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ABSTRACT
          This report discusses an evaluation of the implementation of
Whole School Reform (WSR) in New Jersey. It is based on a study intended to
update the New Jersey Department of Education (NJ DOE) on the implementation
of WSR model programs and strategies in three school cohorts and also outline
the technical assistance needs of district and school-level stakeholders.
Participants in the study were drawn from three key educator groups: members
of each School Management Team (SMT) from the 196 schools in the three WSR
cohorts, central-office administrators, and staff members from the NJ DOE.
Four questions guided the study: (1) What are the SMTs' perceptions of the
progress of WSR implementation? (2) What are district staffs' perceptions of
the progress of WSR implementation? (3) How do SMTs assess the quality of
support supplied by the state? and (4) How do SMTs and district
administrators assess the quality of support supplied by the state? Based on
the findings, it was recommended that NJ DOE target two areas for assistance
and support in implementing WSR: Provide ongoing technical assistance to
administrators and to community organizations, such as training SMT members
on how to hire appropriate personnel, and conduct additional research on the
implementation of WSR. Four appendices feature copies of the surveys and
descriptions of the survey protocol. (Contains 19 references.) (RJM)

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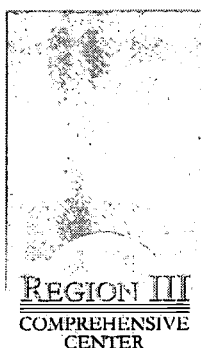
Final Report

Study of Whole School Reform Implementation in New Jersey Abbott Districts
~Perceptions of Key Stakeholders~

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About the Region III Comprehensive Center

The Region III Comprehensive Center is one of 15 Comprehensive Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education to provide technical assistance to educators in states, local school districts, schools, tribes, and other recipients of funds authorized under IASA. Its service area includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The Center is a project of The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education in partnership with RMC Research Corporation, Research for Better Schools (RBS), and ESCORT at the State University of New York Research Foundation.

The goal of the work of the Region III Comprehensive Center is to effect improved student achievement by informing and assisting the practices of educators working within existing public school systems and state education agencies. The Center works with state education agencies, intermediate units, and low performing and high poverty schools to ensure school reform initiatives and appropriately support the needs of special student populations. Special student populations include migrant, limited English proficient (LEP), neglected and delinquent, and other designations under IASA.

The Center's mission is:

> *To provide high quality technical assistance services to state and local education agencies and schools to facilitate the success of education reform and school improvement initiatives.*

Title XIII of IASA requires that *all* students, inclusive of those served under Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs, receive the same opportunity as all other students to achieve high content and performance standards. The Region III Comprehensive Center employs research-based strategies to assist staff and educators within state and local education agencies to model 'best practices,' improve pedagogical skills, or otherwise build capacity. Specific services offered by its technical assistance providers include, but are not limited to: conducting professional development events; serving as consultants; convening and facilitating events; and disseminating information.

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Executive Summary

Overview

Whole School Reform (WSR) is the response of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJ DOE) to the state Supreme Court's 1998 *Abbott v. Burke 153 N.J. 480* decision. As a result of the Court's landmark ruling, districts and schools were required to implement WSR in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6:19A[1]. This regulatory code was adopted into state law in July 1998.

This report presents the findings of an evaluation commissioned by NJ DOE and conducted by the Region III Comprehensive Center at The George Washington University. Its focus centers on the implementation progress of WSR in 18 of the 30 districts designated as Abbott districts in the state of New Jersey during the 2000 school year. The purpose of the study is to inform NJ DOE about:

- the progress of implementation of WSR model programs and strategies in three school cohorts, and
- the technical assistance needs of district and school level stakeholders.

The study's findings are optimally viewed through the lens of *organizational capacity*. A review of the literature on school accountability for improved student achievement identifies several core elements of organizational capacity: teacher knowledge and skills; effective leadership; technical and financial resources, and organizational autonomy.

At the district level, the importance of organizational capacity is critical and connected: it enables educators to raise achievement for all students, particularly in high poverty schools such as those found in the Abbott school districts. We also discuss how policies, even those crafted around the elements of organizational capacity, and clear goals for student learning, are not sufficient to transform schools into collective effective enterprises (see p.5). We argue further that technical assistance is a vital part of capacity building.

Methodology

Survey and telephone protocols were developed to collect data. Participants in the study were drawn from three key educator groups: (1) members of each School Management Team (SMT) from the 196 schools in three WSR cohorts [2]; (2) central office administrators from 18 districts with schools in cohorts 1, 2, and mid-year; and (3) staff

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[1] Legislation was recodified and adopted into state law as N.J.A.C. 6:24A on 6/8/2000.
[2] Cohorts reflect the timetables for planning and implementation that were consistent with those ordered by the state Supreme Court at the recommendation of the NJ DOE. "Cohort 1" schools initiated the WSR process in 1998-99, "cohort 2" in the 1999-2000 school year, and "mid-year cohort" in the second term of the 1999-2000 school year.

members from the NJ DOE Headquarters and the Program Improvement Regional Centers (PIRCs)[3] at the state level.

A survey focused on the primary components of WSR was administered to each of the three key educator groups. Components of the survey include:

- Planning,
- Governance,
- School-based budgeting,
- Personnel,
- Academic program,
- Training,
- Resource integration and alignment,
- School environment,
- Student and family services, and
- Family involvement.

Three surveys were developed for this study: (1) The NJ WSR School Staff Survey, (2) The NJ WSR District Staff Survey, and (3) a Process Evaluation of WSR administered to the NJ DOE. All three surveys, using Likert scales, address various aspects of WSR implementation. Results of the first survey measured the perceptions of SMTs in their implementation progress of WSR and also provided data on the level of support provided to them by the district and the state in the implementation of WSR. The second survey provided data on the perceptions of district administrators of their progress in implementing various aspects of WSR, and to what degree NJ DOE activities and products appropriately support WSR. The third survey provided data about the perceptions of NJ DOE staff regarding their support to schools in WSR, the extent to which NJ DOE activities and products were beneficial, and the extent of progress schools realized in WSR implementation.

A telephone interview of eight NJ DOE staff involved in managing the state's "roll-out" process was conducted in order to provide an expanded perspective on WSR implementation. Interview questions focused on the various steps involved in implementing WSR, the goals and mission of the state DOE in this effort, and the perceived impact of the reform on districts and schools.

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[3] PIRCs are the state technical assistance centers that house the "School Review and Improvement" (SRI) teams. The purpose of the SRI teams is to assist school and district staff with their WSR initiatives.

High survey response rates at school, district and state levels were obtained as illustrated in Table 1, below:

Table 1

Whole School Reform Survey Response Rates in the State of New Jersey by School, District and State Levels

Survey Sectors	Total Population	Number of Respondents	Response Rate (Percent)
School	590	415	70
District	72	70	97
State	8	7	88
Total	670	492	73

Conclusions

Four questions guided the study. Representative findings for each question are summarized below:

Question 1: What perceptions do members of School Management Teams (SMTs) have of the progress of Whole School Reform implementation?

Overall, SMT members stated that they had made "significant progress" in all components of WSR implementation (i.e., planning, governance, school-based budgeting, personnel, academic program, training and professional development, integration and alignment of resources and functions, school environment, student and family services, and family involvement). Yet analysis of individual items within each component revealed that "significant progress" was not made in the following aspects of WSR:

- A sufficient number of faculty/staff to implement fully and support the WSR program;
- Adoption of an academic program that meets the needs of LEP students;
- Training/professional development in the following areas: needs identification of programs and services; alignment of curriculum and instruction to state standards; personnel selection appropriate to the school; and use of zero-based budgeting processes;
- A school-based team that would train parents for volunteer roles (i.e., Student and Family Services); and
- An ongoing effort to involve parents as partners in school-based decision making (i.e., membership on SMT).

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Question 2: What perceptions do district staff have of the progress of Whole School Reform implementation?

District staff assessing their own progress in implementing WSR observed that "some progress" was made in implementing all components of WSR. However, an analysis of individual items identified aspects of WSR implementation in which "less progress" was made. These aspects include:

- Training and technical support to SMTs;
- Budgeting issues;
- Professional development for school staff; and
- Provision of data to schools for purposes of planning and decision-making.

Question 3: How do SMTs assess the quality of support provided by districts?

SMT members rated district support highest in the area of curriculum alignment and weakest in the area of providing performance and demographic data for decision-making.

Question 4: How do SMTs and district administrators assess the quality of support supplied by the state?

District and school respondents agreed that there were three areas in which the state provided support for WSR implementation to "some extent" only. These areas were:

- SRI team support for schools,
- Start-up grants and incentives, and
- WSR model showcases.

Of these three areas, NJ DOE is urged to focus on the first only – SRI team support for schools. The reason for this is fairly straightforward: now that all Abbott schools have begun WSR implementation, the other two areas are pre-implementation strategies and are no longer needed.

Lessons Regarding Organizational Capacity for School Reform

As stated earlier, this study is predicated on the premise that *schools cannot take responsibility for improving student achievement if the organizational capacity necessary to work effectively as a collaborative enterprise is not in place.* In this report, we demonstrate how and in what ways WSR strategies are related to the elements of organizational capacity defined in the literature.

We also point out, however, that WSR policy, with its specific focus on building the organizational capacity of schools, has not addressed the needs of district administrators or NJ DOE staff in reinventing their roles so that they might provide the technical assistance that schools need to implement WSR successfully. We point out that it is equally important to realize that NJ DOE and district administrators need to develop their

own capacity at both the individual and institutional levels if they are to provide educational direction and leadership to advance WSR at the school level.

We discuss some new ways that district and DOE staff must change institutional structures and individual roles to maximize efficiency, effectiveness and job performance. Specifically, they must change from:

- Centralized bureaucracies to decentralized institutions that manage autonomous schools.
- Categorical programs and budgets to consolidated programs and budgets.
- A management perspective focused on monitoring program compliance to a technical assistance perspective focused on continuous improvement.
- Organizations rich in data that are largely inaccessible to organizations able to help district and school staff organize, analyze and manipulate data in order to permit educators to make meaning about student learning.

The areas where we postulate that district administrators and DOE staff need to build their own capacity are areas where respondents reported "less progress" for WSR implementation (training and technical support to SMTs, budgeting issues, professional development for school staff, and provision of data to schools for analysis). It is for this reason that our recommendations provide suggestions for technical assistance in these areas.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that NJ DOE target two areas for assistance and support of the implementation of WSR in Abbott districts and schools: (1) provide ongoing technical assistance to district and school level administrators and to community organizations that can support WSR, and (2) conduct additional research on the implementation of WSR. In terms of presentation, each recommendation is paired with the particular stakeholder group it is designed to serve: district, school and community members. Each recommendation also is presented by technical assistance and research categories.

In the area of technical assistance for district level administrators, it is recommended that NJ DOE:

- Work with districts to design training for SMT members on how to hire personnel appropriate for their schools.
- Work with district administrators to design training for curricula alignment to the state content standards.
- Work with district administrators to expand curricula alignment training to include instructional and classroom assessment alignment to the state content standards.
- Continue training on how to collect, organize and analyze comprehensive data at the district level to facilitate administrators' assistance and support of

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schools engaged in a continuous improvement process for managing student improvement.

- Create a partnership with Abbott districts to create a statewide warehouse for student achievement data. This centralized resource would enable educators at district and school levels to access and manipulate data in order to inform a continuous improvement process aimed at advancing and sustaining student achievement.
- Create a partnership with Abbott districts to develop an accountability system that is primarily based on a philosophy of capacity building (Fullan, 2000), enabling educators to become assessment literate.

It is recommended that NJ DOE provide the following training at the school level:

- Train SMT members on how to identify needs for additional programs and services.
- Advance training in the area of zero-based budget development and budget adjustment to facilitate annual assessment of school needs.

At the community level, it is recommended that NJ DOE form partnerships as follows:

- Collaborate with organizations that support parent involvement and assist them to implement the elements of WSR and train parents for volunteer roles and partnerships with the schools. Among suggested organizations are:

  - New Jersey PTA
  - ASPIRA of New Jersey, Inc.
  - NJ Association of Parent Coordinators
  - Parent Information Resource Centers

Due to the emphasis of WSR on school restructuring, the state has to this point focused on providing ongoing assistance to schools (via PIRCs). However, based on the study findings, we recommend that the NJ DOE expand its technical assistance to incorporate the district level. The rationale for this is that district administrators must build their own capacity to provide the technical assistance schools need to implement WSR successfully. Thus we strongly recommend that the state maintain its support for schools through its SRIs while increasing the level of support for districts.

We recommend further that NJ DOE consider developing a research plan in collaboration with NJ stakeholders. Among questions that merit consideration and additional research are:

- What is the relationship between successful implementation of WSR and improved student achievement?
- How and in what ways does the selection and fidelity of model implementation affect student achievement?

