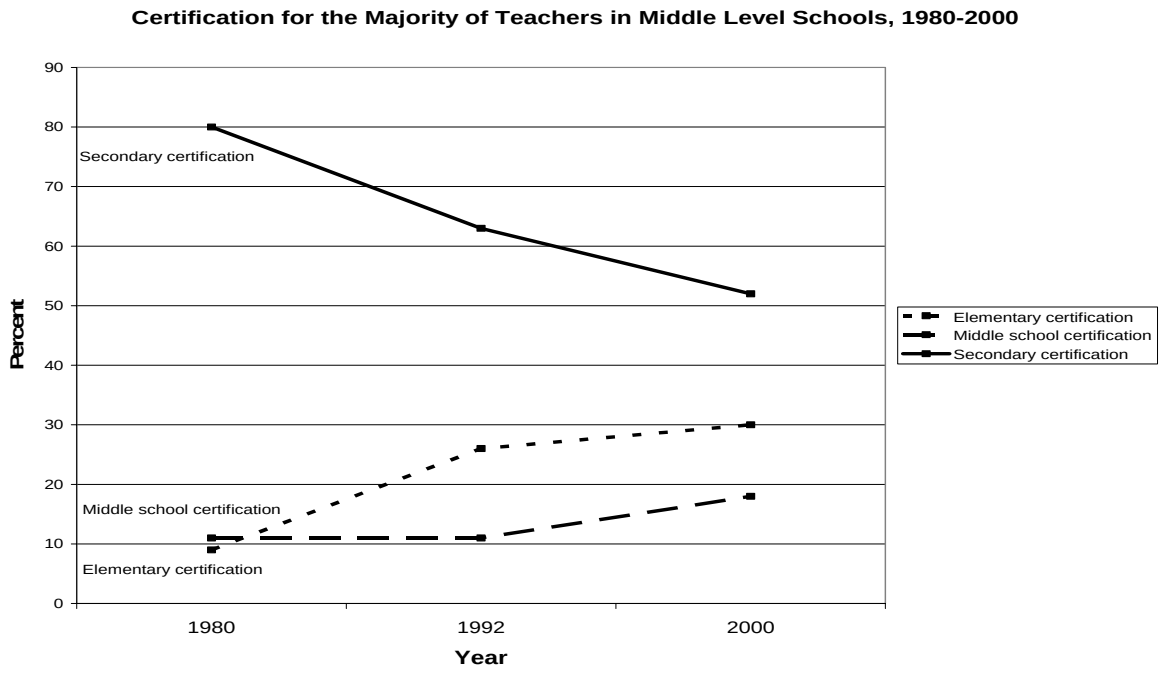
for interdisciplinary teaming, issues of pedagogy, and teacher certification. Three notable findings were identified:

1. Teachers possessing an elementary or middle-grades certification participated more frequently in the types of team and classroom practices that are known to be effective in teaching and learning with young adolescents.
2. Regardless of certification type, in schools where teaming has been implemented in all middle-grade levels combined with high levels of common planning time, teachers report higher levels of both team and classroom practices.
3. Middle-grade certified teachers working in schools engaged in teaming with high levels of common planning time have the highest levels of practices on all team and classroom practices' scales. (p.135)

Valentine and his colleagues (2002) found that the percentage of teachers with middle level teacher certification and preparation has been on the rise over the last twenty years. And while the shifts have been positive, the authors note that, "The fact remains that only 18% of schools reported that most of their teachers had middle level certification. Teacher induction programs, mentoring, ongoing professional development, and advanced certification called for in *Turning Points 2000* are key issues if progress toward middle level certification is to continue" (Valentine et al., 2002, p.10). A representation of the data on teacher certification as reported by Valentine and his colleagues is provided in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Teacher Certification at the Middle Level



(Valentine, et al., 2002, p.10)

Professional Development

Professional development should focus on influencing the outcome of student achievement (Elmore, 2002). The value of professional development comes from "what it contributes to the individual's capacity to improve the quality of instruction in the school and school system" (Elmore, 2002, p.14). According to Louis (2000) "Professional development does not, by itself, lead directly to improved teaching unless the overall organizational conditions promote risk-taking and collective responsibility for student success" (p.23).

Valentine and his colleagues (2002) found that 65% percent of middle-level schools had three to six days for professional development with an average of 5.35 days per year. Little

(1982) in an ethnographic study of six schools, three elementary and three secondary, found that continuous professional development is thoroughly achieved when teachers:

- Engage in frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice,
- Are frequently observed and provided with useful (if potentially frightening) critiques of their teaching,
- Plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together, and
- Teach each other the practice of teaching (p.331).

Louis (2000) identified professional development strategies for middle schools, while also pointing out that it is still not exactly clear what professional development should consist of for middle-level schools. These professional development strategies included: enhancing skills and understanding through participation in materials and instructional design; encouraging and providing opportunities for reflection; teacher-as-researcher; and, interdisciplinary teaming.

Writing on professional development from a review of literature, Hawley and Valli (2000) identified nine principles for learner-centered professional development. Professional development should:

1. Focus on what students are to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning that material,
2. Be driven by analyses of the differences between (a) goals and standards for student learning and (b) student performance,
3. Involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and, when possible, in the development of the learning opportunity and/or the process to be used,
4. Be primarily school based and integral to school operations,

5. Provide learning opportunities that relate to individual needs but are, for the most part, organized around collaborative problem solving,
6. Be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning, including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and outside perspectives,
7. Incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on outcomes for students and processes that are involved in implementing the lessons learned through professional development,
8. Provide opportunities to engage in developing a theoretical understanding of the knowledge and skills to be learned, and
9. Be integrated with a comprehensive change process that addresses impediments to, and facilitators of, student learning. (Hawley and Valli, 2000)

Drawing on data collected as part of the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, Garet and his colleagues used structural equation modeling (SEM) to show that professional development activities sustained over time with a substantial investment in the amount of hours devoted to the activity was likely to be of higher quality. In addition, the enhancement of teachers' knowledge and skills has a strong influence on changing teaching practices (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001).

Organizing Relationships

This section of the literature review is organized around *Turning Points 2000* Recommendation #4: Organize relationships for learning to create a climate of intellectual development and a caring community of shared educational purpose (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p.24). The section will

include relevant literature on: (1) transitions, (2) school size, (3) interdisciplinary teaming, (4) ability grouping, and (5) advisory.

One of the main distinguishing features of *Turning Points 2000* from other reform movements, specifically those directed at middle level schools, is the idea of creating a community of and for learning. Considering schools as communities is a much different conception than the traditionally held perspective of thinking about schools as organizations. Sergiovanni (1994) noted this distinction of metaphor as a choice between communities or organizations. He recognized that organization was the dominant paradigm. "In schools as organizations the ties that connect us to others and to our work are contractual" (Sergiovanni, 1994, p.216). But when thinking about how people come together the purposes are not always in the spirit of organizations. "Not all groupings of individuals, however, can be characterized as organizations" (Sergiovanni, 1994, p.217). "In communities…the connection of people to purposes and the connections among people are not based on contracts but on commitments. Communities are socially organized around relationships and the felt interdependencies that nurture them" (Sergiovanni, 1994, p.217). Brazee (1997) noted of middle school classrooms, "Ongoing, consistent, and caring relationships between students and adults in the school setting are critical components of middle level classrooms" (p.193).

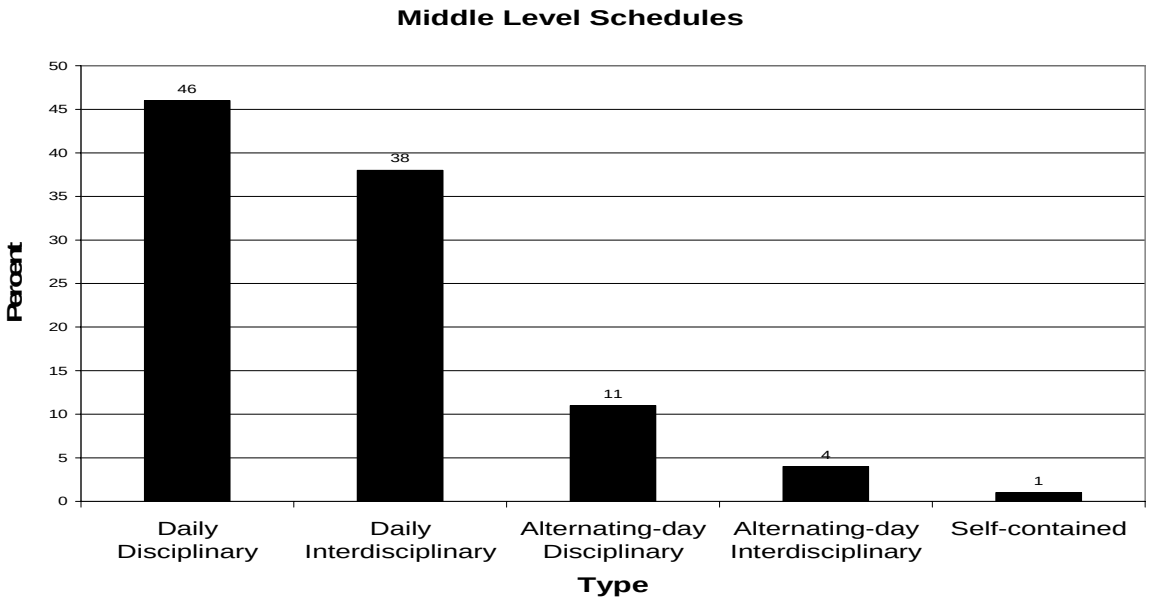
Middle schools are different than the elementary schools students come from. Moving to the middle school requires students to shift from a learning environment where a majority of time is spent with one teacher and one group of peers. Often times the move to middle school requires a student to learn from as many as 7 or 8 teachers a day, probably changing classes with different peers in each class. To make middle schools more personal and aid the development of close relationships between teachers and students, advocates called for the establishment of

programs and practices that could be used to help students by developing a sense of community. The practices include the use of advisories, interdisciplinary teams, homerooms, and counseling services, all of which are, "…designed to provide guidance and monitor the academic, social, and emotional welfare of individual students" (MacIver, 1990, p.458).

Middle schools use a number of daily schedule designs, typically including: a daily period (6, 7, or 8 hour day), four-block, 75-75-30 plan, concept-progress model, or trimester plan (Canady & Rettig, 1995). Drawing on data collected through a national study, Valentine and his colleagues (2002) found that 46% of the middle level schools used a daily disciplinary schedule, 38% a daily interdisciplinary schedule, 11% an alternating-day disciplinary schedule, 4% an alternating-day interdisciplinary schedule, and 1% a self-contained classrooms. A visual representation of the distribution of school schedules is provided in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Schedules Employed at the Middle Level



(Source: Valentine et al., 2002)

Transition Programs

Middle level schools fill a unique role in the structure of public schools, serving students between the elementary and the high school levels. Transitions provide a change in status for students (Mizelle & Mullins, 1997). As a result, the idea of transitioning between schools influences the middle level in a unique way; middle schools provide a transition for students entering from the elementary level and for those exiting to the high school level. The transition to middle school comes at a tumultuous time for some students. Barber and Olsen (2004) write about the transition,

> The unique risk to students at the middle school transitions…is likely not only a function on non-supportive school structures…but also because of the confluence of other developmental changes occurring in students of this age, and because this transition, being the first such major transition, is experienced more abruptly and disruptively for students. (p.25)

George and Alexander (1993) provided distinguishing characteristics of the three levels. These characteristics are provided in Table 12.

Table 12

The Middle School Unique and Transitional

Program	Elementary	Middle	High
Student-Teacher Relationship	Parental	Advisor	Choice
Teacher Organization	Self-Contained	Interdisciplinary Team	Department
Curriculum	Skills	Exploratory	Depth
Schedule	Self-contained	Block	Periods
Instruction	Teacher-directed	Diverse	Student-centered

Student Grouping	Chronological	Supportive	Subject
Building Organization	Single classroom	Team or House	Department
Co-curriculum	All participate	Broad Choice	By Ability
Governance	Principal and Teachers	Principal and Council	Principal and Department Heads
Teacher Preparation	Child-oriented generalist	Flexible Resource	Academic Specialist

(Alexander & George, 1993, p.46)

The success of the transition can to some degree be attributed to the teacher-student relationship and how students feel about the support they receive (Barber & Olsen, 2004). In an experimental study, Felner and his associates (1993) found that by employing concepts associated with the *Turning Points* philosophy, including the assignment of students to pure teams, having classrooms in close proximity, and the use of a teacher-student advisory, students in the treatment group had a higher success rate. The study used MANOVA and ANOVA analytic techniques to examine the relationship between measures of school climate (student affiliation, negative student interactions, positive teacher-student relations, harshness, student participation in decision-making, innovative curriculum, structure/clarity, and achievement emphasis/commitment) and outcome measures which included: school transition stress, psychological distress, behavior problems, academic expectations, and classroom behavioral adaptation. They found that compared to the control group, students in the treatment group (1) rated the school environment more positively, (2) had a more positive transition/adjustment to the new school, (3) had lower levels of stress associated with transition and better adjustment in the psychological domain, (4) had academic expectations of a higher level, and (5) had lower levels of delinquency (Felner, Brand, Adan, Mulhall, Flowers, Sartain, DuBois, 1993).