- How might "lessons learned" from each successive cohort advance understanding and improve implementation for cohorts engaging in WSR?
- Considering the large and growing number of limited English proficient (LEP) and language minority students, how and in what ways do existing WSR models address their needs?

In sum, the data provide useful information to NJ DOE on how to improve the implementation of WSR. An important lesson of the study is that the state needs to increase its technical assistance to districts. The recommended context of this technical assistance emphasizes the need of NJ DOE staff and district administrators to work together in order to build their individual and institutional capacity to support schools in the implementation of WSR. Finally, it is recommended that the state evaluate the WSR implementation process on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that educators have data on which to base future decisions.

I. Introduction

The 1998 New Jersey Supreme Court decision in *Abbott v. Burke 153 N.J. 480*[1] propelled the New Jersey Department of Education (NJ DOE) on a course of Whole School Reform (WSR) in 30 special needs districts. Known collectively as the Abbott districts, state law required that schools in these districts be restructured in accordance with the programs and strategies found in the WSR proposal developed by the NJ DOE. WSR is a policy initiative that utilizes research-proven programs and strategies to transform schools into an effective collective enterprise focused on improving student achievement.

This study was commissioned by the NJ DOE and conducted by the Region III Comprehensive Center at The George Washington University. Its twofold purpose is: (1) to measure the implementation of WSR model programs and strategies from the perspectives of participants at the school, district and state levels in three school cohorts,[2] and (2) to inform NJ DOE of the technical assistance needs of district and school level stakeholders.[3]

The report contains four chapters: Chapter I is an introduction providing an overview of WSR, the purpose of the study and the effects of WSR policy on state and district personnel. Chapter II details the methodology of the study and presents study questions, study population, data collection methods, instruments, and method of analysis. Chapter III is a discussion of the findings for each group involved in the study thereby providing a school-level perspective, district perspective and NJ DOE perspective on the implementation progress of WSR. Chapter IV presents findings and recommendations.

The Context for the Study: The Implementation of Whole School Reform in NJ Abbott Schools

The Whole School Reform initiative was proposed in response to the New Jersey Supreme Court decision in *Abbott v. Burke* which stipulated that the New Jersey Department of Education increase funding in 30 special needs[4] or low-income districts throughout the state. The increased funding is intended to enable these districts and schools (known as the Abbott districts/schools) to meet the state constitutional imperative to provide a "thorough and efficient" education by teaching the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) to ensure both equity and excellence are afforded to *all* students in New Jersey.

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[1] *Abbott v. Burke 153 N.J. 480* is a school finance lawsuit which charged that disparities between wealthy and poor districts had increased under Chapter 212 of the New Jersey Public School Education Act (1975).

[2] Cohorts reflect the timetables for planning and implementation that were consistent with those ordered by the state Supreme Court at the recommendation of the NJ DOE. "Cohort 1" schools initiated the WSR process in 1998-99, "cohort 2" in the 1999-2000 school year, and "mid-year cohort" in the second term of the 1999-2000 school year.

[3] Whether WSR is related to improved student achievement is outside the scope of this study design. An assessment of what relationship, if any, exists between WSR and improved student achievement would require a separate study.

[4] New Jersey classifies its school districts based on an aggregation of census data in the following areas: percent of population with no high school diploma, percent with some college, occupation, population density, income, unemployment, and poverty. On a categorical scale of A-I, the Abbott districts fall in the two lowest categories, A and B.

The WSR proposal submitted to the New Jersey Supreme Court outlined a complete restructuring of an entire school through a series of research-proven programs and strategies focused on improving student achievement. As stated by NJ DOE when introducing the first version of regulations in July 1998, "its (WSR) broad purpose is to guide a sweeping reform of education in which the program, staffing, operations and financing of each individual school will be rebuilt from the 'ground up' using research-proven programs and strategies."

A more specific purpose of the WSR implementation/restructuring process is to build each school's capacity to teach all students the state's CCCS, thereby providing schools in the Abbott districts with the tools to create a "thorough and efficient" system of free public schools, a right guaranteed to New Jersey students by the state constitution.

In order to implement this reform, NJ DOE established rules to outline the responsibilities of local districts. District responsibilities include: acting cooperatively in the implementation of WSR; ensuring that schools are led by effective principals; notifying the School Management Team (SMT) and the School Review and Improvement (SRI) team prior to transfer or removal of teachers; according high priority to WSR in development of the school budget; providing a full-time technology coordinator, full-time media specialist, and full-time dropout prevention officer; implementing a NJ DOE-approved district-wide security plan; implementing a NJ DOE-approved alternative middle school and high school program; implementing a NJ DOE-approved plan for central office support of school-based management; assuring collaboration among schools in the district in order to ensure a smooth transition for students among schools; providing balances in early childhood program aid and demonstrably effective program aid; and implementing a NJ DOE-approved district-wide accountability system.

At the school level, WSR rules included the requirement that schools adopt model programs that are research-based.[5] This Abbott requirement is parallel to one of the components of the US Department of Education's Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program that recognizes the need for comprehensive, not fragmented, school reform.

In addition, WSR requires each school to:

- Create a governance structure know as the School Management Team (SMT) to manage the school reform process;
- Create a position known as a "WSR facilitator";
- Write a school improvement plan;
- Develop a school-based budget that directs resources toward the implementation of WSR; and
- Develop goals, objectives, evaluations and an accountability plan.

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[5] Research-proven evidence of effectiveness is a key feature of the models approved by NJ DOE for WSR implementation. "Research-proven" indicates that the models are well-researched and documented designs for schoolwide change and have been replicated with proven results. The 13 models approved by NJ DOE for Abbott schools to choose from are: Accelerated Schools, America's Choice, Coalition of Essential Schools, Communities for Learning, Co-NECT, Microsociety, Modern Red Schoolhouse, PAIDEIA, Success for All/Roots and Wings, School Development Program (Comer), Talent Development, Ventures in Education and an Alternative Program Design (home-grown model).

Comparing the Theory of Organizational Capacity to WSR Policy

Nationally, standards-based reform is steeped in the assumption that reform will be accomplished when all students learn the challenging content standards of their respective states. State policies on accountability focus on the school as the accountable unit for improving student learning. A school's performance will be judged by educators' ability to teach students the standards and success will be measured by student results on standards-aligned, state-mandated tests. Though research on accountability suggests that there is *little or no relationship between an externally imposed accountability system and a school's organizational capacity to teach students' content*, state assessments are the evaluative mechanisms used to measure school reform.

The proposed ingredients of organizational capacity in the literature and illustrated in Figure 1 are: teachers' professional knowledge and skills; effective leadership; availability of technical and financial resources; and organizational autonomy to act according to demands of the local context (Newmann, King and Rigdon, 1997). The argument presented in the literature is that schools and school personnel cannot take responsibility for improving student achievement if the capacity to function as a *collective effective enterprise* does not exist.

A comparison of the ingredients of organizational capacity to WSR policy demonstrates that the programs and strategies it contains are designed to build a school's organizational capacity. Following is a list of the proposed ingredients of organizational capacity and WSR strategies related to each ingredient:

- **Teachers' professional knowledge and skills** — teachers must possess direct knowledge of subject matter, curriculum, students, and general and subject-specific pedagogy in order to help students learn (Carpenter et al, 1989; Schulman, 1986; Wilson and Weinberg, 1988). Adoption of WSR models such as *Success for All* and *America's Choice* provide teachers with knowledge and skills by supplying them with training in a curriculum and an implementation process (Erlichson et al., 2001).
- **Effective leadership** — since the 1970's, researchers have emphasized the importance of a school mission or collective sense of purpose shared by staff (Edmonds, 1979; Purkey & Smith, 1983; and McLaughlin, 1993) and of the role of leadership in articulating and mobilizing support for it (O'Day, Goertz and Floden, 1995). WSR creates a governance structure at the school (SMT) and asks team members to lead the process in the development of a shared vision and mission by conducting a comprehensive needs assessment upon which a WSR Implementation Plan is based.
- **Availability of technical and financial resources** — WSR schools have access to state technical assistance from the School Review and Improvement Teams housed at the Program Improvement Regional Centers (PIRCs). Team members work directly with schools and districts to provide the technical assistance needed to implement WSR and appropriately fund materials, facilities and personnel.
- **Organizational autonomy to act according to demands of the local context** — WSR has given teachers and schools discretion over decisions relevant to instruction and funding. WSR strategies include implementation of: (1) a new governance structure —

the School Management Team (SMT); (2) a comprehensive needs assessment; (3) a WSR Implementation Plan; (4) model selection; and (5) a budget process that enables schools to adjust funding. These strategies provide Abbott schools with the tools to make autonomous decisions based on the needs of students at a particular school.

In order for a school to become a *collective effective enterprise* it must effectively coordinate and organize its human, technical and social resources. Newmann et al., point out that the key to effective coordination and organization of these resources is establishing a shared and clear purpose for student learning among school staff. This "shared and clear purpose for student learning" is provided to schools by the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS).

In sum, although WSR policy addresses the ingredients of organizational capacity identified in Newmann, et al., and the CCCS provide a clear purpose for student learning, neither policy not standards transform schools. It is only when the ingredients of organizational capacity and the goals for student learning are translated by school staff with the support and assistance of the DOE, district administrators and technical assistance providers into <u>effective</u> instruction, management, and knowledge that schools will begin to understand how to coordinate and organize the human, technical and social resources to become an effective collective enterprise.

The following flowchart combines WSR programs and strategies with the Newmann et al., ingredients of organizational capacity to demonstrate visually the interrelationship between the categories of organizational capacity and a clear goal for student learning. This graphical treatment illustrates how both must be taken into account when coordinating and organizing the human, technical and social resources needed to transform schools into effective collective enterprises.

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Study of Whole School Reform Implementation in New Jersey Abbott Districts

**Establish Strategic Elements of
Organizational Capacity**

- Teacher Knowledge and Skills
  - WSR Model Program
- Effective Leadership
  - SMT, Vision, Mission, Plan
- Technical and Financial Resources
  - PIRCs
  - Abbott funding
- Organizational Autonomy
  - Comprehensive needs assessment
  - WSR model selection
  - WSR implementation plan
  - Zero-based budgeting

**Coordinate and organize
human, technical and social
resources at a school**

**Effective
Collective
Enterprise**

**Establish Clear Goals for
Student Learning**

- NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards

Figure 1. The Process of Transforming Schools into Effective Collective Enterprises.

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NJ DOE also has adopted four common capacity-building strategies found in other states (Massell, 1998) in an effort to provide support to school staff as they work to translate policy and standards into effective instruction, management and knowledge:

1. **The building of an external infrastructure to provide professional development and technical assistance[6] to districts and schools**—the New Jersey Department of Education has created the Program Improvement Regional Centers (PIRCs) at three regional locations (North, Central and South). School Review and Improvement (SRI) teams, housed at each PIRC, provide direct support and technical assistance to Abbott school districts.

2. **The setting of professional development and training standards**—professional development and training standards have been set by the Department and are linked to WSR and Core Curriculum Content Standards[7]. Training for WSR model implementation is coupled with teacher recertification.

3. **Providing curriculum materials**—curriculum frameworks have been developed and distributed in each of the Core Curriculum Content Standards areas. Some WSR models provide curricula.

4. **Organizing and allocating resources**—the Department of Education has taken great strides to insure that schools allocate resources according to: (1) school improvement plans developed by school management teams, and (2) the consolidation of federal, state and local funds for WSR efforts.

Reinventing NJ DOE and District Jobs

In the previous section we posit that WSR programs and strategies and the CCCS are policy initiatives focused on building the organizational capacity needed by schools to improve student achievement. We point out that both WSR policy and CCCS need to be translated by school staff into effective instruction, management and knowledge before schools can begin to understand how to coordinate and organize the human, technical and social resources to become effective collective enterprises. Such translation cannot occur without the support and assistance of NJ DOE and district administrators.

In order for NJ DOE and district administrators to provide effective support and assistance to schools, they have to learn new ways to think about and do their jobs. Minimally both the individuals and the organizations they work in must shift from:

- Centralized bureaucracies to decentralized institutions that manage separate, autonomous schools.
- Categorical planning and budgeting to consolidated planning and budgeting.
- A management perspective focused on monitoring program compliance to a technical assistance perspective focused on continuous improvement.

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[6] Technical assistance supports educators in the alignment of all components of the educational system—curriculum and instruction, professional development, school leadership, accountability, and school improvement.

[7] Training for WSR model implementation is accepted as credit toward recertification. Continuing education emphasizes, but is not limited to, knowledge and skills essential to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

- Organizations rich in data that are not readily accessible to organizations able to help district and school staff organize, analyze and manipulate data in order to permit educators to make meaning about student learning.

The unfortunate reality is that there have been few programs or strategies within WSR regulations that are designed to help district and NJ DOE staffs build the organizational capacity needed to work in new ways that enable them to support and assist schools in achieving reform goals. For the most part, these staff have had to learn new ways to think about and do their jobs while actively working to assist schools in the implementation of WSR. It is highly likely that the time-intensive struggle to develop this capacity has impacted the smooth implementation of WSR at school levels.

Overview of this Study

This study examines perceptions of the implementation progress of WSR in Cohort 1, 2 and mid-year Abbott district schools. As stated previously, "cohorts" reflect the timetables for planning and implementation that were consistent with those ordered or accepted by the Court at the Department's recommendation. "Cohort 1" schools initiated the WSR process in the 1998-99 school year, "cohort 2" in the 1999-2000 school year, and "mid-year cohort" in the second term of the 1999-2000 school year. The study began in the fall 2000. Cohort 3 (2000-2001) schools were not included because in fall 2000 these schools and school personnel had just begun the WSR implementation process.

The purpose of the study was twofold: (1) to measure stakeholders (at the school, district and state levels) perceptions of the progress of implementation of WSR model programs and strategies in three school cohorts, and (2) to provide information to the NJ DOE on the technical assistance needs at district and school levels.

This study focused on four overarching questions:

(1) What perceptions do School Management Team (SMT) members have of the progress of Whole School Reform implementation?
(2) What perceptions do district staff members have of the progress of Whole School Reform implementation?
(3) How do SMT members assess the quality of support provided by the districts?
(4) How do SMT and district administrators assess the quality of support supplied by the state?

WSR asks Abbott schools and districts to do something different, namely, to manage for results. Thus the paradigm shift brought about as a result of WSR implementation requires that key stakeholders share a common understanding and collective vision of how to embrace effectively a series of new processes that comply with N.J.A.C. 6:24A in changing how schools work. At the school level, these changes encompass:

- **Planning**—conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to select a WSR model, set realistic goals for improvement, engage all stakeholders in the WSR planning process, use data on an ongoing basis to evaluate the implementation and impact of WSR.

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- **SMT Governance**—develop a WSR Implementation plan, devise a school-based budget, review student assessment results to determine the programmatic and curriculum-based needs of all students.
- **School-based Budgeting**—develop a school budget that concentrates all resources to support objectives for meeting WSR goals developed as well as the flexibility to adjust the budget to reflect the annual assessment of school needs and goals.
- **Personnel**—support personnel decisions that advance the goals of the WSR implementation plan and ensure that the school is sufficiently staffed to implement fully the WSR program.
- **Academic Program**—install a school curriculum aligned to the Core Curriculum Content Standards, align instruction to the Core Curriculum Content Standards, align classroom assessment to Core Curriculum Content Standards, et cetera.
- **Training**—train the school management team in organizational skills and train practitioners in the skills needed to teach the state Core Curriculum Content Standards.
- **Resource Integration and Alignment**—focus all roles and responsibilities, financial resources and school structures on WSR efforts.
- **School Environment**—provide staff and students with a safe and orderly environment for learning and establish policy, programs, procedures or practices that foster collaborative and productive relationships between students and staff.
- **Family Involvement**—work in partnership with parents to make school-related decisions and to strengthen the home-school relationship to improve student learning.

WSR requirements also compel changes in institutionalized roles at the district level in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6:24A. District level change require educators to:

- Make changes in the functions of central administration to support planning, budget and decision-making at the school level.
- Hire staff in support of WSR implementation.
- Provide effective principal leadership.
- Ensure full implementation of school-based management.
- Provide access to training and technical support to School Management Teams to enable members to carry out their new governance duties efficiently and effectively.
- Allocate sufficient time and resources to School Management Teams to develop their capacity to better perform and manage this work.
- Ensure that the WSR model is implemented to support district goals and state standards.
- Ensure curriculum coordination and articulation across grade levels (PreK-12).
- Provide professional development to school staff for effective implementation of WSR.
- Provide timely and useful data to schools for use in assessing student and school needs.
- Ensure budgets dedicate resources to support school goals and strategies.
- Establish alternative programs to meet the needs of middle and high school students who have not succeeded in traditional learning environments.
- Implement a district-wide security plan to create safe and orderly school environments.

II. Methodology

Participants in the Study

The purpose of this study was to acquire the perspectives of three key groups at state, district and school levels in order to assess the implementation progress of Whole School Reform in New Jersey. Participants from these three key groups included: (1) members of the School Management Team from 196 schools; (2) central office administrators from 18 Abbott districts[8]; and (3) seven of eight staff members from NJ DOE Headquarters and the regional Program Improvement Regional Centers (PIRC).

Instruments

Three surveys were developed for this study: (1) The NJ WSR School Staff Survey, (2) The NJ WSR District Staff Survey, and (3) a Process Evaluation of WSR administered to NJ DOE staff. All three surveys use Likert scales[9] and address various aspects of WSR implementation. While customized to match the group surveyed, questions shared across groups centered on: planning, governance, school-based budgeting, personnel, academic program, training, resource integration and alignment, school environment, and family involvement. In addition to the Likert scale answer format, each survey included open-ended questions that asked respondents to identify achievements and barriers concerning the implementation of WSR. The school staff survey and the district staff survey also included two open-ended items that asked for a description of what was different as a result of WSR and what type of assistance the NJ DOE could supply that was perceived as beneficial.

The first survey measured the perceptions of SMTs regarding the implementation progress of WSR and also provided data on the level of support provided to them by the district and the state during WSR implementation. The second survey provided data on the perceptions of district administrators of their progress in implementing various aspects of WSR, and to what degree NJ DOE activities and products appropriately support WSR. The third survey provided data about the perceptions of the NJ DOE staff of their support to schools in WSR, the extent to which NJ DOE activities and products were beneficial, and the extent of progress schools realized in WSR implementation.

A telephone interview of seven of eight NJ DOE staff involved in managing the state's "roll-out" process was conducted in order to provide an expanded perspective on WSR implementation. Interview questions focused on the various steps involved in implementing WSR, the goals and mission of the state DOE in this effort and the perceived impact of the reform on districts and schools.

The surveys were distributed to:

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[8] Of the 30 Abbott districts, only 18 had 'cohort 1, 2, and mid-year' schools. The study centered on these cohorts of schools.

- Members of each School Management Team from the 196 schools in Cohorts 1, 2 and mid-year,
- Central office administrators from the 18 Abbott Districts with schools in Cohorts 1, 2, and mid-year,
- Seven of eight NJ DOE staff from Headquarters and the Program Improvement Regional Centers (PIRCs) at the state level.

Data Collection

In collecting the data, two methods of collection were used: (1) surveys of NJ DOE, central office personnel and School Management Teams (SMTs), and (2) telephone interviews with NJ DOE staff on WSR implementation.

Survey distribution occurred during fall 2000. At the school level, there was a total population of 590 possible respondents from 196 Abbott schools representing both Cohorts 1, 2 and mid-year. Of those, 415 respondents completed the survey for a final response rate of 70 percent. At the district level, 18 districts had Cohort 1, 2 and mid-year schools. The total number of possible respondents at the district level was 72; 70 administrators completed the survey for a final response rate of 97 percent.

Table 1

Whole School Reform Survey Response Rates in the State of New Jersey by School, District and State Levels

Survey Sectors	Total Population	Number of Respondents	Response Rate (Percent)
School	590	415	70
District	72	70	97
State	8	7	88
Total	670	492	73

At the state level, NJ DOE Headquarters staff and PIRC managers were critical in the oversight of WSR implementation. Eight of these individuals were identified for participation in this study because of their extensive experiences with WSR since the Abbott ruling in 1998. Seven of the eight NJ DOE staff (87.5 percent) agreed to and completed interviews pertaining to the implementation of WSR.

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[9] The Likert technique presents a set of attitude statements. Subjects are asked to express agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale. Each degree of agreement is given a numerical value from "1" representing agreement to "5" representing disagreement. Thus a total numerical value can be calculated from all responses. The questionnaire in this study used three formats (see Appendices A-C).

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Analysis

Beyond the presentation of simple frequencies and percentages, the principal method of analysis was comparison of mean scores for each item of the survey. When comparing the responses of School Management Team members, district and state personnel on the same items or areas, t-tests were conducted to determine if any differences in the perspectives were statistically significant[10]

Responses to open-ended questions first were coded into separate categories for each question, then sorted by category. Open-ended questions were used to expand understanding of the quantitative findings.

Study Questions

Analysis and discussion sections of the study were guided by the following:

- What are the general characteristics of respondents, for example: (1) the composition of NJ DOE, and the role of district administrators and SMTs, and (2) the level of experience of respondents.
- What WSR models did schools select?
- How do school staff assess institutional efforts toward implementing WSR in the areas of: (1) planning, (2) school governance, (3) development of a school budget for WSR, (4) personnel hiring, (5) the academic program, (6) training and professional development for SMT and teachers, (7) student and family services, and (8) family involvement?
- How do school staff self-assessment of efforts to implement WSR compare to self-assessments reported by NJ DOE staff?
- How do school district administrators rate their own progress in: (1) organizing to support WSR at the school level, (2) providing principals and School Management Teams (SMTs) with training and resources around WSR, (3) ensuring that districts' educational standards (i.e. curriculum, professional development, budgeting, et cetera) are met by WSR plans, and (4) providing alternative programs for middle school and high school students?
- How helpful have NJ DOE technical assistance efforts been in supporting WSR to districts and schools in the following areas: (1) written materials and the NJ DOE web site, (2) WSR training, (3) WSR implementation grants, (4) WSR model showcases, (5) implementation of WSR, (6) assistance with budgeting issues, and (7) program development for secondary schools.
- How do NJ DOE staff assess their technical assistance efforts in the following areas: (1) written materials such as the Guide for Implementing Urban Education Reform in Abbott Districts and the NJ DOE website, (2) WSR training, (3) WSR implementation grants, (4) WSR model showcases, (5) implementation of WSR, (6) assistance with budgeting issues, and (7) program for secondary schools.
- How do school and district level assessments of NJ DOE's efforts compare to NJ DOE self-assessments?

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[10] The significance level utilized for all t-test was p<0.05

- Based upon the overall assessments by the three participant groups (schools, districts and NJ DOE), what is the overall assessment of WSR implementation?

III. Discussion

School Staff Perspective on Whole School Reform

General Characteristics of Respondents

WSR devolved decision making to the school level and created new governance structures — School Management Teams (SMTs). WSR established SMTs to enable school staff, parents and community members to have a central role in managing the school. By design, SMTs include the school principal and representatives of teachers, parents and community members. Figure 2, below, presents the overall composition of the SMT members for the survey respondents.
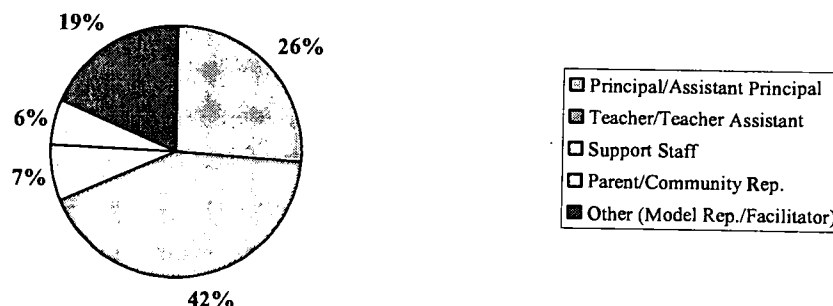
Figure 2. Composition of Respondents to School Management Teams Survey
  N=415

As Figure 2 illustrates, teachers (42 percent) constitute the largest group of respondents, whereas parents and community members combined comprise only 6 percent of respondents at the school level. This finding illustrates that WSR implementation progress at the school level is largely based on the perceptions of school practitioners (e.g. principals, assistant principals, teachers, teachers' assistants, and support staff). While the community was represented in this study, the overall community presence as measured by proportion or percentage was relatively low.