MacIver (1990) identified three common transitional activities for elementary students, "having elementary school students visit the middle-grade school, having the administrators of the middle-grade and elementary schools meet to discuss programs and articulation, and having middle-grade counselors meet with elementary counselors or staff members" (MacIver, 1990, p.462). Mizelle and Mullins (1997) noted many of the prevalent practices for transitioning students into and out of the middle school. Examples of transitioning practices are provided in Table 13.

Table 13

Transitional Practices Into and Out of Middle School

Into Middle School	Out of Middle School
Organize Articulation and Planning Programs	Helping students prepare academically
Shadow days for students and teachers	Shadow days for students
Parent Involvement	Parent Involvement
Pay attention to students experiencing major difficulties	Provide social supports

Mizelle & Mullins (1997)

Valentine and his colleagues (2004) found that principals of highly successful schools reported using more transition practices (10-20% higher) for students into and out of the middle school when compared to a national sample.

School Size

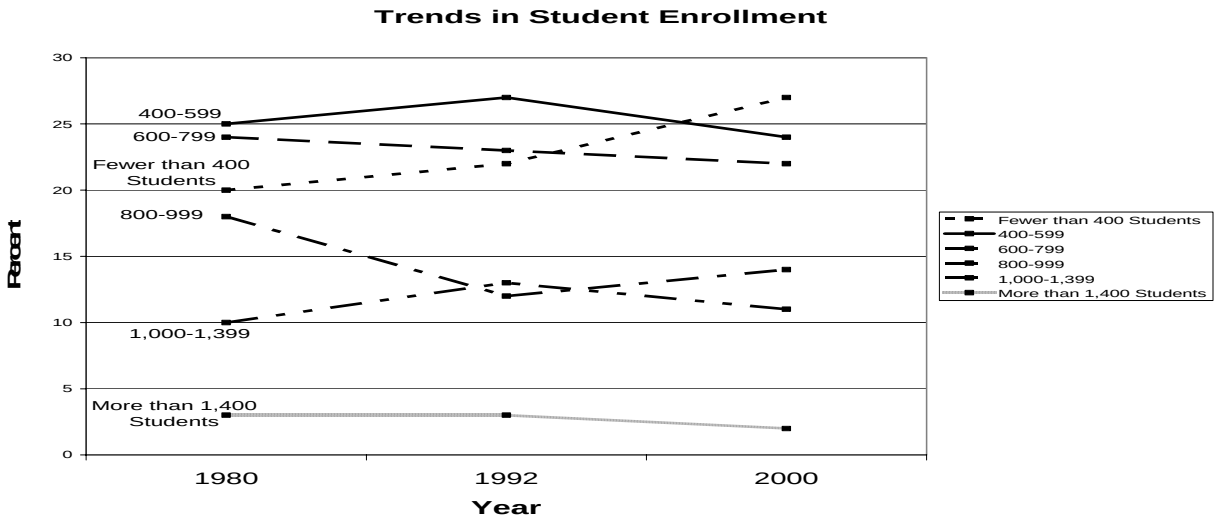
To some degree the size of a school matters. "When possible, the school populations of middle schools should be kept in the 400 to 800 range. When larger schools are unavoidable, great care should be taken to establish 'schools-within-a-school' plans to assure that young adolescents are not placed is [sic] schools that are impersonal and ineffective" (McEwin,

Dickinson, & Jenkins, 2003, p.47). Smaller schools are characterized as being more equitable and places where students learn more (Lee & Smith, 1996) and representative of unique school cultures (Conway, 1994).

In a 2002 study, Valentine and his colleagues found that over the past twenty years there has been little change in school enrollment trends, "Large middle level schools had not become the norm, nor can we state with confidence that smaller schools had become the norm. Essentially, there appears to be little change in school enrollment patterns" (Valentine et al., 2002, p.4). A representation of data presented by Valentine and his colleagues (2002) on school enrollment is presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8

Trends in Enrollment of Middle Level Schools



Source: Valentine et al., 2002, p.5

Interdisciplinary Teaming

Much like the idea of an appropriate education for adolescents, the idea of interdisciplinary teaming has been around for many years and in many different forms in education as have other issues regarding staffing (Wynn & DeRemer, 1961). "In theory,

interdisciplinary teaming facilitates flexible grouping and scheduling practices; in reality, regrouping and flexible scheduling seldom occur, even in schools using interdisciplinary teaming" (MacIver, 1990, p.461).

Wraga (1997) provided an overview of the historical perspective that has led the concept of interdisciplinary teaming as it is today. Elements identified by Wraga (1997) in the history of interdisciplinary teaming are listed in Table 14.

Table 14

Historical Perspective on Interdisciplinary Teaming

Time Period	Antecedents	Examples
Early 20th Century		Platoon School; Winnetka Plan; Pueblo Plan
1950s	Promoted as a solution to a number of perceived educational problems	Teacher shortages after World War II, offered as a way to teach larger groups of students by using fewer students.
1960s	Had assumed the proportions of an educational fad	Appeared in the Second Handbook of Research on Teaching; Indexed over 200 times in the Education Index; purported to be in keeping with NSF initiatives following Sputnik.
1970s	Curriculum attacked for lacking relevance to the lives of learners and to the life of society	Appeared as a way to foster individual efficacy and social amelioration;

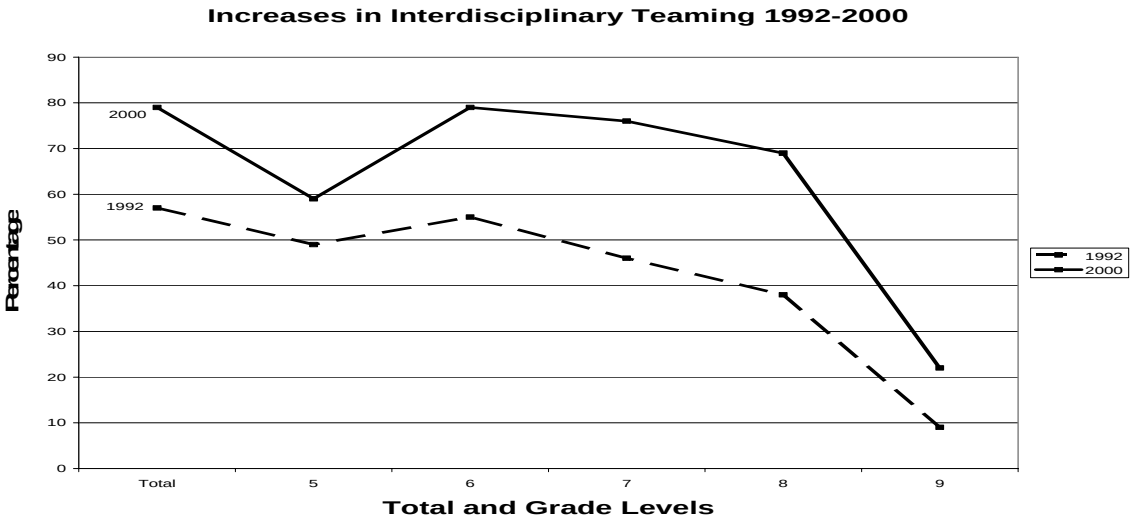
(Wraga, 1997, p.327-328)

The number of middle schools using interdisciplinary teams has been increasing in America's middle schools over the life of the middle school movement (McEwin, 1997; Valentine, Clark, Hackmann, & Petzko, 2002; McEwin, Dickinson, Jenkins, 2003). Valentine

and his colleagues (2002) found an increase of schools using teaming from 57% in 1992 to 79% in 2000 as well as increase at all grade levels, see Figure 9.

Figure 9

Increases in Interdisciplinary Teaming, 1992-2000



Source: (Valentine et al., 2002, p.80)

The distinction between team teaching and interdisciplinary teaming is important. Wraga (1997) differentiates between the two:

> The term team teaching is often used to describe a situation in which two or more teachers on the same grade level share students and common planning time. (p.326) Interdisciplinary team teaching…involves a team of two or more subject teachers who share students and planning time and who work to draw connections between their subjects; often these teachers actually teach together (Wraga, 1997, p.326).

Armstrong (1977) identified the purported strengths of team teaching as: permitting team members to take advantage of individual teacher strengths; spurring creativity; facilitating

individualized instruction; providing for better sequencing and pacing of increments of instruction; and builds program continuity over time (p.66).

Flowers, Mertens, and Mulhall (2003) noted the following about interdisciplinary teams from their research in recent years at the Center for Prevention Research and Development:

- Interdisciplinary team teachers must meet regularly for common team planning time,
- Smaller interdisciplinary teams engage more often in team and classroom "best practices,"
- The positive impact of interdisciplinary teaming on team and classroom "best practices" increases as teams work together longer,
- Team activities are strongly linked to classroom instruction,
- Middle grades certified teachers in highly implemented schools engage more frequently in team and classroom best practice, and
- Sustained engagement in high levels of middle school practices positively impacts student achievement. (pp.55-57)

Time is important for interdisciplinary teams to be effective. Time for establishing relationships, time for accomplishing work, time for collaboration, and time in terms of longevity for the growth of the team, "…the success of teaming hinges on the team members' recognition that it takes time to come together, reconcile differences among members, and establish a standard pattern of interaction" (Gable & Manning, 1999, p.182). MacIver (1990) found that "…the data indicate that increases in the amount of common planning time are strongly associated with increases in the amount of time the team spends coordinating content, diagnosing individual student needs, planning special events, conducting parent conferences, regrouping, and rescheduling" (MacIver, 1990, p.461).

Interdisciplinary teams often have a routine for how tasks are organized, deliberated, addressed, and handled. Interdisciplinary teams may find it appropriate to establish an agenda, assign team members a specific role, and create a mechanism that is acceptable to the team for resolving differences of opinion (Gable & Manning, 1999).

In addition to helping teachers with their work, interdisciplinary teaming also has advantages for students. Arhar (1997) identified the positive outcomes for students as increased engagement in academic and school-related work, achievement, student attendance and behavior, and student belonging.

Trimble (1997) identified four characteristics of effective teams: (1) accomplish their tasks in a superior fashion; (2) satisfy the human needs of the participants; (3) develop suitable procedures and skills for being productive while sustaining involvement and energy, and; (4) interact with their environment according to their purposes (pp.297-299). Through the use of teaming and a common planning time, teachers are able to discuss and review student progress or problems (Braddock & McPartland, 1993).

Using a qualitative design, McQuaide (1994) examined how one 6th grade interdisciplinary team used its common planning time. The author found that 47.5% of the time was spent on discussions regarding students, of which 63% focused on special education students and 37% on regular education students. Issues regarding policy were discussed 40.5% of the time, pedagogy 8%, evaluation (self) 2.5%, and subject matter 1.5%. The study also looked at the five areas noted above and their frequency over the course of three months (September, October, and November). The study found increases in discussion regarding students and a decrease in discussion on subject matter. Policy discussions rose in October but declined in November. Issues of pedagogy fell in October, but increased slightly in November. Issues of

self-evaluation increased slightly from September to October and decreased slightly from October to November.

Kruse and Louis (1995) conducted a study that examined the concept of interdisciplinary teaming and its effect on school-wide community. Kruse and Louis noted the positive aspects that are assumed to support the use of interdisciplinary teaming, primarily: increasing teacher's authority, more involvement in decision-making, rewards and benefits of teaching in an interdisciplinary structure, increased effectiveness of communication and efficacy, and a collective responsibility for student learning (Kruse & Louis, 1997). As the authors note, "…the literature has neglected teaming's impact on the larger school community, choosing instead to focus on the benefit within the smaller groups of teachers who are part of teams" (Kruse & Louis, 1997, p.262).

In a follow-up study, Louis and Kruse (1997) used a qualitative design to examine the conflict between teams and community, a topic they had previously touched on (Kruse & Louis, 1995). The 1997 study focused on four middle schools that were dedicated to teaming. Data were collected from interviews, observations, and school documents. Data analysis occurred through data reduction, development of individual case studies, researcher team discussions, and comparative case studies.