When assessing the implementation progress of WSR, a contextual fact that merits consideration is the number of years experience respondents possess in: (1) the new governance structure (SMT), and (2) their positions at the school (e.g., principal, teacher, et cetera). WSR is a comprehensive and innovative approach to enacting reform in schools. It transfers decision-making authority in areas such as planning, governance, budget, curricula, et cetera, from central office administrations to SMT members at the school level. Along with this authority come additional responsibilities for SMT members that exceed traditional school roles. A person occupying a <u>new</u> role such as WSR Facilitator would likely face increased challenges in striving to develop the necessary skills for his/her professional role while also taking on the additional management duties of WSR implementation as an SMT member. On the other hand, an experienced staff member may be more resistant to change (e.g., "This too shall pass!"). Thus it

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can be argued that the level of experience among school staff may play a crucial role in the implementation progress and in the eventual success of WSR. Figure 3 shows the distribution of tenure among SMT members on the SMT.
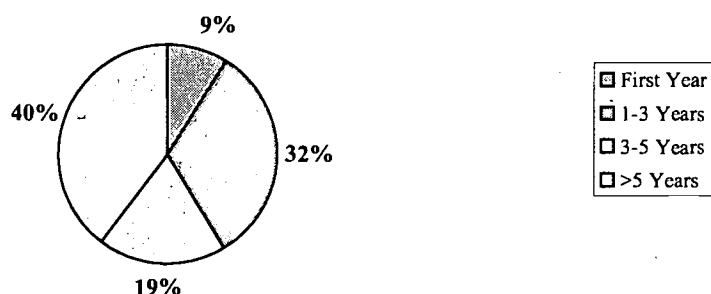
Figure 3. SMT Survey Respondents' Tenure in Current Position[11]
N=415

As is evident in Figure 3, by combining two categories (first year and 1-3 years), two-fifths (41%) of the SMT members occupied their positions after WSR started. This finding indicates that a significant number of SMT members were "new" both to their position at the school and their SMT membership. It would be interesting to determine whether or to what degree perceived differences of the success of WSR implementation are attributable to staff tenure. This may be an area of further study.

Figure 4 depicts the distribution of tenure levels for each SMT position. Based upon the means for each group, groups with the most tenure were teachers/teaching assistants, whereas the groups with the least amount of tenure were staff in the "other" category, which consisted largely of WSR facilitators, master teachers/teacher leaders, special staff (counselors, librarians) and other staff accorded specialized roles around WSR.

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[11] SMT and district surveys included a question regarding school tenure (i.e., "How long have you served at the school in your current position?"). Due to a formatting error, two of the answers overlapped (First year, 1-3 years, 3-5 years, 5 or more years). We acknowledge that there was likely some confusion among the respondents in their attempts to answer this item correctly. Thus, responses to this item must be considered carefully.
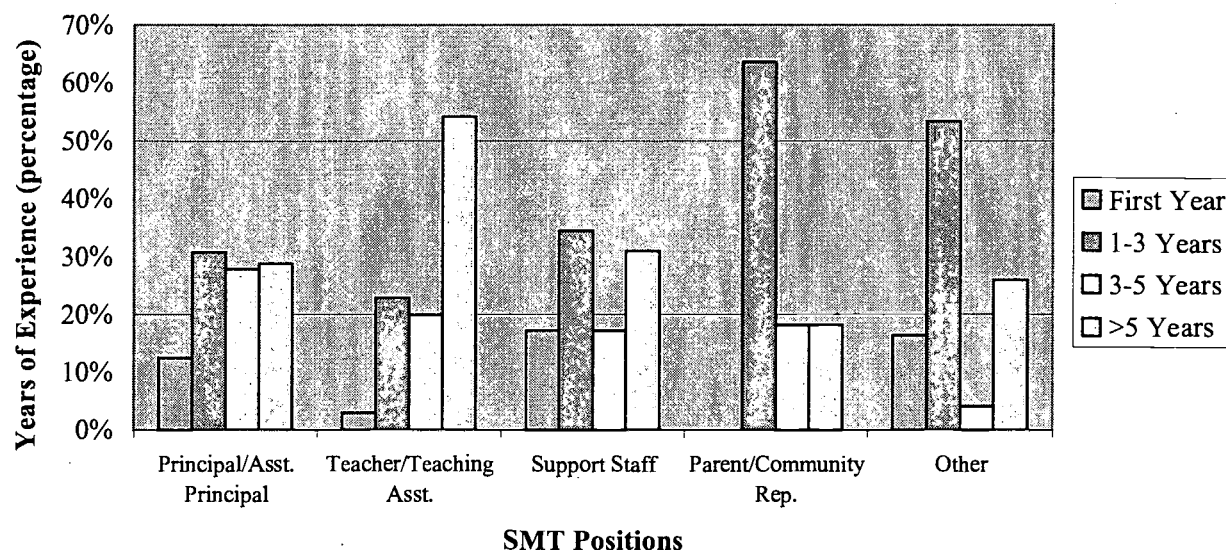
Figure 4. Tenure of SMT Survey Respondents on SMT by Position[12]
N=415

After the Abbott schools completed a comprehensive needs assessment to evaluate the gap between where the school was and where it wanted to go, the Abbott decision dictated that school personnel choose either a research-proven whole school reform model or develop an alternative program design as the centerpiece of their school improvement efforts.[13]

Types of WSR Models Selected

NJ DOE provided Abbott schools with 13 educational reform models[14] from which to choose. *Success For All* was the presumptive model. Models have been characterized by the state as either content models (i.e. prescriptive models such as SFA that provide curricula and instructional strategies to staff) or process models (i.e. non-prescriptive models such as Comer which focus on governance mechanisms, operations, and guiding principles). Figure 5 presents a breakdown of the models selected by the Abbott district schools studied.

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[12] SMT and district surveys included a question regarding school tenure (i.e., "How long have you served at the school in your current position?"). Due to a formatting error, two of the answers overlapped (First year, 1-3 years, 3-5 years, 5 or more years). We acknowledge that there was likely some confusion among the respondents in their attempts to answer this item correctly. Thus, responses to this item must be considered carefully.

[13] A related question that merits future study is: how well matched are the models selected to the needs of the school?

[14] NJ DOE selected 13 WSR models among which Abbott school personnel could choose: Accelerated Schools, America's Choice, Coalition of Essential Schools, Communities for Learning, Co-NECT, Microsociety, Modern Red Schoolhouse, PAIDEIA, School Development Program (Comer), Success for All/Roots and Wings, Talent Development, Ventures in Education and an Alternative Program Design (home-grown model).
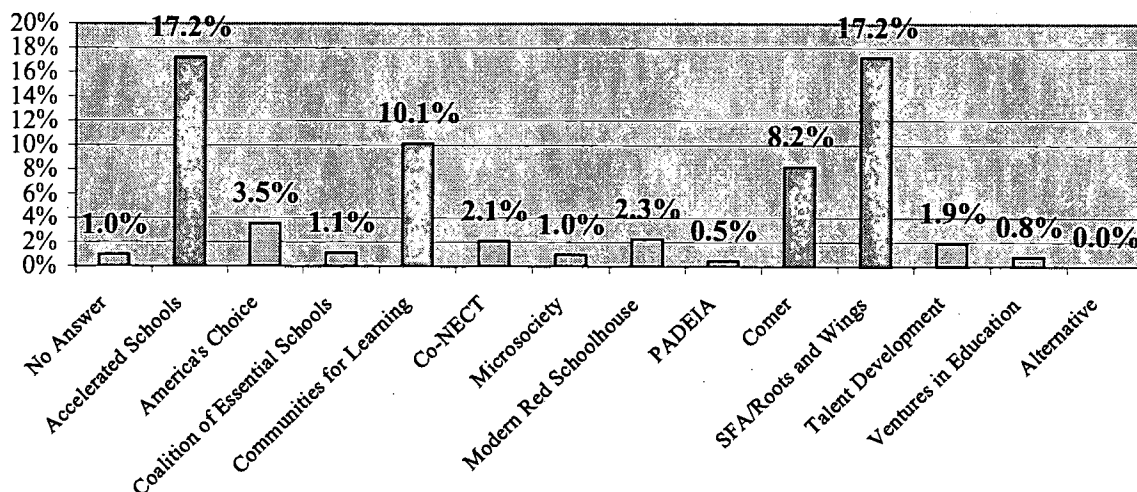
Figure 5. Choice of School Reform Models Among WSR School Respondents
N=415

As Figure 5 reveals, no one model was the predominant choice among WSR schools. However, 78.8 percent of sampled Cohort 1, 2 and mid-year schools chose four models: (1) Success For All/Roots and Wings, (2) Accelerated Schools, (3) Communities for Learning, and (4) Comer. Only one of the four models chosen provided a curriculum for schools to implement and could be said to be a "content" model (See Figure 6). Thus, many schools chose WSR models that focused more on process and instructional principles than curriculum. Model selection is important because it is likely to impact whether or to what degree student achievement gains are made. For example, in the absence of a well-conceived, well-aligned curriculum, selection of a model that assists with curricula and instructional alignment over a model that provides a curriculum may well impact a school's performance in improving student achievement.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the four most frequently chosen WSR models of schools in cohorts 1, 2 and mid-year.

Model	WSR Schools' Selections (by percent)	Governance Strategies	Classroom Strategies	Curricula Materials
Accelerated Schools	25.7	X	X	
Success for All/Roots and Wings	25.7			X
Communities for Learning	15.1		X	
Comer	12.3	X		

Figure 6. Top Four WSR Models Selected

- **Accelerated Schools** focus on conducting an "Inquiry Process" during the first year of implementation in order to set improvement priorities and establish a governance structure to investigate challenges and develop solutions. Accelerated Schools also implements an instructional component called "Powerful Learning" that is based on traditional gifted and talented teaching approaches.

- **Success for All//Roots and Wings** is a research-based approach toward learning that provides schools with curricula materials in reading, writing, language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. The model also offers professional development in proven strategies for instruction, assessment and classroom management; one-to-one tutoring for primary children who need it; and active family support approaches.

- **Communities for Learning** has two fundamental principles: (1) to link schools to other learning environments such as libraries, museums, and workplaces, and (2) to individualize instruction in the classroom by using a variety of instructional strategies and grouping patterns.

- **Comer** has three mechanisms, three operations and three principles.

  The **three mechanisms for governance structures** are: (1) the school planning and management team, (2) the student and staff support team, and (3) the parent team.

  The **three operations that the teams must perform** are the development of: (1) a comprehensive plan, (2) a staff development plan, and (3) a monitoring and assessment plan.

  The **three guiding principles** are: (1) a no-fault approach to problem solving, (2) forging consensus for decision-making, and (3) collaboration which insists that teachers, support staff and the principal share responsibility for managing the school.

Self-Assessment of the School Implementation Progress

The survey directed toward SMT members requested that respondents assess: (1) their own efforts in implementing WSR, and (2) the support and activities offered by the local school district and the NJ DOE. Respondents were asked to rate their own implementation efforts according to a five-point Likert scale: 1=No Progress, 2=A Little Progress, 3=Some Progress, 4=Significant Progress, and 5=Goals Achieved. Each item received a "mean rating" or average of all respondents and a standard deviation (*SD*) was calculated in order to determine the amount of variation around the mean for each item.

Table 2 presents the results from the SMT survey, matching each survey item to one area of WSR implementation. Respondents to the school surveys reported that "significant progress" (i.e., a mean rating of 4.0) was made in the following categories:

- Planning,
- School Management Team,
- School-based Budgeting, and
- Integration and Alignment of Resources.

In the category of Personnel issues, respondents reported making only "some progress" in the area of having sufficient faculty/staff onboard to support and implement WSR programs and strategies. Anecdotal comments from the open-ended questions suggest that some schools lacked key personnel for implementation of the selected model and highlight some of the WSR implementation challenges faced by schools:

Sample Respondent Quotes

- "We do not have tutors that are required for implementation."
- "The most significant barrier is having to start without one of the most important components—tutors!"
- "The SMT had to provide monies for tutors and the monies were removed by 'higher-ups,' so we haven't any tutors. How is the program expected to be successful if all parts aren't in place?"

Among survey items focused on the academic program, respondents reported that only "some progress" had been made in meeting the academic needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students. This outcome suggests that one of the challenges of WSR is that the needs of certain special needs/minority students might be overlooked while attention is focused on the overall population.[15]

Two items within the components of Student and Family Services and Family Involvement scored below the standard for "significant progress". These items were:

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[15] Another question for further research is: how well do WSR models meet the needs of LEP students?

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- A team in place at school trains parents in volunteer roles, and
- Parents are partners in school-related decisions.

These findings show the challenges of involving parents in meaningful roles at school, especially in roles that affect key school decisions.

Within the Training and Professional Development category, there were a number of training-related areas in which SMTs did <u>not</u> feel "significant progress" had been made. A majority of SMTs surveyed reported that training was not received in the following areas:

- Needs identification for additional programs and services,
- Alignment of curriculum and instruction to state standards,
- Selection of personnel appropriate for the needs of their school, and
- Use of zero-based budgeting processes.

Among the 10 items that focused on the training and professional development of SMTs, a majority of survey respondents felt that they <u>did</u> make significant progress in six areas:

1. Defining roles and responsibilities as team members,
2. Fostering teamwork and building consensus,
3. Conducting a comprehensive needs assessment,
4. Developing realistic improvement goals/strategies,
5. Implementing a WSR model, and
6. Providing professional development to teachers to help them learn how to implement successfully a WSR model.

Findings in this area highlight the need for NJ DOE to provide technical assistance in the areas of identifying needs for additional programs and services, curricula and instructional alignment, personnel hiring and implementing zero-based budgeting processes.

When reviewing the ratings for items within each category of WSR implementation (i.e. planning, governance, school-based budgeting, personnel, academic program, training and professional development, integration and alignment of resources and functions, student and family services, and family involvement) it should be noted that SMTs stated that they had made at least "some progress" in all of the items. Even the lowest rated item (i.e., "received training to select personnel for their schools") received a rating of 3.71, placing this indicator above the "some progress" standard of 3.00.

Table 2

SMT Members' Self-Assessment of WSR Implementation

	M.	SD
Planning		
Comprehensive Needs Assessment Conducted	4.57	0.77
WSR Goals Aligned with State Standards	4.47	0.73
Stakeholders engaged in WSR Planning	4.33	0.80
Informed Search for Model that meets student needs conducted	4.61	0.78
Data used to evaluate WSR and make adjustments/improvements	4.31	0.87
School Management Team		
Developed WSR plan based on needs assessment	4.39	0.82
Involved in development of school based budget	4.33	0.90
Provides input towards development of school based budget	4.40	0.84
Reviews assessments results to determine needs	4.25	0.91
Creates workgroups of SMT and non SMT members	4.23	0.96
Works effectively with other SMT members to accomplish WSR goals	4.46	0.77
Constituted in accordance w/state regulations	4.64	0.60
School-Based Budgeting		
Budget concentrates all resources to WSR	4.44	0.75
Budget reflects assessment of needs and goals	4.40	0.77
Personnel		
Decisions support goals of WSR	4.42	0.76
Sufficient number of faculty/staff to support and implement WSR	3.97	0.98
Academic Program		
School Curriculum aligns w/NJ DOE Core Curriculum Content Standard	4.58	0.66
Instructional strategies enable students to achieve state standards	4.42	0.72
Classroom assessments provide ongoing information on student performance	4.25	0.78
WSR aligns to the state standards	4.55	0.67
WSR meets academic needs of special ed. students	4.10	0.91
WSR meets academic needs of LEP students	3.96	0.99
WSR meets academic needs of gifted and talented	4.08	1.01

N=415

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Table 2 (cont.)

SMT Members' Self-Assessment of WSR Implementation

	M	SD
Training and Professional Development		
SMT trained in roles and responsibilities as team members	4.35	0.85
SMT trained in teamwork and consensus building	4.33	0.88
SMT trained to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment	4.04	1.02
SMT trained to identify needs for additional programs and services	3.95	1.03
SMT trained to develop realistic improvement goals/strategies	4.01	0.99
SMT trained to align curriculum and instruction to state standards	3.99	1.04
SMT trained to select personnel for their school	3.71	1.21
SMT trained to use zero-based budgeting[16] processes	3.75	1.24
SMT trained to implement WSR model	4.19	0.93
Teachers received professional development to implement WSR model	4.10	0.90
Integration and Alignment of Resources and Functions		
Staff roles and responsibilities are coordinated to support WSR	4.30	0.79
Financial resources are coordinated to support WSR	4.24	0.80
School structures support WSR efforts	4.29	0.82
School provides safe orderly environment	4.31	0.83
Relationships between student and staff are positive & prod.	4.34	0.79
Student and Family Services		
Team in place at school involves parent involvement	4.27	0.85
Team in place at school trains parents in volunteer roles	3.75	1.18
Team in place at school intervenes to resolve student issues	4.16	0.95
Team in place at school acts on teacher referrals and recommendations	4.23	0.94
Team in place at school links student health and social service agencies	4.26	0.90
Program in place at school refers students to alternative educational services	4.16	0.95
Program in place to provide student code of conduct adequate security	4.29	0.85
Program in place to provide health and social services essential for achievement	4.24	0.88
Family Involvement		
Parents are partners in decisions related to school	3.82	1.01
Parents are welcome in the school	4.60	0.64
School provides ongoing support to strengthen school-parent-student relationships	4.30	0.88

N=415

SMTs Assessment of District and NJ DOE Support of WSR

The first section of the SMT survey focused on SMT members' self assessment. Table 3 shows means and standard deviations for two sections in which respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the activities and services provided by local districts and NJ DOE. Items were

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[16] Zero-based budgeting process—a means of identifying inefficiencies and ensuring that money is allocated toward necessary programs and services. It is a mechanism to reallocate money away from ineffective programs to support more effective programs.

rated according to a four-point Likert scale: 1=Not at All, 2=To Some Extent, 3=To a Moderate Extent, and 4=To a Great Extent. The results suggest that SMTs felt that districts provided at least "a moderate" extent of support for WSR (mean=3.0).

Table 3

<u>SMTs Assessment of District and NJ DOE Support of WSR</u>

	M	*SD*
District Support		
Aligning district and state standards to implement WSR	3.51	0.71
Providing professional development to implement WSR	3.51	0.76
Developing and implementing school budget	3.48	0.74
Hiring personnel to support WSR		0.87
Providing performance data for decision-making	3.25	0.82
Providing demographic data for decision	3.26	0.83
NJ DOE Support		
Written guidelines and materials	3.25	1.17
NJ DOE sponsored regional meeting	3.12	1.16
Support and training provided by SRI	2.78	1.32
WSR Start-Up grants/Incentives for Success for All		1.59
WSR model selection showcases	2.80	1.43

N=415

SMTs rated districts highest (mean=3.51) in the area of the alignment of state and district standards and lowest (mean=3.25) in the area of providing performance and demographic data for decision making. While it is positive that districts can provide the support needed to align curriculum to state content standards, it is <u>crucial</u> that districts also provide meaningful data to the schools in order to allow data-based decisions about continuous improvement strategies to be made[17] (Fuhrman, 1999). As mentioned earlier, this is an area where district staff will have to learn new ways to think about and do their jobs.

SMTs assessed NJ DOE assistance with materials and guidelines as supporting WSR to a "moderate extent". SMTs assessment of activities/strategies developed by NJ DOE to assist in implementation of WSR revealed that three out of five items supported WSR to "some extent" only. These items were:

- Providing School Review and Improvement (SRI) team support for schools (mean=2.78),
- Providing start-up grants and incentives (mean=2.63), and
- Providing WSR model showcases (mean=2.80).

Of these three areas, the most important for future NJ DOE assistance is the SRI support given to schools. The other two areas, start-up grants and incentives and WSR model showcases, were

[17] A new approach that involves school-site determination of and planning around specific performance targets, such as improved test scores in reading and math.

WSR start-up strategies. As of this writing, all Abbott schools have passed the start-up phase. In this context, it makes sense for the state to concentrate its efforts on the quality and stability of support that SRI teams provide. While anecdotal, following are some comments from the open-ended question on the school level survey on the kind of technical assistance school personnel believe NJ DOE should offer:

Sample Respondent Quotes

On SRI team support:

- "To be available especially during the planning, developing and actual writing of the budget to support and clarify in whatever way needed."

On the need for stability:

- "To continue our association with our SRI contact, [*first and last name removed for privacy*], who has developed an educated background knowledge of our school. It is essential to have stability in state people."

- "More consistency in the people working for NJ DOE. DOE members who are SRI need to become familiar with the school(s) they work with."

On little contact with the SRI:

- "We need more communication with NJ DOE representatives as we have had very little."

- "More contact with SRI representative. We had great contact our first year, but not the second. I felt more informed the first year."

- "We need a SRI person who will be able to meet with us frequently during the budget process. Last year we received very little guidance."

- "Inconsistent support from SRI. Staff constantly changes—no contact from SRI."

- "Little or no onsite support from SRI due to change in position for SRI members."

Table 4 provides means and standard deviations for the items that assessed the impact of the state funding for WSR. The items were scored according to a five-point Likert scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

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Table 4

Response Ranges and SMTs Assessment of the Impact of State Funding for WSR

Impact of State Funding	M	SD
Sufficient textbooks, materials, and supplies for all students	4.19	0.87
Additional teachers to reduce class size to state mandated rates	3.76	1.20
Sufficient computers to meet state ratio of 1:5	3.33	1.39
Sufficient security guards and equipment	4.10	1.00
Sufficient training on the CCCS and other pertinent WSR topics	3.89	0.94
Support for remedial services	3.79	1.20
Health and social service referral and other support services	3.92	0.98

N=415

The outcomes for these items imply that SMTs have a moderately positive view of the impact of state funding in these key areas. One area, the provision of sufficient computers to meet the state ratio of 1:5, was less positive than the other items and indicates that the purchase of computers has not kept pace with other items in this category of WSR.

The overall theme suggests that SMTs were somewhat ambivalent concerning their views on the impact of state funding. A primary reason for this ambivalence is reported by respondents who noted that funding was unavailable to them for WSR implementation. According to respondents, insufficient funding occurred for various reasons, among these:

Sample Respondent Quotes

- "Insufficient funding for all aspects of the program, i.e., tutors. Budget cuts."

- "In the budget, the SMT had to provide monies for tutors and the monies were removed by higher-ups so we haven't any tutors. How is the program expected to be successful if all parts aren't in place?"

- "During the 2000-2001 school year, we have limited funding (mid-year cohort II). We are looking for grants, etc., to support needed committee work and professional development activities during the year."

- "The barrier has been regular budget cuts that prevent implementation including tutors that are suggested by the program."

While anecdotal, these comments may shed some light on why such items received low ratings. What the data are unable to reveal is whether or not funding levels are or are not sufficient to buy computers or hire additional teachers to reduce class size. The central question is whether barriers toward WSR implementation hinge on a lack of funding or the need to reallocate funding currently available? In any case, respondents have raised an area of concern because the crux of the Abbott decision is to provide the funding necessary to provide a "thorough and efficient" education in the 30 special needs districts. While this discussion does not suggest that current Abbott funding levels are inadequate, it does point out that this is an area for further

study by NJ DOE. The reporting of insufficient funds may mean that districts and SMT members need further training in budget development and reallocation of resources. SMTs self-rating of progress made on implementing zero-based budgeting was very low and is another indication that this may be an area where the state should focus assistance.

Implementation Assessment Indices for Districts and NJ DOE

In order to make more general statements concerning SMTs' overall assessment of support provided by local districts and the NJ DOE, indices were created. Individual survey items were combined into three scales representing each of the major topic areas (i.e., assessment of district support, assessment of NJ DOE support and the impact of state funding). In essence, the resulting scales (district support, NJ DOE support and impact of state funding) provide "mean scores" for each of the areas.

Tables 5a and 5b reveal the reliability statistics for each of the three areas, followed by descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation).

Table 5a

Reliability Statistics and General Statistics for Assessment Indices (District and State Support)

Indices for Assessment of Services from the Districts and the NJ DOE	Reliability (Standardized Alpha)	Number of Items	Value Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
District Support	0.904	6	1-4	3.39	0.62
NJ DOE Support	0.756	5	1-4	2.83	0.97

Table 5b

Reliability Statistics and General Statistics for Assessment Indices (Impact of State Funding)

Index for Assessment of Funding	Reliability (Standardized Alpha)	Number of Items	Value Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Impact of State Funding	0.839	7	1-5	3.89	0.74

As Table 5a shows, each of the indices satisfies the "a=0.60" standard [18] for scales. Table 5a reveals that the level of support SMTs received from NJ DOE was assessed at a lower level (mean= 2.83) than the support SMTs received from districts (mean= 3.39). According to the four-point Likert scale for these items (1=Not at All, 2=To Some Extent, 3=To a Moderate Extent, and 4=To a Great Extent Again), SMTs rated NJ DOE as supporting WSR to less than "a moderate extent." This point emphasizes the need for NJ DOE to improve its assistance and guidance to SMTs in implementing WSR.

The District Perspective on Whole School Reform

The Composition and Experience Level of District Staff

As mentioned earlier, in order for district administrators to support and assist Abbott schools as they translate WSR policy and CCCS into effective instruction, management and knowledge, district administrators must change the way the think about their jobs and shift from:

- Centralized bureaucracies to decentralized institutions that manage separate, autonomous schools.
- Categorical planning and budgeting to consolidated planning and budgeting.
- A management perspective focused on monitoring program compliance to a technical assistance perspective focused on continuous improvement.
- Organizations rich in data that are not readily accessible to organizations able to help district and school staff organize, analyze and manipulate data in order to permit educators to make meaning about student learning.

After the Abbott decision was announced, each low-income, Abbott-designated district in New Jersey was responsible for hiring and maintaining a staff of administrators who would provide support for schools implementing WSR models.

Figure 7 presents the composition of the districts' WSR support teams by position. [19]

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[18] Alpha reliability is a measure of the reliability of a scale of a set of items. A sufficient alpha statistic (a=0.60) indicates that differences in respondents' scores on a scale or set of items are due to differences in respondents' opinions and not a measure of problems with the clarity or readability of the actual tems.