Kruse and Louis (1997) found the following dilemmas from the schools they examined: issues relating to time, a focus on the immediacy of the students on team as opposed to their entire school career, time for teachers to organize versus reflection, issues of team autonomy, and a critical reflection on practice. The team structure can promote tight bonding within the team; however, administrators have to be aware of the difficulties that can happen in trying to develop school-wide community in such a loosely-coupled system (Weick, 1976). One

recommendation that the authors made is for a centralized body to make decisions, "…a central decision-making group that regularly attends to cross-team issues should be a part of any teamed school" (Kruse & Louis, 1997, p.283). Principals also have to provide opportunities, both formally and informally, for communication to occur across the building. Kruse and Louis (1997) concluded, "…both administrators and teachers need to shift their focus away from teams as an end to teams as one of several mechanisms to create a schoolwide focus on the school's goals for teaching and learning" (p.286).

Ability Grouping

The practice of ability grouping has been a topic of much debate in public education for a number of years. The debate generally centers around two contrasting types of ability grouping: heterogeneous and homogeneous. Heterogeneous grouping places students of varying ability levels together for purposes of instruction. Conversely, homogeneous grouping places students of similar ability together for purposes of instruction. There are many arguments for and against both types of grouping. The largest proponents of maintaining homogeneous grouping are those concerned about gifted students (Slavin, 1993).

The issue of equity is often used to understand the detrimental effects of homogeneous grouping. Where homogeneous grouping is a common practice, "typically, it means that high-track students are gaining and low-track students are falling further behind" (Gamoran, 1992, p.13). This inequality is a result of unequal instruction, and unequal behavior and attitudes among students (Gamoran, 1992). Ability grouping has been shown to have value, if used appropriately. In so doing, grouping by ability can be an effective measure if, teachers and students are not permanently in a setting, and if instruction to the lower performing students in improved (Gamoran, 1992).

Slavin (1993) in a review of the research conducted on ability grouping found essentially no discernible difference between the achievement effects on students that were heterogeneously or homogeneously grouped. Slavin (1993) also notes however that simply moving away from ability grouping will not by itself improve student achievement. As a recommendation, Slavin (1993) offers a suggestion that forms of cooperative learning be used when working with heterogeneously grouped classes.

In a study that examined the collective responses from upper elementary students' perceptions of ability grouping, Elbaum, Schumm, and Vaughn (1997) found that students generally prefer heterogeneous grouping. Students viewed the practice of heterogeneous grouping as being fairer to struggling readers, while at the same time acknowledging that homogeneous grouping is probably most appropriate for students who cannot read at all. "Students report that mixed ability formats provide poorer readers with help from better readers and an opportunity for all students to cooperate" (Elbaum et al., 1997, p.487).

George and Alexander (1993) described the practice of grouping as it related to issues of organizing students and teachers. They provided a depiction of grouping practices that occur in middle schools viewed on a continuum from practices associated with elementary to secondary. A representation of the continuum is provided in Table 15.

Table 15

Continuum of Grouping Practices

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F	School G
Modified Core Program (MCP)	Developmental Age Grouping (DAG)	School-Within-A-School (SWS)	Long-Term Teams (LTT)	Grade-level Team (GLT)	Grade-wide Teams (GWT)	Departmentalized (DPT)
More Elementary						More Secondary

(George & Alexander, 1993, p.307)

Valentine and his colleagues (2002) found an increase in ability grouping from 1992 to 2000, which led the authors to voice concern over the practice,

> The grouping of students into specific classes based upon students' academic ability was evident in middle level schools. The arguments against ability grouping have been summarized previously and are explicated in great detail throughout the literature of education, including the middle level literature. If progress is to be made, teachers, principals, and policymakers must be willing to address this issue aggressively. They must work with parents and pressure other groups so they understand the negative consequences. Currently, it appears that middle level education is stepping backward on this important issue of student equity. (Valentine et al, 2002, p.143)

Advisory

George and Alexander (1993) described the purpose of an advisory program as, "to promote involvement between a teacher and the students involved in the advisory group" (p.201). In this capacity teachers assume the role of an academic expert on each advisee, a school advocate and guide for each student, and assisting with the social and emotional education and maturation of advisees (George & Alexander, 1993). Clark and Clark (1994) identified six purposes of teacher advisories:

1. Promote opportunities for social/emotional development in young adolescents,
2. Assist students with academic and learning problems,
3. Facilitate positive involvement between adults (teachers, administrators, staff) and students,
4. Provide an adult advocate for every young adolescent in the school,

5. Encourage communication among students, parents, and teachers, and

6. Promote positive, safe school environments (pp.135-136).

Advisory programs provide benefits for those students and teachers involved with them. The benefits of advisory programs for students and teachers as identified by Clark and Clark (1994, pp.136-137) are listed in Table 16.

Table 16

Benefits of Advisory Programs

Benefits	
Students	Teachers
1. Promote improvement in teacher/student relationships	1. Improve teacher/student relationships on a personal level
2. Help students to make the transition to new school environments	2. Enhance opportunities to gain greater awareness and understanding of student behavior
3. Give students feelings of more control over decisions	3. Allow students to see teachers as people with likes and dislikes, hobbies, and interests
4. Foster and promote an atmosphere of equality	4. Contribute to a more positive school climate
5. Help students develop a sense of positive self-worth	5. Facilitate better home/school cooperation
6. Assist students in improving attitudes necessary for responsible citizenship	
7. Provide opportunities for students to be known by at least one adult in the school	
8. Assist students with social growth, including getting along with others and learning to make new friends	
9. Provide each student with an adult advocate	
10. Provide greater opportunities for group work and participation in youth service	

activities

(Clark & Clark, 1994)

Schools that have counselors and counseling services are less likely to use or have advisory programs, while those serving larger numbers of economically disadvantaged students are more likely to offer advisory programs (MacIver, 1990). "Middle school reformers frequently recommend that every middle grades student be assigned one school adult as the main contact for mentoring, guidance, and support in all aspects of the student's educational program" (CCAD, 1989; Merenbloom, 1986; cited in Braddock & McPartland, 1993).

Galassi, Gulledge, and Cox (1998) devised a typology to describe the diverse types of advisory programs that middle-level educators implement under the umbrella of the term advisory. Galassi and his colleagues (1998) identified six types of advisory programs; these six types are differentiated as follows:

- Advocacy: those that aim to attend to students' individual needs by providing time and opportunity for a concerned adult in the school to get to know them well.
- Community: serve what may be referred to as social or belonging needs.
- Skills: delivering a developmental guidance approach that recognizes that each individual is unique but progresses through some common growth stages with related needs.
- Invigoration: provide an opportunity for students (and advisors) to have fun, to recover from "mental fatigue," and/or "blow off steam" before resuming instruction.
- Academic: designed primarily to meet cognitive educational needs that can be distinguished from the affective realm.
- Administrative: completion of a variety of "housekeeping" tasks, although relationships between teacher and students or among students may be strengthened during this time as well. (pp.20-25)

The typology of advisory programs as identified and defined by Galassi and his colleagues is presented in Table 17.

Table 17

A Typology of Advisory Emphasis

Type	Need	Time	Goals & Focus	Advisor Skills	Sample Activities
Advocacy	Affective	Substantial implement. time	Adult-student relationship	Personal qualities—interest and concern for students	Individual student conferences
Community	Affective	Substantial implement. time	Group identity	Personal qualities—group management	Group discussions, projects, intramurals
Skills	Affective and cognitive	Substantial prep and implement. time	Developmental guidance	Personal qualities—group management, group facilitation	Decision making, stress management, race relations, values clarification
Invigoration	Affective	Minimal prep time	Relaxing, recharging	Personal qualities, enthusiasm	Intramurals and clubs, parties, informal fun activities
Academic	Cognitive	Substantial implement. time	Academic performance	Personal qualities, teaching	Study skills, silent reading, writing, tutoring
Admin.	Admin.	Minimal prep and implement. time	General school business, house-keeping	Clerical, organizational	Announcements, distributing school materials, collecting money

(Galassi, Gulledge, & Cox, 1998, p.19)

Unfortunately many advisory programs are closer to the administrative rather than the advocacy type.

> Although advisory or homeroom periods are common, many of the activities that occur during these periods are mechanical tasks…rather than social and academic support activities that use teachers' talents as advisors and that help students feel that someone is looking out for their interests and needs. (MacIver & Epstein, 1991, p.592)

The call for organizing relationships for learning is similar to other calls that have been made for creating small learning communities (SLC), a term common at the secondary level. In 2005, Oxley synthesized the findings on small learning communities. These findings support many of the concepts prevalent throughout middle level schools and recommended in *Turning Points 2000*. Oxley's findings from the research conducted on small learning communities across three areas, small unit organization, school and district accommodation, and curriculum and instruction are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Findings on Small Learning Communities

Small Unit Organization
The SLC: • Enrolls no more than a few hundred students • Encompasses at least a half-day block of students' instructional day • Encompasses at least two years of study in the SLC • Interdisciplinary teams of teachers share students in common • Team members instruct more than half of their class load in the SLC • Team shares planning time in common • Partner with parents and community stakeholders • Has building space sufficient to create a base for collaboration • Admission is driven by student and teacher choice • Offerings attract a diverse group of students
School and District Accommodation
• School administrators have particular assignments within an SLC. • Counseling staff members have specific SLC assignments. • Special education and remediation specialists have specific SLC assignments. • Academic department goals are aligned with SLC needs. • Class scheduling and staffing are adjusted to establish innovative curriculum and instruction programs. • Dropout programs and tracked courses are adjusted to increase student choice and academic

challenge across all programs and SLCs. • School improvement goals are aligned with SLC goals and needs. • Small learning communities are represented in school governance structures. • School and district provisions for staff planning and development accommodate SLC needs.
Curriculum and Instruction
The SLC: • Offers an authentic course of study • Has a rigorous, standards-based curriculum • Teacher teams actively collaborate on curriculum and instruction and student progress • Active, authentic (student-centered) work occurs (including collaboration with community partners) • Teams make innovative, flexible use of time and space to meet the needs of all students • Teachers advise and mentor students and collaborate with parents • Teams reflect on practice and engage in continuous improvement with stakeholders and other critical friends • Teams set and pursue professional development goals that accord with SLC improvement needs

(Oxley, 2005, pp.5-21)

Democratic Governance

This section of the literature review is organized around *Turning Points 2000* Recommendation #5: Govern democratically, through direct or representative participation by all school staff members, the adults who know the students best (Jackson & Davis, 2000, pl.24). The section will include relevant literature on principal leadership.

Leadership does not come only from the principal or the person in a position of formal authority. Any member can lead, "…leadership can be exercised anywhere in an organization even though it is formal leaders who often receive official credit (or blame)" (Bolman & Deal, 1994, p.81). As schools become more like communities of professionals, then the need for formal leadership is reduced (Brandt, 1992). And while studies have shown that teacher leadership and principal leadership have small statistical effects on student engagement and achievement (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Cotton, 2003; Waters, Marzano, McNulty, 2003; Witziers, Bosker & Kruger, 2003)

they are still indispensable in school reform, particularly because of their ability to indirectly influence factors that in turn directly influence student achievement.

Historically, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has provided the leadership and direction for the examination of middle level principals and their schools through national studies. NASSP's involvement with the formal study of middle level schools and their leaders can be traced back more than forty years. Beginning in 1965 with the publication of Rock and Hemphill's *The Junior High School Principalship* and continuing to 2004 with Valentine, Clark, Hackmann, and Petzko's *Leadership for Highly Successful Middle Level Schools*, NASSP has been a leader in the study of the principalship at the middle level. The publications, years, and authors of NASSP's middle level national studies are listed in Table 19.

Table 19

Studies Sponsored by NASSP on Middle Level Schools and their Leaders

Year of Publication	Title	Authors
1966	Report of the Junior High-School Principalship	Donald A. Rock & John K. Hemphill
1981	The Middle Level Principalship, Volume I: A Survey of Middle Level Principals and Programs	Jerry W. Valentine, Donald C. Clark, Neal C. Nickerson, Jr., & James W. Keefe
1983	The Middle Level Principalship, Volume II: The Effective Middle Level Principal	James W. Keefe, Donald C. Clark, Neal C. Nickerson, Jr., & Jerry W. Valentine
1993	Leadership in Middle Level Education, Volume I: A National Survey of Middle Level Leaders and Schools	Jerry W. Valentine, Donald C. Clark, Judith L. Irvin, James W. Keefe, & George Melton
1994	Leadership in Middle Level Education, Volume II: Leadership in Successfully Restructuring Middle Level Schools	James W. Keefe, Jerry W. Valentine, Donald C. Clark, & Judith L. Irvin
	A National Study of Leadership in	

2002	Middle Level Schools, Volume I: A National Study of Middle Level Leaders and School Programs	Jerry W. Valentine, Donald C. Clark, Donald G. Hackmann, & Vicki N. Petzko
2004	Leadership for Highly Successful Middle Level Schools, Volume II: A National Study of Leadership in Middle Level Schools	Jerry W. Valentine, Donald C. Clark, Donald G. Hackmann, & Vicki N. Petzko

The national studies sponsored by NASSP provided practitioners and researchers the opportunity to understand the changes, trends, and issues associated with the growth of the middle school movement and their leaders. By having a consistency in researchers (Valentine and Clark) the National Studies were able to document and expand on concepts identified in previous studies, while at the same time bring in relevant and new issues (such as technology and school violence in the 1990s) that were of interest to middle level leaders and researchers. The decade studies provided a resource to understand middle schools and their leaders at specific points in time, all the while being cogent in identifying the issues, concerns, and demands faced by middle level leaders. Coupled with the work of studies led by William Alexander and Ken McEwin, and Paul George (Alexander et al., 1968; Alexander & McEwin, 1989; McEwin, Dickinson, Jenkins, 2003; George & Oldaker,1985; George & Shewey, 1994) the studies provide an excellent account of how middle level schools have and have not changed over the past thirty-seven years.

After classroom instruction, leadership has been described as the second most important factor contributing to what students learn in a school (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Leithwood and his colleagues (2004) identified three areas where successful leadership can focus attention to seeing that students learn: setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. Through involving others in the governance process, school

leaders can build a sense of responsibility and empowerment on behalf of the teachers in the building. Leadership can then become, as Lambert (2002, p.37) stated, "the professional work of everyone in the school" with empowerment for teachers at either the individual or team levels or both (Somech, 2005).

Leithwood and Duke (1998) reviewed the body of work conducted on leadership and identified six types present in the literature at the end of the twentieth century.

1. Instructional: the critical focus for attention by leaders is the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students (p.34).
2. Transformational: the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organizational members (p.35).
3. Moral: the critical focus of leadership ought to be on the values and ethics of leaders themselves. Authority and influence are therefore to be derived from defensible conceptions of what is right or good (p.36).
4. Participative: assumes that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus for leaders (p.38).
5. Managerial: assumes that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks, or behaviors, and that if these functions are carried out competently the work of others in the organization will be facilitated (p.40).
6. Contingent: assumes that what is important is how leaders respond to the unique organizational circumstances or problems which they face as a consequence of, for example, the nature and preferences of coworkers, conditions of work, and tasks to be undertaken (p.42).

The last four decades can be associated with different theories on educational leadership. The 1970s saw a focus on leadership style (Kunz & Hoy, 1976; Sergiovanni, 1979). The 1980s focused on the principal as an instructional leader (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Andrews & Soder, 1987). However, the approach may have overestimated the occurrence of behaviors associated with instructional leadership. "Insofar as there is any empirical evidence on the frequency of actual instructional leadership in the work of school administrators, it points to a consistent pattern: direct involvement in instruction is among the least frequent activities performed by administrators on any kind at any level, and those who do engage in instructional leadership activities on a consistent basis are a relatively small proportion of the total administrative force" (Murphy 1990; Cuban 1988, cited in Elmore, 2000).

The 1990s saw a groundswell of thought about the role of leadership in school settings (Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood & Duke, 1998). Throughout the decade important work was done on issues of instructional, transformational, and distributed leadership. In the writings about middle level leadership, calls for more democratic governance at the building level were in keeping with the larger body of research being conducted on leadership.

Transformational leadership, as a facet to leadership in educational settings, surfaced in the 1990s; however, the roots of the approach go back further. James McGregor Burns' 1978 book, *Leadership*, is considered by most as the foundation of transformational leadership. Others cite James V. Downton's (1973), *Rebel Leadership*, as the beginning (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2000). Yukl (2002) noted that while Burns (1978) provided many of the ideas for transformational leadership, Bass (1985 & 1996) did much more for the study of the approach. Transformational leadership, conceptualized by Burns (1978) as transforming leadership, can be juxtaposed with transactional leadership.

According to Burns leadership requires followers; these followers then must have a relationship with those in leadership positions. The type of relationship was characterized as either transactional, where "Such leadership occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things" (Burns, 1978, p.19); or, as transformational, "Such leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p.20).

Yukl (2002) provided insight into the distinction between transactional and transformational.

> With transformational leadership, the followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect toward the leader, and they are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do. According to Bass, the leader transforms and motivates followers by (1) making them more aware of the importance of task outcomes, (2) inducing them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization or team, and (3) activating their higher-order needs. In contrast, transactional leadership involves an exchange process that may result in follower compliance with leader requests but is not likely to generate enthusiasm and commitment to task objectives. (p.253)

In the field of education, no author has been more prolific in the study and writing of transformational leadership than Kenneth Leithwood. Leithwood studied transformational leadership extensively throughout the 1990s. In 1992, Leithwood wrote that instructional leadership did not seem to encompass the direction that should be taken by leadership. Leithwood identified three goals where leaders should direct their efforts: "(1) helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; (2) fostering teacher

development; and (3) helping them solve problems together more effectively" (Leithwood, 1992, pp.9-10).

Leithwood echoed previous work from the corporate arena, on the importance of moving toward transformational approaches to leadership. In 1984, Tichy and Ulrich, writing in MIT's *Sloan Management Review,* made a call similar to Leithwood's 1992 call, for leadership to address the shaping of organizational cultures. Drawing on examples from the world of business, the authors wrote,

> We call these new leaders transformational leaders, for they must create something new out of something old: out of an old vision, they must develop and communicate a new vision and get others not only to see the vision but also to commit themselves to it….transformational leaders not only make major changes in these three areas but they also evoke fundamental changes in the basic political and cultural systems of the organization. (Tichy & Ulrich, 1984, p.59)

Transformational leadership becomes important when considering issues related to school culture, reform, and change. Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) conducted a qualitative study across twelve sites (6 involved with a previous study and 6 that were not) to assess the role of leadership in shaping a collaborative school culture. From this study the authors found,

> The most direct contributor to the development of strengthened relationships is for staff to be involved in collaborative decision-making; the likelihood that staff will participate authentically in such decision-making is a function of the amount of support they perceive from colleagues, their commitment to accomplishing their school improvement goals and the opportunities for collaboration provided through adjustments to the organization. (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990, p.24)

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) found from a quantitative study that surveyed 2,465 teachers and 44,920 students in 123 elementary and junior high schools that while principals have little indirect effect on student engagement (participation and identification) they do have an influence on the conditions of the organization. Therefore, the principal does have an influence on shaping elements of the system in order to more fully effect aspects of the school that contribute to positive student experiences.

The rationale for democratic governance has its foundation in issues related to school-based management/site-based management. The rationale behind school-based management is that the school is the primary decision-making unit and that change requires ownership (David, 1989). When operating under a school-based management approach it is essential that schools have autonomy over issues of budget, staffing, and curriculum (David, 1989). Not everyone may naturally view themselves as a leader or wish to take a leadership role, encouragement and support is therefore needed when asking individuals to assume a position of leadership. Bolman and Deal (1994) identified four ways in which leadership can be encouraged: (1) learned from experience; (2) reflection and dialogue with others; (3) identifying and emulating exemplary leaders; and, (4) teaching would be leaders the importance of symbolic activities in an authentic manner. Leaders must involve constituents who will be impacted by proposed changes and policies (Robertson & Briggs, 1998).

The empowerment of stakeholders is important when examining issues of school reform. *Turning Points 2000* recognized the critical importance of empowerment in the democratic governance recommendation. Through empowerment the ability to influence is shifted from the principal to teachers (Reitzug, 1994). Empowerment, however, due to inconsistencies in programs and a lack of awareness of the change process may not be welcomed by all teachers or

administrators (Argyris, 1998). Much like leadership, empowerment can at best be said to hold an indirect influence on student achievement. Instead of empowerment influencing student achievement directly, we see that empowerment provides a mechanism to influence a teacher's work environment and the ability to examine and improve pedagogical practices (Peterson, Marks, & Warren, 1996). Elmore (2000) stated that, "Public schools and school systems, as they are presently constituted, are simply not led in ways that enable them to respond to the increasing demands they face under standards-based reform" (Elmore, 2000, p.2). Therefore, if reform of the middle school and subsequently improvement in achievement is to occur, then leadership along with the other elements of reform must be considered.

"Shared decision making refers generally to the involvement of teachers in determining how the budget is spent, who is hired, and whatever other authority has been delegated to the school" (David, 1989, p.50). When using school-based management the leadership and culture of the school is critical (David, 1989). According to David (1989) when schools undertake the use of school-based management (SBM), four elements become important: (1) access to new knowledge and skills for participants; (2) the need for leadership from the building principal; (3) time for the school staff to acquire new knowledge and skills and, equally important, time to put them to use; and, (4) salary levels to adequately, reflect the value provided by those participating.

In a study that examined the outcomes of instituting school-based management, Robertson and Briggs (1998) found that SBM does foster a greater change in the process of decision making and if such decisions are of high quality, can lead to the improvement of school culture; however, the influence of such decision-making on the behaviors of individuals may not always produce the desired outcome. In addition, Weiss and Cambone (1994) noted from their qualitative study of 193 principals and teachers in schools involved with shared decision making

that for shared decision making to be productive it should be viewed as one piece of a larger change process for reform rather than the entire process.

Robertson, Wohlstetter, and Mohrman (1995) examined how school-based management influences the reform of pedagogical practices. In this qualitative study the authors found that for the reform to actually change the practices of curriculum and instruction, a majority of supporting conditions, though not all, had to be in place. The supporting conditions were: power, knowledge, information, rewards, instructional guidance system, leadership, and resources.

Smylie, Lazarus, and Conyers (1996) further informed the understanding of the relationship between issues of site-based management and instructional reform. In a longitudinal study of one K-8 district that had implemented site-based management seven years earlier they found that teachers' individual autonomy declined while teacher accountability increased and the school reported modest differences of improved instructional practice. They concluded:

> These findings provide substantial support for the analytical model and for the conclusion that teacher participation in school-based decision making is related positively to instructional improvement and to student academic outcomes. They indicate that the relationship of participation to instructional improvement and student outcomes functions in relation to increased accountability, the presence of organizational learning opportunities for teachers, and decreased individual teacher autonomy. (Smylie et al., 1996, pp.190-191)

Fullan and Watson (2000) provided further insight into successful site-based management initiatives when they noted that successful programs are about changing the culture of the school and that in more successful schools principals and teachers focused primarily on forming a professional learning community, student work, and changing instructional practices to achieve

better results. Supplementing the insights of Fullan and Watson, Briggs and Wohlstetter (2003) identified eight elements of schooling associated with successful site-based management approaches:

1. A vision focused on teaching and learning that is coordinated with student performance standards;
2. Decision-making authority used to change the core areas of schooling;
3. Power distributed throughout the school;
4. The development of teachers' knowledge and skills that is oriented toward change, a professional learning community, and shared knowledge;
5. Mechanisms for collecting and communicating information related to school priorities;
6. Monetary and non-monetary rewards to acknowledge progress toward school goals;
7. Shared school leadership among administrators and teachers; and,
8. Resources from outside the school. (pp.356-366)

Beck and Murphy (1998), using a qualitative design, gathered data over a year and identified the contributions site-based management can make in a school's success. The authors found that site-based management contributed to a school's success by (1) enabling persons to implement plans in short periods of time, (2) allowing for participation in hiring, (3) encouraging formerly reticent parents to become involved, and (4) serving as an energizer for educators (p.377). At the same time site-based management did not particularly provide direction for goals, instruction, professional development, and hiring. Rather, site-based management influenced the structures that were put in place for the school to make the right decisions. Understanding the influence of site-based management is further complicated by the findings of Wohlstetter and

McCurdy (1991). From their qualitative study of school decentralization in Chicago, Miami and Los Angeles they concluded that policies of decentralization are influenced by district policies and district politics, thus creating unique issues and challenges for the implementation of site-based management.

The use of a leadership team, particularly a team of teachers and administrators, is a natural approach for distributing leadership or installing a democratic governance system. Chrispeels, Castillo, and Brown (2000), through a review of the literature, found the following factors influence the effectiveness of leadership teams:

1. Clarity of roles and responsibilities,
2. Support from the district,
3. Collaborative and supportive principal leadership,
4. Positive relations with the school-community,
5. Training in how to function as a team and resolve conflicts,
6. Knowledge of budgets, planning and pedagogy, and
7. A focus on students and issues of teaching and learning (pp.23-26).

Leadership as an organizational capacity is related to issues of democratic governance. Sergiovanni (1992) identified community norms as the mechanism with which direct leadership could be replaced. Ogawa and Bossert (1995) wrote about leadership as an organizational capacity.

> Leadership flows through the networks of roles that comprise organizations….The medium of leadership and the currency of leadership lie in the personal resources of people. And, leadership shapes the systems that produce patterns of interaction and the meanings that other participants attach to organizational events. (p. 225)

This type of leadership is then distributed across an organization, "…not only is leadership distributed throughout the school, but that the total amount of leadership in a school matters, and that leadership multiplies through interactions" (Furman, 2003, p.4). Elmore (2000) wrote of distributed leadership,

> …does not mean that no one is responsible for the overall performance of the organization. It means, rather, that the job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contribution to the collective good. (p.15)

James Spillane has become one of the leading writers on distributed leadership. His conception of distributed leadership is somewhat different than previous notions of participative leadership as described by Leithwood and Duke (1998). Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond (2004) argue that leadership is distributed across all elements of schooling.