[19] The variation in key factors for each district (student enrollment, number of WSR schools, available financial and human resources, etc.) resulted in wide variations in the structure of each district's WSR support team. Therefore, the overall numbers are not necessarily representative of many districts.
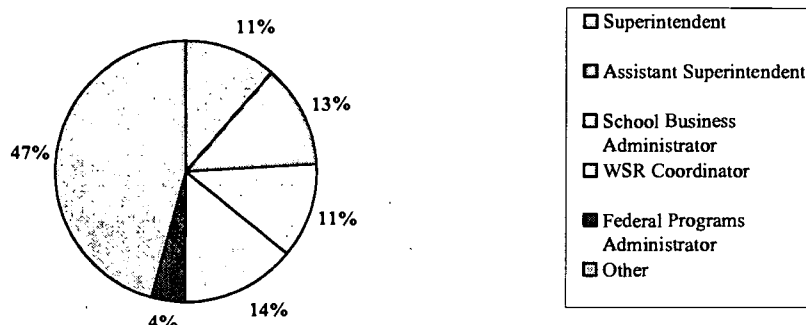
Figure 7. Distribution of Positions Held by District WSR Staff Survey Respondents
N=70

As Figure 7 indicates, the largest category of district staff that supervised WSR schools was the "other" category. According to NJ DOE staff, many of the district staff involved in supervising the implementation of WSR also were involved with other state and local initiatives (e.g., reading, poverty, family involvement, et cetera) and were often listed as "other" because of the lack of an accurate position category. Yet two years after the Abbott ruling, it also may indicate that central office staff has not restructured sufficiently to fully support WSR.

As is the case with SMTs, experience is an important consideration when assessing the implementation of a challenging program like WSR. Just as SMTs benefit from having experienced educators and staff, school districts benefit from having administrators who are familiar with the characteristics, strengths and needs of their local districts.

Districts with less prepared and experienced staff may face additional obstacles in implementing WSR. One example may be that inexperienced staff may not know how to shift from a district perspective to a school perspective. For example, rather than providing training and professional development to bilingual staff working with Limited English Proficient students throughout the district, they may now have to provide training and professional development for teachers of these students within the context of a specific model implemented at the school.

Figure 8 compares the experience levels of district staff that oversee the WSR program to those of SMT members at the schools.
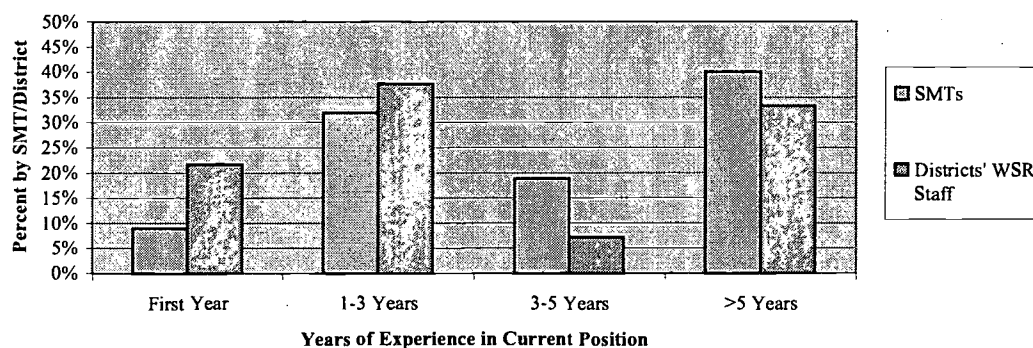
Figure 8. Comparison of Tenure of SMT and District WSR Staff Survey Respondents[20]
N=70

As Figure 8 illustrates, the district staff involved with WSR tend to be less experienced than the SMT members at the school level. The fact that over 60 percent of district staff entered their positions since the start of WSR (less than 3 years before this survey was administered) highlights some possible issues regarding the organizational capacity of the school districts to provide effective support to WSR schools.

Districts' Effectiveness in Implementing WSR

The survey provided opportunities for WSR district staff to assess: (1) their own efforts in supporting WSR schools, and (2) the support and activities offered by NJ DOE in supporting WSR. The district staff were asked to rate their own implementation efforts according to a five-point Likert scale: 1=No Progress, 2=A Little Progress, 3=Some Progress, 4=Significant Progress, and 5=Goals Achieved. Each item received a "mean rating" or arithmetic average for all respondents.

As Table 6 reveals, all of the items indicated at least some progress since WSR began.

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[20] SMT and district surveys included a question regarding school tenure (i.e., "How long have you served at the school in your current position?"). Due to a formatting error, two of the answers overlapped (First year, 1-3 years, 3-5 years, 5 or more years). We acknowledge that there was likely some confusion among the respondents in their attempts to answer this item correctly. Thus, responses to this item must be considered carefully.

Table 6

Self-Assessment of WSR Implementation by District Staff

Planning	M	SD
Making changes in central administration to support school-based management	3.85	0.93
Hiring technology coordinators to support implementation of WSR	4.30	0.89
Hiring drop-out prevention officers to support implementation of WSR	4.31	0.88
Hiring health/social service coordinators to support implementation of WSR	4.26	0.85
Hiring teachers to support implementation of WSR	4.33	0.79
Hiring security guards to support implementation of WSR	4.49	0.69
Hiring certified tutors to support implementation of WSR	3.80	1.30
Hiring school facilitators to support implementation of WSR	4.44	0.88
Providing effective principal leadership	4.05	0.76
Insuring full implementation of school-based management	3.92	0.84
Providing access to training and technical support to SMTs in their roles and responsibilities	3.92	0.90
Providing access to training and technical support to SMTs in teamwork and consensus building	3.77	0.86
Providing access to training and technical support to SMTs to conduct comprehensive needs assessments	3.65	0.98
Providing access to training and technical support to SMTs to develop goals and strategies to identify needs for additional services		0.86
Providing access to training and technical support to SMTs to use zero-based budgeting processes	3.66	0.92
School's budget concentrates all resources to WSR	3.44	0.98
Schools budget reflects assessment of needs and goals	3.42	0.92
Allocating sufficient time and resources to SMTs to carry out their work	3.83	0.88
Ensuring that reform models are implemented to support district goals and state standards	3.68	0.95
Ensuring curriculum coordination and articulated across grade levels	3.80	0.92
Providing professional development to school staff to implement WSR effectively	3.65	0.87
Providing timely and useful data to schools for use in assessing student and school needs	3.76	0.91
Ensuring that budgets dedicate resources to support school goals and strategies effectively	3.64	1.00
Establishing alternative programs to meet the needs of high school students who have not succeeded in traditional learning environments	3.95	0.98
Implementing a district-wide security plan to create safe and orderly school environments	4.14	0.80 ·

N=70

Areas that experienced the least amount of progress included:

- Training and technical support to SMTs (means=3.58, 3.65, 3.77, 3.92),
- Budgeting issues (means=3.42, 3.44, 3.66),
- Professional development for school staff (mean=3.65), and
- Provision of data to schools for analysis (mean=3.76).

In the survey of SMT members at the school level, the areas needing the greatest improvement centered on training and support of SMT members. These findings appear to emphasize the importance of building the organizational capacity of district administrators to enable them in turn to provide SMT members and other school staff with the technical assistance needed that will enable them to effectively manage their schools.

Table 7 presents means and standard deviations for districts' and SMTs assessments of how helpful NJ DOE support and products have been in supporting the implementation of WSR. The items were rated according to a four-point Likert scale: 1=Not at All, 2=To Some Extent, 3=To a Moderate Extent, and 4=To a Great Extent. As was the case with SMTs, district staff felt that on three out of five items, providing SRI team support for schools, providing start-up grants and incentives and sponsoring the model showcases, NJ DOE has supported WSR "to some extent" only. Again, these findings reveal key areas for NJ DOE to emphasize when planning future technical assistance.

Table 7

Districts' and SMTs Assessment of NJ DOE's WSR Support

NJ DOE Support for WSR-Schools	SMTs M (SD)	Districts M (SD)
Written guidelines and materials	3.25 (1.17)	3.27 (0.92)
NJ DOE-sponsored regional meeting	3.12 (1.16)	3.12 (0.95)
Support and training provided by SRI	2.78 (1.32)	2.84 (1.17)
WSR Start-Up grants/Incentives for Success for All/Roots and Wings	2.63 (1.59)	2.71 (1.36)
WSR model selection showcases	2.80* (1.43)	2.41 (1.25)

*Significance level p<0.05

Table 8 also includes districts' assessments of services and products provided by NJ DOE specifically to districts. None of the areas were rated as having helped districts "to a moderate extent." In particular, in regards to providing for "particularized needs"[21] of districts, NJ DOE received its lowest rating (1.31) on any item evaluated by SMTs and districts. This finding suggests that districts believed that NJ DOE did not provide the training needed for districts to submit a "particularized needs" application in order to meet the specific and unique needs faced by individual districts. This emphasizes the importance of NJ DOE providing quality training in a timely fashion.

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[21] NJ DOE defines particularized needs in the following way: If students are unable to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) because of needs that are not met by the WSR model or required programs for secondary schools, the school's SMT, through its local board of education, should submit a proposed programmatic plan to address the need.

Table 8

Districts' Assessments of NJ DOE Support

NJ DOE Support for WSR-Districts	M	SD
WSR implementation	2.83	1.13
Particularized needs	1.31	1.33
School-based budgets	2.88	1.08
Required programs for secondary schools	2.48	1.41

SMT N=415
District Staff N=70

NJ DOE Perspective on Whole School Reform

The Distribution and Experience Level of District Staff

The staff of NJ DOE faced formidable obstacles in implementing the conditions of the Abbott decision: (1) the short, timeline between the Abbott decision (May 1998) and the beginning of the 1998 school year; (2) NJ DOE efforts to change from a monitoring role to one of providing technical support to schools and districts; (3) schools' and districts' capacity to take on more responsibility for managing schools (i.e., supervising budgets, choosing school reform models, et cetera); and (4) the challenging task of translating the Abbott decision into a well-defined series of action steps. Understanding the experiences and lessons learned by NJ DOE while implementing WSR are important not only for improving the effectiveness of WSR implementation in New Jersey but also helps to inform other state agencies of the challenges involved in systemic educational reform.

As stated in the Methods section, NJ DOE staff members completed surveys that assessed their experiences in overseeing WSR implementation at the school level. As shown in Figure 9, throughout the first 2+ years of WSR, two of the NJ DOE respondents served as the Assistant Commissioner for Student Services, two other staff members served as Director of the Office of Program Review and Improvement, one staff person as Special Assistant to the Commissioner on School Improvement and three NJ DOE staff served as Managers at each of the Program Improvement Regional Centers.

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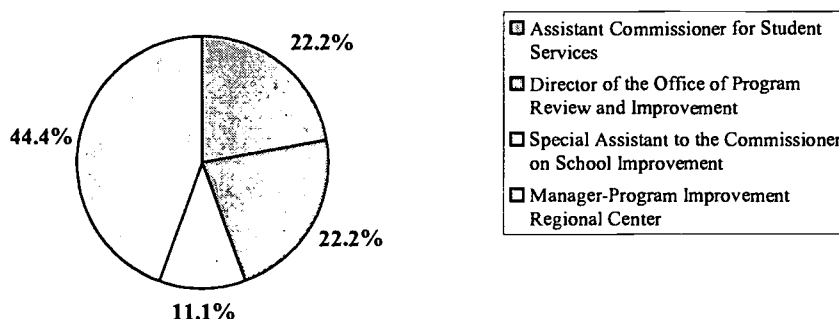
Figure 9. Distribution of NJ DOE Staff
N=7

The first section of the survey asked NJ DOE staff to assess the districts' support of WSR at the school level. As Table 9 reveals, NJ DOE staff typically had a less favorable view of the impact of the districts' efforts in supporting the WSR schools. (Survey items were rated according to a four-point Likert scale: 1=Not at All, 2=To Some Extent, 3=To a Moderate Extent, and 4=To a Great Extent). NJ DOE staff gave districts a particularly low rating on developing and implementing the school budget and in providing performance and demographic data for decision making. This correlates well with findings on both the school and district-level surveys and restates the importance of the state providing quality and timely training to district and school staff members in these areas.