- In developing a distributed perspective on leadership, we move beyond acknowledging leadership practice as an organizational property in order to investigate how leadership might be conceptualized as a distributed practice, stretched over the social and situational contexts of the school. Leadership…is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific issues. (Spillane et al., 2004, p.5)
- By taking leadership practice in a school as the unit of analysis, rather than an individual leader, our distributed theory of leadership focuses on how leadership

practice is distributed among both positional and informal leaders (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001, p.24).

Marks and Louis (1997) studied schools where teachers were participating in school-based management and found that empowerment becomes important when it was addressed at school-level policies and focused specifically on creating a professional community aimed at improving instruction (Marks & Louis, 1997; Taylor & Bogotch, 1994). This concept of a professional community is founded on collegial relationships (Little, 1982). The level of professional community in a school is associated with teacher involvement in school reform (Midthassel, 2004).

Marks and Louis (1999) also examined the relationship between teacher empowerment and organizational learning through a mixed-method design which included collecting quantitative data via a questionnaire and qualitative data through observations of teaching practice, governance, and professional development meetings and interviews with members of the school community. The study found that simply structuring site-based management for purposes of empowerment was not enough. Rather, schools must assess and build the capacity for organizational learning to occur.

Louis, Marks and Kruse (1996) found a relationship between teacher empowerment and professional community in a school setting. The authors defined professional community as being evident "by movement toward five elements of practice: shared values, focus on student learning, collaboration, deprivatized practice, and reflective dialogue" (p.760). The authors also identified a number of factors that support professional community across a school setting and delineated them as either structural or human and social resources:

- Structural: size, staffing complexity, scheduled planning time, and teacher empowerment.

- Human and social resources: supportive leadership, openness to innovation, respect, feedback on instructional performance, and professional development (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996).

From this mixed-method study the researchers obtained quantitative and qualitative measures of professional community across 24 elementary, middle, and high school sites. A number of findings regarding professional community are important:

- Structural conditions—lower staffing complexity, scheduled common planning time, and empowerment of teachers—proved important supports to professional community in schools (p.780).
- Human and social resources are as critical to professional community as structural features (p.786).

Sweetland and Hoy (2000) examined the relationship between school climate and teacher empowerment by using a quantitative design that surveyed 2,741 teachers in 86 New Jersey middle schools and used correlations and multiple regression as the method of analysis. The authors found that, "Both academic press and collegial leadership made significant independent contributions to teacher empowerment and were the two strongest predictors of empowerment" (p.719). From these findings on academic press and collegial leadership the authors note that the relationship and implementation of site-based management will be more effective in schools that possess an open and healthy school climate.

King and Newman (2000) noted the importance of professional community: along with teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and, program coherence to influence a school's capacity to impact student achievement, with capacity in turn being influenced by professional development. Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, and Valentine (1999) examined the development of

professional community in the context of a comprehensive school improvement process and its relationship with organizational learning. They noted the critical role principals play in forming professional community and the challenge of addressing bureaucratic expectations while trying to establish professional community.

Like the organization to which they belong, leadership teams should also have the ability to learn. Leithwood, Steinbach, and Ryan (1997) described the following as important factors in team learning.

1. Team leadership…can make a significant difference to a team's learning.
2. The presence of at least one team member who is ready to contradict or point out the fallacies in members' thinking fosters learning.
3. The teams classified as low potential teams were missing many of the internal conditions for team learning.
4. Teams are capable of learning and successfully working with initiatives mandated from outside the school.
5. Small schools facilitate team learning through the proximity of members and the interaction that occurs as a result. (pp.322-323)

Shifting to a more democratic form of governance requires participants (teachers and administrators) to re-evaluate processes that have historically been used. Poole (1995) found that as relationships between teachers and administrators shift to more collegial, collaborative representations through dialogue, participants can begin to build trust and construct appropriate meanings and contexts for how this new form of governance will actually work. Poole (1995) concluded, "…engagement in productive dialogue in which participants question perspectives,

clarify intentions, and reflect on their assumptions can facilitate the reconstruction of meaning within organizations" (p.591).

Chrispeels and Martin (2002) identified four roles that team members may find themselves in when leading change and how organizational structures can promote or inhibit the change. These roles were communicator, staff developers, problem solvers, and leaders/decision makers. Varying levels of trust between teachers and administrators may partially explain this difficulty leadership teams experience in making decisions.

Trust is a crucial element in learning, leadership, school effectiveness and organizational cultures (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) identified five components of trustworthiness: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness. Brewster and Railsback (2003) noted that trust between principals and teachers is essential if collaboration is to truly happen. Hoy and Tarter (1997) also wrote to the importance of trust,

> How important is trust in the context of schools? Our research suggests that it is vital. Trust is directly linked to school effectiveness and successful leadership. Schools with cultures of trust are good places to work and to learn. Teachers in these schools are generally happy and productive, and students are more likely to see school as a place where they like to be rather than have to be. (p.11)

Brewster and Railsback (2003) provided recommendations on how to build trust for principals and teachers. The authors' recommendations are provided in Table 20.

Table 20

Suggestions for Building Trust

Between Principals and Teachers	Among Teachers
Demonstrate personal integrity	Engage the full faculty in activities and discussions related to the school's mission, vision, and core values.
Show that you care	

Be accessible	Make new teachers feel welcome.
Facilitate and model effective communication	Create—and support—meaningful opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively.
Involve staff in decision making	Identify ways to increase and/or improve faculty communication.
Celebrate experimentation and support risk	Make relationship building a priority.
Express value for dissenting views	Choose a professional development model that promotes relationship building.
Reduce teachers' sense of vulnerability	
Ensure that teachers have basic resources	
Be prepared to replace ineffective teachers	

(Brewster & Railsback, 2003, pp.12-17)

Efficacy is a concept that has been shown to influence action and performance at the student, teacher, and school level (Pajares, 1994; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; and, Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). Bandura (1997) defined efficacy as "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce to given attainments" (p.3; cited in Goddard & Goddard, 2001). Writing on individual self-efficacy, Bandura (1982) stated, "The higher the level of perceived self-efficacy, the greater the performance accomplishments" (p.127). The idea of efficacy, as it is concerned with individual teachers and the collective school, is useful in understanding issues of school reform and calls for democratic governance (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004).

In education, studies have differentiated efficacy into two types: general teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy (Hipp & Bredeson, 1995; Scribner, 1999). Hipp and Bredeson (1995) found that teachers' personal teaching efficacy (their own perceived ability) was higher than general teaching efficacy (the ability of others in the school) and that the leadership

functions influencing both types (personal and general) were (a) models behavior, (b) provides contingent rewards, and (c) inspires group purpose.

Differentiating between high and low levels of personal teaching efficacy (PTE), Scribner (1999) found that teachers with high PTE experienced professional development differently than those with low PTE. Where, "high PTE teachers had the ability to maintain focus on the primary task of teaching students and to persevere in spite of often difficult environmental challenges. Low PTE teachers…were less likely to exhibit evidence of mastery learning…(and) sought quick fixes and unreflective additions to teaching repertoires that could be assimilated into existing classroom routines" (pp.227-228). Reames and Spencer (1998) found a relationship between how teachers perceive their school's culture and their personal teaching efficacy and commitment to the organization.

Addressing collective efficacy, Bandura (1982) noted, "Perceived collective efficacy will influence what people choose to do as a group, how much effort they put into it, and their staying power when group efforts fail to produce results" (p.143). At the school level this collective efficacy then, "refers to the perceptions of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can organize and execute the courses of action required to have a positive effect on students" (Goddard & Goddard, 2001, p.809). Goddard and Goddard (2001) examined the relationship of collective efficacy on individual efficacy through survey results and found that "variation in collective efficacy explained variance in teacher efficacy above and beyond that accounted for by our school contextual factors" (p.814). Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2004) addressed the fact that perceived collective efficacy can influence a teacher's performance and student learning. Thus we can see collective efficacy as an indirect influence on student achievement. Bandura (1982) noted the following on the effects of collective efficacy when involved with change,

> Achievement of collective efficacy requires cogent means of relating factional interests to shared purposes. The unifying purposes must be explicit and attainable through concerted effort. Because success calls for sustained endeavor over a long time, proximal subgoals are needed to provide incentives and evidence of progress along the way. (p.145)

In 2003, the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) Lab published *Balanced Leadership* (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003), a meta-analysis of the research conducted on the influence of leadership on student achievement. Drawing from an initial pool of over 5,000 studies, 70 meet the criteria of the research design: "quantitative student achievement data; student achievement measured on standardized, norm-referenced tests or some other objective measure of student achievement; student achievement as the dependent variable, and; teacher perceptions of leadership as the independent variable" (Waters et al., 2003, p.2).

In 2005, McREL published a follow-up titled, *Leading Schools: Distinguishing the Essential from the Important* (Waters, & Grubb, 2005). In this work, Waters and Grubb collected survey data from principals about over the 21 leadership responsibilities identified in *Balanced Leadership*. Factor analysis was used for purposes of analyzing the 21 responsibilities and how they related to change. Together these two documents provided insight about the influence of principal leadership on student achievement and change.

In *Balanced Leadership*, Waters and his colleagues (2003) found that leadership does influence student achievement, positively and negatively. In addition, 21 leadership responsibilities were identified that principals undertake that influence student achievement. The responsibilities, descriptions, and average correlation from Waters and his colleagues (2003) are provided in Table 21.

Table 21

Principal Leadership Responsibilities

Responsibilities	The extent to which the principal…	Average Correlation
Culture	Fosters shared beliefs & a sense of community	.29
Order	Establishes a set of standard operating procedures & routines	.26
Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus	.24
Resources	Provides teachers with materials & professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs	.26
Curriculum, instruction, and assessment	Is directly involved in the design & implementation of curriculum, instruction, & assessment practices	.16
Focus	Establishes clear goals & keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention	.24
Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment	Fosters shared beliefs & a sense of community & cooperation	.24
Visibility	Has quality contact & interactions with teachers & students	.16
Contingent rewards	Recognizes & rewards individual accomplishments	.15
Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with teachers & among students	.23
Outreach	Is an advocate & spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders	.28

Input	Involves teachers in the design & implementation of important decisions & policies	.30
Affirmation	Recognizes & celebrates school accomplishments & acknowledges failures	.25
Relationship	Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers & staff	.19
Change agent	Is willing to & actively challenges the status quo	.30
Optimizer	Inspires & leads new & challenging innovations	.20
Ideals/beliefs	Communicates & operates from strong ideals & beliefs about schooling	.25
Monitors/evaluates	Monitors the effectiveness of school practices & their impact on student learning	.28
Flexibility	Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation & is comfortable with dissent	.22
Situational awareness	Is aware of the details & undercurrents in the running of the school & uses this information to address current & potential problems	.33
Intellectual stimulation	Ensures that faculty & staff are aware of the most current theories & practices & makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture	.32

(Waters et al., 2003, p.4)

Waters and his colleagues recognized that leadership can have a positive effect on student achievement, as well as a negative influence. The authors identified two broad concepts that help in understanding the influence of leadership on student achievement, (1) focus of change and (2) leaders understanding of the magnitude of the order of such change. The authors then conclude with offering leadership practices associated with the responsibilities depending upon the magnitude of change, delineated as first and second-order.

In the 2005 follow-up, *Leading Schools: Distinguishing the Essential from the Important*, Waters and Grubb surveyed principals about the leadership characteristics previously mentioned. Factor analysis was conducted on the data producing three key findings: (1) all of the 21 responsibilities remained viable, none were dismissed, (2) "seven leadership responsibilities were positively correlated with leading change, and (3) four responsibilities were negatively associated with second-order implications" (Waters & Grubb, 2005, p.5). The responsibilities associated with positively leading change and negatively influencing change are listed in Table 22.

Table 22

Relationship of Leadership Responsibilities to Change Efforts

Positively Correlated with Leading Change	Negatively Associated with Second-Order Change
Change agent	Communication
Flexibility	Culture
Ideals and beliefs	Input
Intellectual stimulation	Order
Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment	
Monitor and evaluate	
Optimizer	

(Waters & Grubb, 2005)

For those responsibilities positively associated with leading change, "This finding provides an empirical basis for determining which leadership responsibilities principals emphasize for the purpose of initiating, leading, and sustaining changes with second-order implications for stakeholders" (Waters & Grubb, 2005, p.5). For those responsibilities negatively

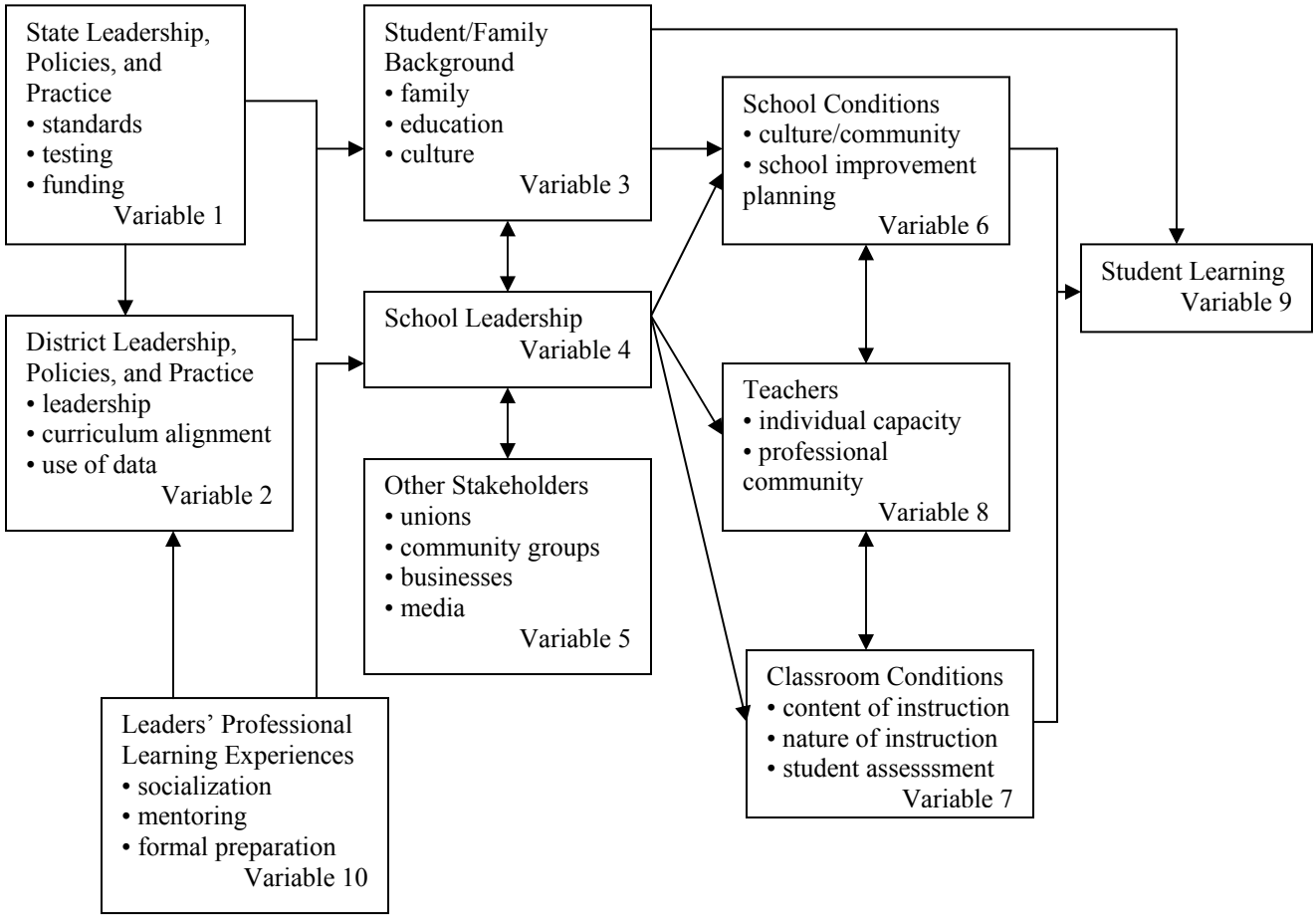
associated, “We interpret this finding to mean that when teachers, staff, and other community members perceive a change as second order, they may also perceive the principal’s use of these responsibilities as having declined. We have interpreted this finding as a negative, unintended consequence of change with second-order implications” (Waters & Grubb, 2005, p.5). By noting this perception of others about a reduction in a principal’s capacity while undertaking changes with second-order implications, the authors proposed that these responsibilities could in fact be distributed to other members in the organization. This finding then provides insight about what exactly should be distributed to members of an organization in instances of distributed leadership.

In 2005 another important document on leadership became available from one of the national education laboratories. *Educational Leadership: A Review of the Research*, was written by Kenneth Leithwood for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory at Temple, the Laboratory for Student Success (LSS). In this work Leithwood provided an historical perspective on the study of leadership in educational settings in a review of the research which sought to synthesize the findings into a coherent image of what was known about educational leadership. Leithwood provided a model to understand the influence of leadership on student learning. A reproduction of the framework Leithwood proposed is presented in Figure 10.

The model showed the influence of eight variables which directly and indirectly influence student learning. Three variables identified which directly influenced student learning are: (1) student/family background, (2) school conditions, and (3) classroom conditions. The influence of school leadership was mediated through the student/family background, school conditions, teachers, and classroom conditions.

Figure 10

Leithwood's (2005) Leadership Model for Student Learning



(Leithwood, 2005, p.5)

Safe & Healthy Schools

This section of the literature review is organized around *Turning Points 2000* Recommendation #6: Provide a safe and healthy school environment as part of improving academic performance and developing caring and ethical citizens (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p.24). The section will include relevant literature on features of safe and healthy schools.

Features of Safe and Healthy Schools

> Given the social structures that surround our students, for schools to focus on being responsive to student needs by dealing only with the internal school setting is to operate like a horse being led through a fire; in the midst of crisis, we seem to be wearing blinders. Just as we think of the child in his or her culture, we must think of the school within society. (Kochan, 1992, p.66)

The climate of a school plays a major role in how students, teachers, parents, and community members perceive the school. "The organizational climate of a school is the set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another and influences the behavior of its members" (Hoy & Hannum, 1997, p.291). Hoy and Hannum (1997) defined a healthy middle school as,

> One in which the technical, managerial, and institutional levels are in harmony and the school is meeting its basic needs as it successfully copes with disruptive external forces and directs its energies toward its mission. In healthy schools, students, teachers, administrators, and the communities work together cooperatively and constructively. (p.293)

Van Hoose, Strahan, and L'Esperance (2001) echoed this notion of harmony by drawing attention to the unique physical, sexual, intellectual, social, and personal development of middle-level students. Writing to the role of *Turning Points 2000* in recognizing this importance, Van Hoose and his colleagues (2001) noted that *Turning Points 2000* points out that, "the process of becoming a more successful school begins with an understanding of young adolescents and an

appreciation of their unique needs" (p.67). To help in better understanding how schools can influence these aspects of students' needs, Van Hoose and his colleagues provided examples of practices related to these developmental aspects, external and internal. The aspects and selected examples relevant to school settings are presented in Table 23.

Table 23

Practices That Build or Weaken External and Internal Assets

External Assets		
Asset	*Practices that Weaken*	*Practices that Build*
1. Support	The Aloof Staff	The Student-Centered Staff
2. Empowerment	The fifty-minute lecture	Project Options
3. Boundaries and Expectations	The prison lunchroom	The friendly (but louder) lunchroom
4. Constructive Use of Time	Open your books, read Chapter 7, and answer the questions	Academic Learning Time (ALT)
Internal Assets		
Asset	*Practices that Weaken*	*Practices that Build*
1. Commitment to Learning	Busywork	Concentration Activities
2. Positive Values	Negative role models	Positive Role models
3. Social competencies	The star system	A wide range of awards
4. Positive Identity	The factory model school day	Exploratory learning opportunities

(Van Hoose, Strahan, and L'Esperance, 2001)

"The most significant factors to adolescents' health are found in their environments, and in the choices and opportunities for health-enhancing or health-compromising behaviors that these contexts present" (Thiede-Call, Altan-Riedel, Hein, McLoyd, Petersen, & Kipke, 2002, p.69). Teenage pregnancy and sexual activity by teenagers are issues that middle schools, not

only high schools, face. Teenagers at the beginning of the twenty-first century are sexually active. However, most teens under the age of 15 have not had sex (8 of 10 girls, 7 of 10 boys) (Alan Guttmacher, 1998). Of those females that are sexually active, 9 of 10 use contraceptive methods, however not necessarily correctly (Alan Guttmacher, 1998). Teenagers also acquire sexually transmitted diseases; each year 3 million teens contract an STD (Alan Guttmacher, 1998). One million teens become pregnant annually and teen pregnancy rates are higher in the United States in comparison to other developing countries (Alan Guttmacher, 1998). "Teens who give birth are much more likely to come from poor or low-income families (83%) than are teens who have abortions (61%) or teens in general (38%)" (Alan Guttmacher, 1998, p.2).

A natural conception for combating the issue of teenage pregnancy would be to develop programs for at-risk students about the dangers of teenage pregnancy. However, an experimental study of a program called *Teen Outreach* by Allen and his colleagues (1997) found that discussions about the issue itself were not as successful as other techniques, specifically, involvement with community service, discussions about the community service activities, and discussions and activities about social-developmental tasks of adolescence. Through involvement with the program, "…*Teen Outreach* participants experienced significantly lower levels of course failure, school suspension and teenage pregnancy than students in the control group, even after accounting for baseline levels of these behaviors and for sociodemographic characteristics of students" (Allen, Philliber, Herrling, & Kupermine, 1997, p.735). The authors note the importance alternative routes to prevention and the importance students place on their own involvement with programs.

Research has also been conducted that examines the influence of aspects of school health on student achievement. In a quantitative study that examined the relationship between four

years of school-level test data and student responses (7th, 9th, and 11th graders) to a survey on issues related to health which used regression for analysis, Hanson, Austin and Bayha (2004) noted that simply focusing only on academic standards and outcomes might not completely improve schools, by missing out and not providing students with all of the resources needed for success. The authors stated, "Addressing the health and developmental needs of youth is a critical component of a comprehensive strategy for meeting the accountability demands for improved academic performance" (p.14).

Resiliency in students is an important issue in student development (Bernard, 1993). Writing about the importance for children to be resilient, Bernard (1993) described a resilient child as one with: social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and future. Bernard (1993) also concluded that to help students growing up in adversity, the schools, families, and communities should offer students three things: a caring environment, positive expectations, and ongoing opportunities for participation.

Writing on the topic of school violence, disciplinary issues, and student achievement, Barton and his colleagues (1998) provided insight into how school safety and related policies influence the learning environment in schools. Among a number of intriguing findings, the authors identified two factors that influenced the reduction of school violence: "enforcing a severe set of punishments for students who violate school rules and using a set of security procedures that limit student movements during the school day" (Barton, Coley, & Wenglinsky, 1998, p.7).

Barton and his colleagues (1998) also identified three types of disciplinary offenses and their presence and influence in schools: nonserious, serious, and drug/alcohol related. Among the findings were:

- Socioeconomic status is unrelated to drug offenses.
- More affluent students are more likely to engage in nonserious offenses.
- Security arrangements seem to be associated with lower levels of nonserious offenses.
- School size plays a role.
- Poorer students are more likely to engage in serious offenses.
- Lower levels of delinquency are associated with higher levels of achievement, and vice versa.
- Disciplinary policy is not a side issue…rather, a sound disciplinary policy is a prerequisite for a sound academic policy (Barton, Coley, & Wenglinsky, 1998, pp.15-18).

The authors conclude their report with a reiteration of their main findings regarding school violence, discipline, and achievement:

> …school disorder….is a critical factor in student academic achievement…One very practical solution—invoking student disciplinary policies—was found in this report to be related to lower levels of student misbehavior. Another conventional solution, controlling students' movements during the school day by requiring passes and other measures, also seems to help at least to reduce the levels of 'nonserious' school offenses. (Barton et al., 1998, p.46)

Barton (2001, p.13) provided a range of choices that schools and states could use in addressing disciplinary issues at the building level. Possible approaches included:

- Statewide zero-tolerance legislation,
- Alternative schools,

- New district level “code of behaviors”,
- New disciplinary authority for teachers,
- Character education,
- Teaching conflict resolution,
- Strict school security measures, and
- Classroom management systems.

“Effective classroom management consists of teacher behaviors that produce high levels of student involvement in classroom activities, minimal amounts of student behaviors that interfere with the teachers’ or other students’ work, and efficient use of instructional time” (Emmer & Evertson, 1981, p.342). Bennett (1997) identified themes that are important when considering discipline and the middle-level student. From the review of the literature the following were important to discipline in middle schools: “(1) development of a schoolwide discipline plan; (2) inservice programs; (3) classroom discipline plans; (4) repertoire of discipline models for teachers; (5) educating students; (6) implementation; (7) leadership; and (8) positive school climate” (pp.73-74).

The previous findings were supported by the work of Newmann, Rutter and Smith (1989) who concluded that orderly behavior by students allows teachers to perform their jobs and subsequently would influence learning and achievement on the students’ behalf. Student behavior is also influenced by the changing of the principal (Griffith, 1999) and achievement may also be influenced by a principal change, though depending upon the socioeconomic status of the school, there may be differences in the degree of change in student achievement (Rowan & Denk, 1984).