Table 9

NJ DOE Staff Assessment of Districts' Support of WSR

District Support for WSR-Schools	SMTs M	NJ DOE M
Implementing WSR by aligning district and state standards	3.51	3.17
Providing professional development to implement WSR	3.51	3.29
Developing and implementing school budget	3.48*	2.86
Hiring personnel to support WSR	3.31	2.86
Providing performance data for decision-making	3.25*	2.29
Providing demographic data for decision-making	3.26*	2.29

*Significance level p<0.05
NJ DOE N=7
SMT N=415

Table 10 displays SMT and NJ DOE assessments of SMTs efforts to implement WSR. Survey items were rated according to a five-point Likert scale: 1=No Progress, 2=A Little Progress, 3=Some Progress, 4=Significant Progress, and 5=Goals Achieved. Each item received a "mean rating" or arithmetic average for all respondents. As is evident in the table, NJ DOE typically

had significantly lower assessments of the efforts of SMTs, compared to the SMTs' self-assessments.[22]

Table 10

Rating Scale and Comparison of Assessments of SMTs Efforts in WSR

Assessment of SMTs Efforts in Implementing WSR	SMTs M	NJ DOE M
Conducting needs assessment	4.52*	2.29
Goal setting	4.32*	2.86
Involving community	4.26*	2.86
Choosing the reform model	4.58	3.86
Using data	4.11*	2.17
Using the needs assessment	4.18*	2.14
Working together	4.40*	3.14
School budget is utilized to support WSR	4.25*	3.00
Personnel and staff decisions support WSR	4.22*	2.86
Curriculum aligned to NJ CCCS	4.57*	3.14
Instructional strategies enable students to reach standards	4.39*	3.00
Classroom assessment supports the objectives of WSR	4.23*	2.80
WSR model meets the needs of all students	3.99*	2.71
SMT training provided to members	3.77*	3.43
Faculty and staff received professional development to implement WSR	3.81*	3.43
Teachers received professional development to implement practices	3.90*	3.33
Staff roles and responsibilities are coordinated with WSR plan	4.06*	2.86
Financial resources and school structure aligned with WSR	3.99*	2.86
Schools provide students and staff with safe environment	4.30*	3.20
Relationships between students and staff are positive	4.30	3.40
School conducts needs assessment for families and communities	N/A	2.67
School provides needed services to families	4.02*	2.50
Parents and guardians are involved in decision making	3.66*	2.71
Parents and guardians are welcome in the schools	4.54*	3.29
School provides support to strengthen home-school partnerships	4.12*	3.00

*Significance level $p<0.05$
NJ DOE N=7
SMT N=415

Items for which the greatest variation was shown include: conducting the needs assessment, using data and using the needs assessment. Other areas of variation in perspectives included: setting goals; defining staff roles and responsibilities; making personnel decisions; establishing budget and school structure; providing services to families; and involving parents in decision-making roles. These differences reveal that NJ DOE's greatest concerns regarding the efforts of SMTs center on the roles and responsibilities that historically were the domain of districts and state education agencies (budget, personnel, goals/objectives, parent programs, et cetera).

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[22] It should be noted that SMT responses totaled 415 compared to the sample size of 7 for NJ DOE staff. However, the differences do convey the disparate views of SMTs' effectiveness in implementing WSR from representative samples of each population. NJ DOE also provides the viewpoint of support and oversight for WSR, adding balance to the perspective of SMTs, who function as practitioners at the school level.

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These results also may reflect NJ DOE staff knowledge of the challenges in managing schools, for which many teachers, administrators and parents may not be well prepared. It also speaks to the obstacles that organizations often face when personnel must fundamentally change the way they work. In the case of WSR, school staff need to acquire new knowledge and skills in order to manage schools for improved student achievement.

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Figure 10. Rating Scale and Comparison of Assessments of SMTs Efforts in WSR

	1	2	3	4	5

Conducting needs assessment

Goal setting

Involving community

Choosing the reform model

Using data

Using the needs assessment

Working together

School budget is utilized to support WSR

Personnel and staff decisions support WSR

Curriculum aligned to NJ CCCS

Instructional strategies enable students to reach standards

Classroom assessment supports the objectives of WSR

WSR model meets the needs of all students

SMT training provided to members

Faculty and staff received professional development to implement WSR

Teachers received professional development to implement practices

Staff roles and responsibilities are coordinated with WSR plan

Financial resources and school structure aligned with WSR

Schools provide students & staff with safe environment

Relationships between students and staff are positive

School conducts needs assessment for families and communities

School provides needed services to families

Parents and guardians are involved in decision making

Parents and guardians are welcome in the schools

School provides support to strengthen home-school partnerships

◆— SMTs ◻— NJ DOE

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Table 11

Assessment of NJ DOE Support of WSR by NJ DOE, Districts' and SMTs

NJ DOE Support for WSR	SMTs M (SD)	Districts M (SD)	NJ DOE M (SD)
Written guidelines and materials	3.25 (1.17)	3.27 (0.92)	3.71 (0.48)
NJ DOE-sponsored regional meeting	3.12 (1.16)	3.12 (0.95)	3.57 (0.79)
Support and training provided by SRI	2.78* (1.32)	2.84* (1.17)	4.00 (0.00)
WSR Start-Up grants/Incentives for Success for All/Roots and Wings	2.63* (1.59)	2.71 (1.36)	3.43 (0.79)
WSR model selection showcases	2.80 (1.43)	2.41 (1.25)	

*Significance level $p<0.05$
NJ DOE N=7
SMT N=415
District Staff N=70

As Table 11 depicts, NJ DOE consistently rated its own performance in supporting WSR as higher than assessments rendered by SMTs and districts. (Survey items were rated according to a four-point Likert scale: 1=Not at All, 2=To Some Extent, 3=To a Moderate Extent, and 4=To a Great Extent). This was particularly true regarding SRI training and start-up grants/incentives. This outcome is a mirror image of the NJ DOE appraisal of SMTs and districts, in which self-assessments are typically higher than ratings of observers. Differences in self-assessment from the views of others also sheds light on the disconnect that exists between the perspectives of the three reform groups. Also, while it is important to consider a group's assessment of its own efforts in providing services to others, in many cases it is the perspective of the clients or beneficiaries of the services that determines whether the efforts will have a lasting impact. Acknowledging this point, NJ DOE must focus on improving the quality of training provided by SRI. As pointed out earlier, the model selection showcases and grants and incentives for WSR were start-up strategies employed by NJ DOE. Given that all of the Abbott schools are past the early implementation stage, these services should probably be de-emphasized or removed entirely from consideration.

Figure 11. Assessment of NJ DOE Support of WSR by NJ DOE, Districts' and SMTs

SMTs ◆ Districts □ NJ DOE

Written guidelines and materials NJ DOE-sponsored regional meeting Support and training provided by SRI WSR Start-Up grants/Incentives for Success for All/Roots and Wings WSR model selection showcases
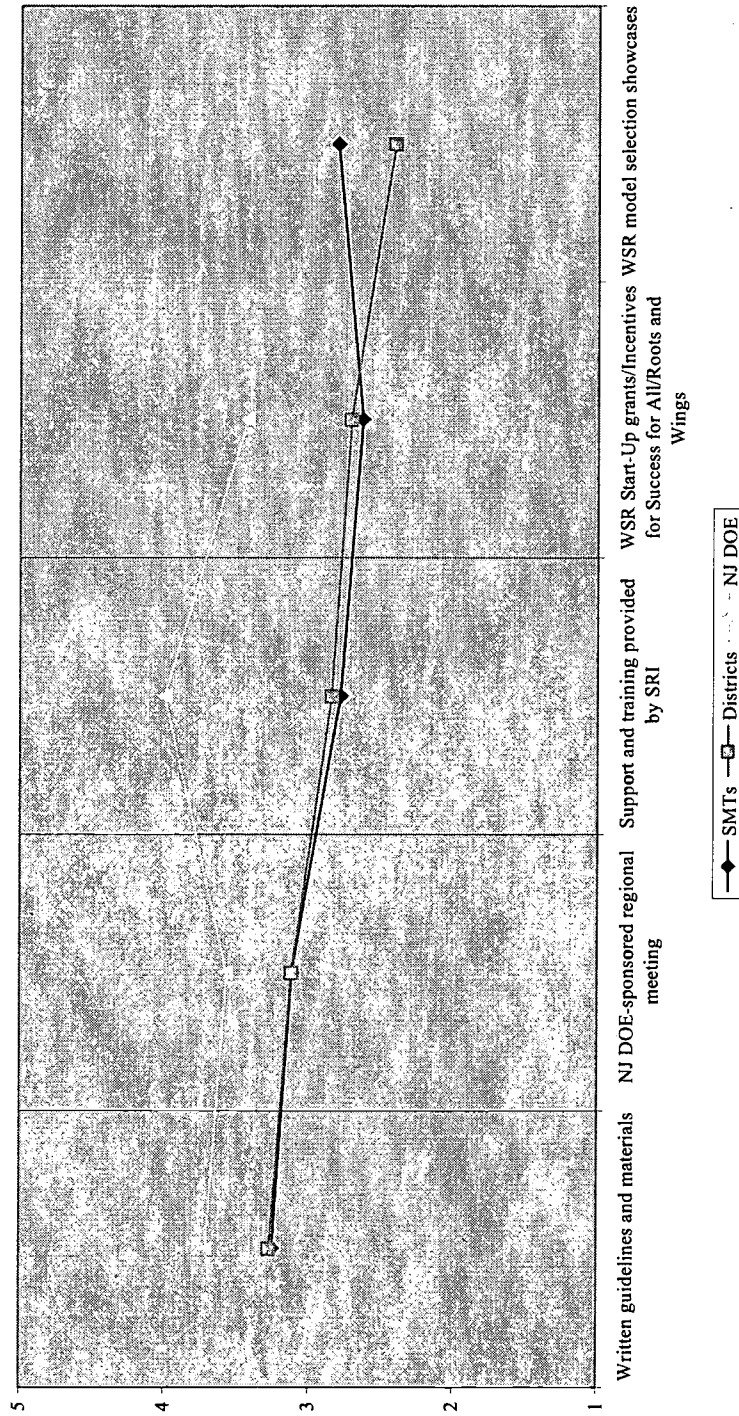
IV. Conclusion

Overview

The ultimate goal of the Whole School Reform policy is to raise student achievement in 30 high poverty districts in New Jersey. The policy is unique in that the state not only has increased funding in these "special needs" districts, as per the Abbott decision, but also crafted a school restructuring policy that is a *de facto* model for building organizational capacity[23] at the school level. Individual school reform is a daunting undertaking when one considers the limited success schools have had over the past thirty years in improving the academic achievement of high poverty students. WSR strives to scale up reform in over 300 Abbott schools.

This study has concentrated on measuring the implementation progress of WSR programs and strategies in the Abbott schools from the perspectives of school, district and state stakeholders. Through measurement of stakeholder perceptions of WSR implementation progress, this study is able to inform the NJ DOE about the needs of both Abbott district and school stakeholders as they change the way they conceptualize and perform their jobs.

As was discussed in the introduction, in order for DOE and district administrators to provide effective support and assistance to schools, they have to learn new ways to think about and do their jobs. Minimally both the individuals and the organizations they work in must shift from:

- Centralized bureaucracies to decentralized institutions that manage separate, autonomous schools.
- Categorical planning and budgeting to consolidated planning and budgeting.
- A management perspective focused on monitoring program compliance to a technical assistance perspective focused on continuous improvement.
- Organizations rich in data that are not readily accessible to organizations able to help district and school staff organize, analyze and manipulate data in order to permit educators to make meaning about student learning.[24]

This is by no means an easy task! This study can assist NJ DOE in targeting the type of assistance and support needed by district staff to provide the educational direction and leadership schools need in order to transform into effective collective enterprises.

Study Questions and Findings

This study focused on four overarching questions about WSR implementation. Findings are highlighted in this section.

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[23] As outlined earlier in this report, WSR program and strategies address the Newmann et al., ingredients of organizational capacity: teacher knowledge and skills, effective leadership; technical and financial resources; and autonomy to make decisions according to the local context.

[24] Bernhardt, Victoria L., 1998. Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement.

1. **What perceptions do members of School Management Teams (SMTs) have of the progress of Whole School Reform implementation?**

Overall, SMT members felt that they had made "significant progress" in all components of WSR implementation (i.e., planning, governance, school-based budgeting, personnel, academic program, training and professional development, integration and alignment of resources and functions, school environment, student and family services, and family involvement). Yet analysis of individual items within each component revealed that "significant progress" was <u>not</u> made in the following areas:
- A sufficient number of faculty/staff to implement fully and support the WSR program;
- Adoption of an academic program that meets the needs of LEP students;
- Training/professional development in the following areas: needs identification of programs and services; alignment of curriculum and instruction to state standards; personnel selection appropriate to the school; and use of zero-based budgeting processes;
- A school-based team that would train parents for volunteer roles (i.e., Student and Family Services); and
- An ongoing effort to involve parents as partners in school-based decision making (i.e., membership on SMT).

2. **What perceptions do district staff have of the progress of Whole School Reform implementation?**

District staff assessing their own progress of WSR implementation reported "some progress" was made in implementing all components of WSR. However, an analysis of individual items identified aspects of WSR implementation in which "less progress" was made. These aspects include:

- Training and technical support to SMTs,
- Budgeting issues,
- Professional development for school staff, and
- Provision of data to schools for purposes of planning and decision-making.

3. **How do SMTs assess the quality of support provided by the districts?**

SMT members rated district support highest in the area of curriculum alignment and weakest in the area of providing performance and demographic data for decision-making.