Drawing on the results from a meta-analysis that examined the effect sizes associated with a myriad of approaches to classroom management and discipline, Marzano (2003) provided recommendations that schools could use to foster positive schoolwide discipline. Five steps were recommended for addressing discipline across a school:

1. Establish rules and procedures for behavioral problems that might be caused by the school's physical characteristics or the school's routines (p.106).
2. Establish clear schoolwide rules and procedures regarding specific types of misbehavior (p.108).
3. Establish and enforce appropriate consequences for specific types of misbehavior (p.110).
4. Establish a system that allows for the early detection of students who have high potential for violence and extreme behaviors (p.112).
5. Adopt a schoolwide management plan (p.114).

Parent & Community Support

This section of the literature review is organized around *Turning Points 2000* Recommendation #7: Involve parents and communities in supporting student learning and healthy development (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p.24).The section will include relevant literature on features of parent and community support.

Parents have an indelible influence in the lives of their children both at home and at school (Rothstein, 2004). The effects of the involvement of parents on students' educational careers build up over time; it is cumulative rather than temporal (Baker & Stevenson, 1986). Barton (2001) addressed the importance with which families must become involved if academic success is to become a reality for America's students, "…it is critical that families come to

believe that their schools must raise their academic standards and that their children must do much better academically" (p.16). By working with families and communities schools can seek to promote the capacity for social capital among members of the school community (Coleman, 1988) which can in turn influence student achievement (Goddard, 2003).

Garvin (1987) conducted a study to examine what parents would like for middle schools to provide for their children. The study found that parents wanted middle schools with a focus on: (a) ensuring student safety, (b) creating an environment where students are known and supported by an adult in the building, (c) developing constructive friendships, (d) providing opportunities for student involvement in activities, (e) providing a positive experience so students want to return, (f) preparing the student academically for high school, (g) informing parents about progress and issues relevant to the age, and (h) creating a welcoming environment to parents when they visit.

Epstein (1992; cited in Lynn, 1994) identified six types of parent-school cooperation. "They represent different goals, require different strategies and involve different costs and benefits to the school" (Lynn, 1994, p.2). The six types identified were:

1. Basic obligations of families
2. Basic obligations of schools
3. Involvement at school
4. Involvement in learning activities at home
5. Involvement in decision-making, governance and advocacy
6. Collaboration with community organizations. (Epstein, 1992; cited in Lynn, 1994)

Kettler, Valentine, Lucas, and Miles (2000) summarized the research on parent-involvement and student achievement at the middle level. Drawing on Epstein's (1995) typology,

the authors examined five forms of parent-involvement associated with student achievement: (1) parenting practices at home, (2) communicating between school and home, (3) volunteering or being an audience at school, (4) learning activities to involve parents with students at home, and (5) decision-making, governance, and advocacy roles.

Scheurich and Skrla (2003) note that parent-involvement is generally viewed from a middle-class perspective, one in which, "the parent serves the educational system because, in the view of educators, this is what will work best if the child is to be successful in schools as they are typically designed" (p.122). What Scheurich and Skrla (2003) propose instead is a collaborative relationship between the school and parents, "What we are advocating is that educators and parents collaborate on all facets of education. For example, we are suggesting that those parents who are available during the school day actually spend time in the classroom as co-teachers, as partners in classroom education…it would be helpful for us to think of ourselves as serving parents, rather than thinking of parents as serving or adjusting to us" (p.123).

Lopez, Scribner and Mahitvanichcha (2001) conducted a qualitative study which investigated effective parent involvement of migrant students in large districts. From 17 interviews and extensive observations over a five-month period, the authors found that, "the main criterion for successful parental involvement programs is an unwavering commitment to meet the multiple needs of migrant families above all other involvement considerations" (Lopez et al., 2001, p.261). "In other words, these schools were successful because they made immense investments to provide families with the psychological support and physical resources necessary for success" (Lopez et al., 2001, p.279).

Williams and Chavkin (1989) identified seven elements of parent involvement programs. Drawing on work conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, the authors

found the following elements essential for effective parental involvement programs: (1) written policies; (2) administrative support; (3) training (staff and parents); (4) partnership approach between parents and staff; (5) two-way communication between home and school; (6) networking (of programs); and, (7) evaluation of program (Williams & Chavkin, 1989). However, Mattingly and her colleagues (2002) studied the outcomes of 41 parental involvement programs, and concluded that, "the results provide little support for the widespread belief that parent involvement programs are an effective means of either improving student academic achievement or changing parent, teacher, and student behavior" (Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, & Kayzar, 2002, p.571).

Schools, parents, and communities must work together to address issues of violence (Lockwood, 1997) because healthy schools interact with their environment and are not isolated from them (Hoy & Hannum, 1997). Trust, therefore, is an essential element in parent collaboration (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Schools need to do more to involve and reach out to parents and communities (Meehan & Cowley, 2003)

The concept of social capital can be informative when conceptualizing issues of parental involvement of a student's education. Drawing on ethnographic data from 88 interviews and observations of 3rd and 4th grade students and their families designed to examine differences of parental networks along lines of socioeconomic class allowed for contesting, Horvatt, Weininger and Lareau (2003) studied the concept of social capital. They defined social capital as, "…the material and immaterial resources that individuals and families are able to access through their social ties" (p.323). They presented a number of interesting findings:

- Middle class parents, largely as a result of their network ties, have considerably greater resources at their disposal when it comes to dealing with such problems than do their working-class and poor counterparts (p.327).
- Parental networks…differ dramatically by social class (p.327).
- Middle-class families are always far more likely than all others to include professionals in their networks (p.330).
- …for both the working-class and poor families in our sample, the primary source of network ties was kinship. Indeed, the informal social life of family members frequently revolved around contact with relatives (p.330).
- Events that created an explosion of collective outrage among middle-class families tended to generate isolated anger or even resigned acceptance within working-class and poor families (p.334).
- Middle-class families intervened more in their children's education, whereas working-class and poor families were resigned to the issues as the way they were.
- For working-class and poor-families, network ties had little relevance to the enhancement of schooling. Instead, they served primarily to alleviate problems stemming from economic necessity: transportation and childcare, clothing and money (p.341).

Israel and his colleagues (2001) sought to examine the influence of family and community social capital on student achievement. Drawing from the NELS:88 data and using hierarchical linear modeling for analysis, the authors found that, "overall the community variables added no more than one percent of the total variance explained by family variables or individual-level control variables for any of the community types in the fitted models" (Israel,

Beaulieu, Hartless, 2001, p.60). Validating that family variables do in fact influence student success was not as important a finding as understanding how communities can influence student success. On this the authors noted, "…access to adults outside the immediate family has a positive effect on these students, as does the stability of living in a locality for a long period without interruption by a physical move to another school or community" (Israel et al., 2001, p.62). In this way then we see that the role of communities can be most helpful to schools when efforts are made to promote the development of social capital of students and families by connecting such members of the community with individuals in need of assistance, a point which *Turning Points 2000* made in the recommendation for linking schools with community resources.

The relationship between communities and educational institutions has been present throughout the history of public education in the United States. *Turning Points 2000* notes that this relationship for middle-level aged students may take the form of linking community resources to schools (for the benefit of students) or more fully integrating the work of the school within the context of the community (such as service learning). This collaboration should be based upon the purposes of the local context (Stone, 1993).

Studying collaboration between schools and communities, Stone (1993) identified three initiatives present in the San Diego, California area, through which collaboration could occur: interagency, front-line professionals, and on-site professionals collaborating with community members. Interagency collaboration calls for executives of different agencies to come together to coordinate and collaborate on issues of mutual importance. This type demonstrates the "need for top-level planning" (p.2) for purposes of coordination. The second type, front-line professionals, is geared more to those individuals directly interfacing with students and community members

around specific issues. The third type focuses on collaborating with parents for issues of community development, such as starting programs for preschool children. Stone (1993) wrote that each case illustrates a perspective on the issue of school-community collaboration.

- Interagency: "…without collaboration by executives, structural problems of the educational and social service systems cannot be corrected" (Stone, 1993, p.3).
- Front-line Professionals: "…should initiate and implement change through collegial relationships and the pooling of scare resources" (Stone, 1993, p.4).
- Collaboration with Parents: "…effective change in schools and communities can be initiated in collaboration with the consumers of services—bottom up" (Stone, 1993, p.4).

School and community partnerships can be difficult to organize and sustain. From a four-and-a-half year qualitative study that drew on weekly site-visits (observations and interviews) to eleven K-8 elementary schools and one high school in Chicago as well as an examination of community initiatives, Kahne and his colleagues found that trying to develop social capital among diverse members produced unexpected outcomes. The sponsoring foundation sought to build trust and networks among members in the initiative (school principals, youth-serving agencies, and community-development agencies), but an emphasis was not placed on the establishment of norms. What resulted was an environment where school principals would come together and be more than willing to engage in discussions and activities if it were on their terms and focused on students' academic success. Over time the environment led community members and organizations to "fade-away." This led the authors to conclude,

> In terms of practice, our study reinforces what many have found: that school networks and collaboration between schools and communities can provide supplemental support

for educators but that transforming educational institutions is enormously difficult. Framing these reform efforts in terms of varied elements of social capital clarifies the challenge of developing social capital and of leveraging school improvement. (Kahne, O'Brien, Brown, Quinn, 2001, p.456)

One technique for involving students with their communities is service learning. Service learning is defined as, "a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities" (National Commission on Service Learning, 2002, p.3). Service learning accomplishes the reversal of student disengagement, reinforces and extends the standards-based reform, promotes the public purposes of education, builds on the growing willingness of students to become involved in service, and contributes to young people's personal and career development (National Commission on Service Learning, 2002). Valentine and his colleagues (2002) found that while recognized as being an important component of a middle level program, the prevalence of service learning was not widespread, "39% of middle level schools did not formally engage in service-learning activities. Principals providing 'other' responses primarily indicated that service learning was addressed through their advisory program, or that it emerged as the result of informal initiatives among interdisciplinary teams or through individual teachers' class activities" (Valentine et al., 2002, p.69).

Ensuring Success for Every Student

The *Turning Points 2000* model illustrates a design system, with the eight recommendations representing the components of the system. Ensuring the success of every student is placed at the middle of the system. Thus, the expectation is that the recommendations will work together in the middle level school to ensure student success.

Writing on the mixed signals that American's send on the importance of academic achievement, Barton (2001) argues that, "the hard fact is that American culture is not really a learning culture, at least not in the K-12 period of life" (p.15). Barton notes how parents differ in their valuing of education, students peers, the workforce, and to some extent higher education. The message is that education must be completed but one does not have to particularly excel.

Writing for the Educational Testing Service, Barton (2003) identified fourteen components structured in two dimensions (school and before/beyond school) that "create and perpetuate achievement gaps" (p.4) in America's schools. The components for the two dimensions are listed in Table 24.

Table 24

Components that Create and Perpetuate Achievement Gaps

School	Before and Beyond School
Rigor of Curriculum	Parent Participation
Teacher Preparation	Student Mobility
Teacher Experience and Attendance	Birthweight
Class Size	Lead Poisoning
Technology—Assisted Instruction	Hunger and Nutrition
School Safety	Reading to Young Children
	Television Watching
	Parent Availability

(Barton, 2003)

The components were further delineated into similar domains. The school level components were assigned into two domains, (1) teaching and learning: "rigor of the curriculum, teacher preparation, teacher experience and attendance, class size, and availability of technology-

assisted instruction" (Barton, 2003, p.6); and, (2) the learning environment: school safety. The four domains associated with the before and beyond school dimension were identified as, (1) the development environment: "weight of birth, exposure to environmental hazards such as lead…and hunger and nutrition" (Barton, 2003, p.6), (2) the home learning connection: reading to young children, the amount of TV watched, and the availability of parents, (3) the community: student mobility, (4) the home and school connection: parent participation.

Barton (2003) noted how the correlates relate to gaps in achievement between minority and majority groups and high and low income families, "In all 14 correlates, of achievement, there were gaps between the minority and majority student populations" (p.7). What is interesting about the correlates is how closely they align with many of the recommendations from *Turning Points 2000.* The alignment between the correlates from ETS and *Turning Points 2000* are presented in Table 25.

Table 25

Similarities between ETS Components and *Turning Points 2000*

TP 1: Curriculum	TP2: Instruction	TP3: Organizing Relationships	TP4: Expert Teachers	TP5: Democratic Governance	TP6: Safe & Healthy Schools	TP7: Parent and Community Involvement
Rigor of Curriculum	Technology, assisted instruction Reading to young children	Class Size	Teacher Preparation Teacher Experience and Attendance		School Safety Birth weight Lead Poisoning	Parent Participation Student Mobility Television Watching

	Hunger and Nutrition	Parent Availability

Rothstein (2004) also identified a number of factors beyond the school that can possibly influence student learning and achievement. These factors include: genetic influences, difference in childrearing practices by social class, cultural influences, racial discrimination, health differences (vision, hearing, oral health, lead exposure, asthma, access to quality medical care), use of alcohol and smoking by mother during pregnancy, child's birth weight, nutrition, housing and student mobility, social class differences, and access to summer and after-school learning opportunities.

Sirin (2005) in a review of the research on the influence of socioeconomic status and student achievement, reported:

> …socioeconomic structure has a strong impact on students' academic achievement. Family SES sets the stage for students' academic performance both by directly providing resources at home and by indirectly providing the social capital that is necessary to succeed in school (Coleman, 1988). Family SES also helps to determine the kind of school and classroom environment to which the student has access (Reynolds & Walberg, 1992a). (p.438)

Wang and colleagues (1993) reviewed the findings from the rankings of 61 research experts, 91 meta-analyses, and 179 handbook chapters on the influence of different factors on student learning. From the study, it was found that distal variables (state, district, and building-wide policies) had little direct influence on student learning. Proximal variables along instructional, psychological, and home environment dimensions, however, contributed

significantly to understanding the influence of learning. A closing implication of Wang and colleagues (1993) is worth quoting at length.

> Two major findings from the present review suggest important policy implications: the actions of students, teacher, and parents matter most to student learning; policies at the program, school, district, state, and federal levels have limited effect compared to the day-to-day efforts of the people who are most involved in students' lives. Knowing that proximal variables have a greater impact on school learning than distal ones, educators, when formulating policies, should be mindful of where they can make the biggest difference in terms of the student, the classroom, and the home. (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993, p.279)

Benchmark studies on the school-level factors that influence student achievement were conducted more than two decades ago. Edmonds (1982) identified five "correlates" of effective schools: (1) principal leadership and attention to the quality of instruction, (2) an instructional focus, (3) an orderly and safe environment, (4) expectations for students, and (5) the use of measures as the basis for evaluation. For these five characteristics, Edmonds (1982) discussed three types of programs in use at the time to achieve these outcomes, (1) those organized and administered within the school or district, (2) those administered by state agencies, and (3) those that are based out of universities. Levine and Stark (1982) provided additional insight in the effective schools research when they examined arrangements that influenced achievement. In keeping with previous work, Levine and Stark (1982) found six instructional processes across the three study sites: 1) curriculum and instruction painstakingly aligned; 2) effective arrangements were made to help low-performing students; with more emphasis placed on: 3) higher-order thinking, 4) available resources, 5) minimizing record-keeping and 6) improving homework and

parental involvement. At the secondary level Raudenbush, Rowan, and Cheong (1993) found that the emphasis teachers place on higher-order thinking is related to the students' track, the discipline, and the teachers' preparation.

In a review of the effective schools literature Purkey and Smith (1983) provided an overview of the movement as it stood in 1983, most notably from the work of Ron Edmonds. In addition, the authors identified outlier studies, case studies, and program evaluations that purported the strengths of the effective schools movement. The literature seemed to be replete with what could be considered a cookbook type of approach. However, Purkey and Smith (1983) noted, "we are not arguing that the current research on effective schools is useless or irrelevant…what is missing and what we now turn to are suggestions on how to combine the ingredients" (p.440). The authors pointed to a number of issues that the effective schools literature did not address, specifically the importance of understanding a school's culture, building consensus, and organization-structure variables (Purkey & Smith, 1983). The authors provided insight about the organization-structure variables, which included school-site management, instructional leadership, staff stability, curriculum-articulation and organization, schoolwide staff development, parental involvement and support, schoolwide recognition of academic success, maximized learning time, and district support (Purkey & Smith, 1983). They concluded that a school culture promoting such variables was characterized by sustained collaborative planning and collegial relationships, a sense of community, clear goals and high expectations commonly shared, and order and discipline (Purkey & Smith, 1983).

In the 1990s, Comprehensive School Reform Models aimed at reforming school practices and subsequently providing a better education for students began to surface. Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) seeks to align and focus the school's efforts in a consistent manor.

> CSR focuses on reorganizing and revitalizing entire schools, rather than on implementing a number of specialized, and potentially uncoordinated, school improvement initiatives. In general, the funding sources supporting the implementation of CSR have been targeted toward the schools most in need of reform and improvement: high-poverty schools with low student test scores. (Borman, Hewes, Overman & Brown, 2002, p.2)

The Appalachian Educational Laboratory conducted a study in 2002 to investigate the differences in classroom practices, school climate, and reading achievement in schools participating in Comprehensive School Reform, the treatment group, and a control group. The study also sought to find differences among models. From this mixed methods study, Holdzkom (2002) found that achievement gains became evident in the third year of implementation; faculty and staff in the treatment group perceived elements of school climate positively; differences in instructional practices were contingent on the reform model being implemented; and, differences existed between instruction, classroom practice, and the relationships of teachers and students, depending on the model.

Writing on the implementation of the *Turning Points* recommendations, Erb and Stevenson (1999) noted that reform efforts may produce a "J-curve" for schools, where student outcomes actually decrease as the levels of implementation increase, but that those declines will be negated as progress is made and the reform becomes more internalized.

> …real reform changes the climate of the school; it changes how teachers relate to each other and to other professionals and parents; it changes how teachers relate to students; and it changes how teachers organize the learning environment for students. (Erb & Stevenson, 1999, p.46)

From an analysis of four districts undergoing a restructuring process, Wehlage and his colleagues (1992) identified seven criteria divided between two areas for educators and the public to consider when evaluating/examining reform:

1. Vision of outcomes for students
    a. Sense of membership in the school
    b. Students engaged in authentic tasks
    c. Valid assessment of student performance
2. Process of restructuring to achieve the vision
    a. Moral commitment to disadvantaged youth
    b. Reflection and dialogue about education
    c. Empowerment to respond to educational issues
    d. Strengthened resources for the school. (p.84)

Sabo (1995) conducted a quantitative study that examined the relationship between the organizational climate of middle schools and the quality of school life. Of particular importance, Sabo found that how teachers viewed the work environment and how students described the environment were not the same. Sabo (1995) found that, "The experience of the principal, the flexibility of the schedule, and limited use of cooperative learning strategies predicted the degree of students' favorable reactions to the overall quality of school experiences" (p.156).

Brown, Anfara, and Roney (2004) examined high and low performing middle level schools (as measured by student achievement) with regards to organizational health. Through a qualitative design, the authors found noticeable differences between the two school types on dimensions of organizational health, including: how standards were viewed; levels of optimism, enthusiasm, and collegiality by teachers for their jobs; how students were viewed as learners;

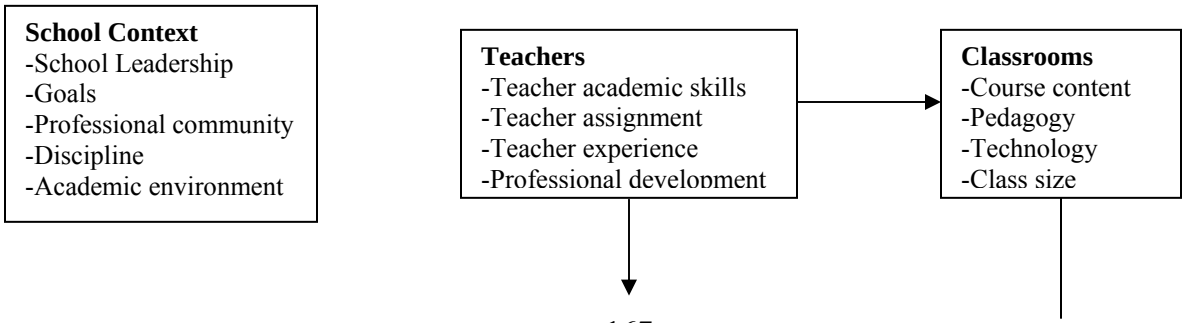
role of the principal as either visionary or test results-driven; community relations; and, levels of parent involvement.

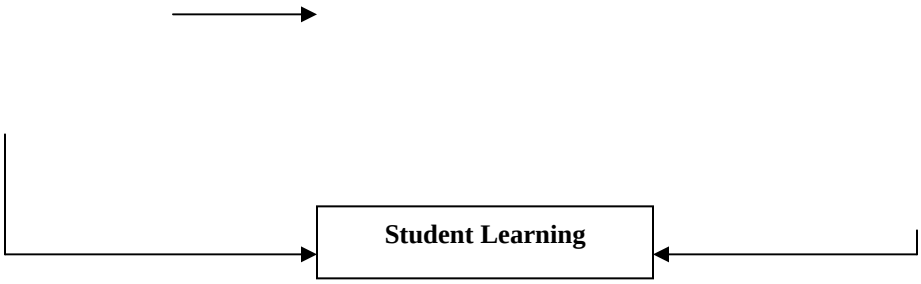
When considering how to go about reforming middle-level education, in order to have middle schools function more in keeping with their original purpose, as well as to align more closely with the recommendations of calls for reform such as *Turning Points*, Clark and Clark (1993) provided four suggestions: (1) build a knowledge base of what developmental responsiveness is and how it should work; (2) assure that programs function effectively, "The middle level school must move away from the narrow focus on organizational structures and place more emphasis on making substantive changes in relationships, classroom instruction, and curriculum" (p.457); (3) advocate for the needs of early adolescents; and, (4) middle level education should be involved in the debate of school reform.

Mayer, Mullens, and Moore (2001) identified 13 characteristics distributed across three areas (school context, teachers, and classrooms) related to student learning. In discussing the implications of the report, the authors stated, "…school quality affects student learning through the training and talent of the teaching force, what goes on in the classrooms, and the overall school culture and atmosphere of the school" (Mayer et al., 2001, p.38). The factors and how the authors perceived their influence of student learning are listed in Figure 11. These factors can influence both direct and indirectly.

Figure 11

School Quality and the Relationship to Student Learning





(Mayer et al., 2001, p.38)

Of interest from the Meyer, et al. study for *Turning Points 2000* recommendations, are the emphases given to teacher preparation/certification, leadership, discipline, academic environment, and the nature of pedagogical practice. Also, the goal of the model is student learning, similar to the *Turning Points* criterion of ensuring student success. For teacher quality, "…school quality is enhanced when teachers have high academic skills, teach in the field in which they are trained, have more than a few years of experience, and participate in high-quality induction and professional development programs" (Mayer et al., 2001, p.38). On leadership, "how schools approach educational leadership and school goals, a professional community, and establish a climate that minimizes discipline problems and encourages academic excellence clearly affects school quality and student learning" (Mayer et al., 2001, p.39). The similarity to *Turning Points 2000* is evident in the fundamental principle of involving stakeholders to create a community of learning that will provide a safe environment for students and teachers while facilitating the process through distributive leadership. About pedagogical practice Mayer and his colleagues (2001) state: "To understand the effectiveness of classrooms, research suggests that it is necessary to understand the content of the curriculum; the pedagogy, materials, and equipment used; and the conditions under which the curriculum is implemented" (p.39).

When thinking about change and reform, attention is often given to efforts and work at the building level. However, in larger districts there may be a necessity for reform efforts to occur across building sites. If a district is not facilitating the effort between schools, schools may

seek involvement in external networks with schools outside of the district system. Elmore (2000) addresses this issue of improvement across sites by defining improvement as,

> …change with direction, sustained over time that moves entire systems, raising the average level of quality and performance while at the same time decreasing the variation among units, and engaging people in analysis and understanding of why some actions seem to work and others don't. (p.13)

Rusch (2005), however, noted some dilemmas in reform efforts with external networks and barriers at the district level.

> A network learning relationship can result in the development of new language, new ideology, new communication strategies, new group skills, and different power relationships. That experience may be a total mismatch to the embedded beliefs, the communication patterns, the learning relationships, and the power dynamics in the network members' school systems. Under these circumstances, organizational learning across the system may prove to be difficult at best. (Rusch, 2005, p.88)

Conclusion

This review of literature has summarized the components of middle school philosophy from the early beginnings at the turn of the twentieth century to the present-day. First, this review provided an extensive review of the historical context of reforms of schools for young adolescents with attention given to the values that formed the underpinnings of the reforms. The review then provided related literature about the eight recommendations of the *Turning Points 2000* design system: (1) curriculum, including historical and modern day perspectives, alignment, and assessment, (2) instruction, (3) expert teachers, including the preparation of teachers specifically for middle level schools and professional development, (4) organizing

relationships for learning, including transitions, school size, interdisciplinary teaming, ability grouping, and advisory, (5) democratic governance, including principal leadership, (6) safe and healthy schools, (7) involving parents and communities, and finally (8) ensuring the success of every student. This extensive literature review was necessary because of the comprehensive nature of the variables analyzed in this study. The following chapter provides the details of the design of the study.

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