4. **How do SMTs and district administrators assess the quality of support supplied by the state?**

District and school respondents agreed that there were three areas in which the state provided support for WSR implementation to "some extent" only. These areas were:

- SRI team support for schools,
- Start-up grants and incentives, and
- WSR model showcases.

Of these three areas, the NJ DOE is urged to focus on the first only – SRI team support for schools. The reason for this is fairly straightforward: now that all Abbott schools have begun WSR implementation, the other two areas are pre-implementation strategies and are no longer needed.

Lessons Regarding Organizational Capacity for School Reform

As stated earlier, this study is predicated on the premise that *schools cannot take responsibility for improving student achievement if the organizational capacity necessary to work effectively as a collaborative enterprise is not in place.* In this report, we demonstrate how and in what ways WSR strategies are related to the elements of organizational capacity defined in the literature.

We also point out, however, that WSR policy, with its specific focus on building the organizational capacity of schools, has not addressed the needs of district administrators or NJ DOE staff in reinventing their roles so that they might provide the technical assistance that schools need to implement WSR successfully. We point out that it is equally important to realize that the NJ DOE and district administrators need to develop their own capacity at both the individual and institutional levels if they are to provide educational direction and leadership to advance WSR at the school level.

The areas where we postulate that district administrators and DOE staff need to build their own capacity are areas where respondents reported "less progress" for WSR implementation (i.e., training and technical support to SMTs, budgeting issues, professional development for school staff, and provision of data to schools for analysis). It is for this reason that our recommendations provide suggestions for technical assistance in these areas.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, it is recommend that NJ DOE target two areas for assistance and support of the implementation of WSR in Abbott districts and schools: (1) continue to provide ongoing technical assistance to district and school level administrators and to community organizations that can support WSR, and (2) continue to conduct additional research on the implementation of WSR. In terms of presentation, each recommendation is paired with the particular stakeholder group it is designed to serve: district, school and community members. Each recommendation also is presented by technical assistance and research categories.

At the district level, we recommend that the NJ DOE provide technical assistance to district-level administrators as follows:

- Work with districts to design training for SMT members on how to hire personnel appropriate for their schools.
- Work with district administrators to design training for curricula alignment to the state content standards.
- Work with district administrators to expand curricula alignment training to include instructional and classroom assessment alignment to the state content standards.

- Continue training on how to collect, organize and analyze comprehensive data at the district level to facilitate administrators' assistance and support of schools engaged in a continuous improvement process for managing student improvement.
- Create a partnership with Abbott districts to create a statewide warehouse for student achievement data. This centralized resource would enable educators at district and school levels to access and manipulate data in order to inform a continuous improvement process aimed at advancing and sustaining student achievement.
- Create a partnership with Abbott districts to develop an accountability system that is primarily based on a philosophy of capacity building (Fullan, 2000), enabling educators to become assessment literate.

At the school level, we recommend that NJ DOE offer training as follows:

- Provide professional development to SMTs that centers on how to identify needs for additional programs and services.
- Continue training in the area of zero-based budget development and budget adjustment to reflect annual assessment of school needs and goals.

At the community level, we recommend that NJ DOE form partnerships as follows:

- Collaborate with organizations that support parent involvement and assist them to implement the elements of WSR. In order for parents to assume volunteer roles and build partnerships with schools, leadership skills must be engendered. Among suggested organizations are:
  o New Jersey PTA
  o ASPIRA of New Jersey, Inc.
  o NJ Association of Parent Coordinators
  o Parent Information Resource Centers

Due to the emphasis of WSR on school restructuring, the state historically has focused on providing ongoing assistance to schools (via PIRCs). However, based on the study findings, we recommend that the NJ DOE expand its technical assistance to include administrators at the district level. The rationale for this is that district administrators must build their own capacity to provide the kind of technical assistance that will help schools organize the human, technical and social resources needed for the successful implementation of WSR. Thus we strongly recommend that the state maintain its support for schools through its SRIs while increasing the level of support for districts.

We recommend further that NJ DOE consider developing a research plan in collaboration with NJ stakeholders. Among questions that merit consideration and additional research are:

- What is the relationship between successful implementation of WSR and improved student achievement?
- How and in what ways does the selection and fidelity of model implementation affect student achievement?

- How might "lessons learned" from each successive cohort advance understanding and improve implementation for cohorts engaging in WSR?
- Considering the large and growing number of LEP and language minority students, how and in what ways do existing WSR models address their needs?

In sum, the data provide useful information to NJ DOE on how to improve the implementation of WSR. An important lesson of the study is that the state needs to increase its technical assistance to districts. The recommended context of this technical assistance emphasizes the need of NJ DOE staff and district administrators to work together in order to build their individual and institutional capacity to support schools in the implementation of WSR. Finally, it is recommended that the state evaluate the WSR implementation process on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that educators have data on which to base future decisions.

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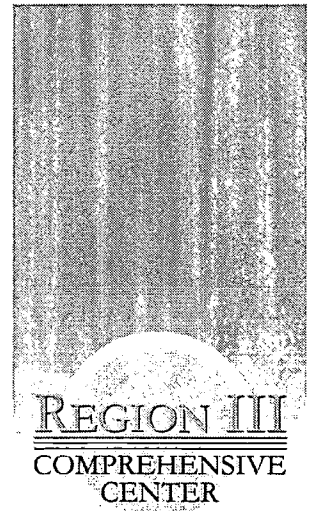
APPENDIX A
NEW JERSEY SCHOOL
STAFF SURVEY

New Jersey Whole School Reform
School Staff Survey
September 2000

School: _____

District: _____

Section I: General Information

1. **What position or role do you represent on your School Management Team (SMT)?** Please mark an x by the choice that best applies to you.

   ❑ Principal

   ❑ Assistant Principal

   ❑ Teacher

   ❑ Teacher Assistant/Paraprofessional

   ❑ Support Staff

   ❑ Parent   } *If you are a parent or a community representative,*

   ❑ Community Representative   *please skip to Question 3*

   ❑ Other

       Please specify _____

2. **How long have you served at the school in your current position?** Please mark an x by the choice that best applies to you.

   ❑ This is my first year

   ❑ 1-3 years

   ❑ 3-5 years

   ❑ More than 5 years

3. **Are you a member of your school's School Management Team (SMT)?** Please mark an x by the choice that best applies to you.

   ❑ Yes

   ❑ No

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4. **What Whole School Reform (WSR) Cohort is your school in?** Please mark an x by the correct choice.

    ❑ Cohort I

    ❑ Cohort II

    ❑ Cohort II Mid-Year

5. **Which of the following reform models is your school implementing?** Please indicate your answer by marking an x by the choice(s) that best describe the reform model(s) being implemented. More than one answer is possible here.

    ❑ Accelerated Schools

    ❑ America's Choice

    ❑ Coalition of Essential Schools

    ❑ Communities for Learning

    ❑ Co-NECT

    ❑ Microsociety

    ❑ Modern Red Schoolhouse

    ❑ PAIDEIA

    ❑ School Development Program (Comer)

    ❑ Success For All/ Roots and Wings

    ❑ Talent Development

    ❑ Ventures in Education

    ❑ Alternative Program Design (home grown)

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Section II: Whole School Reform Implementation

Please indicate the amount of progress you feel your school has made in each of the following aspects of whole school reform by circling the answer that is most appropriate.

A. Planning

	No Progress	A Little Progress	Some Progress	Significant Progress	Goals Achieved
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
1. My school has conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to select a WSR model.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Our WSR Implementation Plan sets realistic goals for improvements that are aligned to the state standards.	1	2	3	4	5
3. A wide range of stakeholders is engaged in the WSR planning process.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My school has conducted an informed search for a reform model that would best meet the needs of students and the school.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My school uses data on an ongoing basis to evaluate WSR implementation and make adjustments and improvements.	1	2	3	4	5

B. School Management Team (SMT)

6. Our SMT has developed the WSR Implementation plan based on the comprehensive needs assessment data.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Our SMT is involved in the development of the school-based budget.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Our SMT provides input towards the development of the school-based budget.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Our SMT reviews student assessment results to determine program and curriculum needs.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Our SMT creates work groups that include both SMT and non-SMT members.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Our SMT members work effectively together to accomplish WSR goals.	1	2	3	4	5

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	No Progress	A Little Progress	Some Progress	Significant Progress	Goals Achieved
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
12. Our SMT is constituted in accordance with state regulations.	1	2	3	4	5

C. School-Based Budgeting

13. The school's budget concentrates all resources to support objectives for meeting WSR goals.	1	2	3	4	5
14. The school's budget is adjusted to reflect annual assessment of school needs and goals.	1	2	3	4	5

D. Personnel

15. School personnel decisions are made to support the goals of the WSR Implementation Plan.	1	2	3	4	5
16. The school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement the WSR Program.	1	2	3	4	5

E. The Academic Program

17. The curriculum in my school is aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Instructional strategies are designed to enable students to achieve state standards.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Classroom assessment practices provide ongoing information about student performance aligned to the standards.	1	2	3	4	5
20. The WSR reform model is aligned to the state standards.	1	2	3	4	5
21. The WSR model meets the academic needs of special education students.	1	2	3	4	5
22. The WSR model meets the academic needs of limited English proficient students.	1	2	3	4	5
23. The WSR model meets the academic needs of gifted and talented students.	1	2	3	4	5

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	No Progress	A Little Progress	Some Progress	Significant Progress	Goals Achieved

F. Training/Professional Development

	No Progress	A Little Progress	Some Progress	Significant Progress	Goals Achieved
24. The SMT has been trained in their roles & responsibilities as team members.	1	2	3	4	5
25. The SMT has been trained in teamwork and consensus building.	1	2	3	4	5
26. The SMT has been trained to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The SMT has been trained to identify needs for additional programs and services	1	2	3	4	5
28. The SMT has been trained to develop sound and realistic improvement goals and strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
29. The SMT has been trained to align curriculum and instruction to the state standards.	1	2	3	4	5
30. The SMT has been trained to select personnel for their schools.	1	2	3	4	5
31. The SMT has been trained to use zero-based budgeting processes.	1	2	3	4	5
32. The SMT has been trained to implement their WSR Plan and model.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Teachers have received sufficient professional development to implement instructional practices aligned to the state standards.	1	2	3	4	5

G. Integration and Alignment of Resources and Functions

	No Progress	A Little Progress	Some Progress	Significant Progress	Goals Achieved
34. Staff roles and responsibilities are coordinated to support the school's WSR efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Financial resources are coordinated to support the school's WSR efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
36. School structures (e.g. schedules and workgroups) are coordinated to support WSR efforts.	1	2	3	4	5

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H. School Environment

	No Progress ▼	A Little Progress ▼	Some Progress ▼	Significant Progress ▼	Goals Achieved ▼
37. The school provides students and teachers with a safe and orderly environment for learning.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Relationships between and among students and staff provide a positive and productive learning and working environment.	1	2	3	4	5

I. Student and Family Services

Items 39–43 are for Elementary School Staff only. If you are Middle School or High School Staff, please go on to items 44–46.

	No Progress ▼	A Little Progress ▼	Some Progress ▼	Significant Progress ▼	Goals Achieved ▼
39. A team is in place at our school that encourages parent involvement.	1	2	3	4	5
40. A team is in place at our school that trains parents for volunteer roles	1	2	3	4	5
41. A team is in place at our school that intervenes to resolve student issues.	1	2	3	4	5
42. A team is in place at our school that acts on teacher referrals or recommendations.	1	2	3	4	5
43. A team is in place at our school that links students to appropriate health and social service agencies.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Programs are in place to identify and refer students in need of alternative educational services.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Programs are in place to provide a student code of conduct and adequate security.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Programs are in place to provide access to health and social services deemed essential for educational achievements of students.	1	2	3	4	5

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J. Family Involvement

	No Progress ▼	A Little Progress ▼	Some Progress ▼	Significant Progress ▼	Goals Achieved ▼
47. Parents/caregivers are partners in decisions related to the school.	1	2	3	4	5
48. Parents/caregivers are welcome in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
49. The school provides ongoing support to strengthen the home school relationship to improve student learning.	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate how the <u>district</u> has supported your efforts to implement WSR by circling the choice that best describes your situation.

	Not at All ▼	To Some Extent ▼	To a Moderate Extent ▼	To a Great Extent ▼
50. My district has supported our efforts to implement WSR by aligning curriculum and district assessments to state standards.	1	2	3	4
51. My district has supported our efforts to implement WSR by providing professional development.	1	2	3	4
52. My district has supported our efforts to implement WSR by supporting the development of a school budget and its implementation.	1	2	3	4
53. My district has supported our efforts to implement WSR by hiring personnel to support WSR.	1	2	3	4
54. My district has supported our efforts to implement WSR by providing meaningful and timely <u>performance</u> data for planning and decision making.	1	2	3	4
55. My district has supported our efforts to implement WSR by providing meaningful and timely <u>demographic</u> data for planning and decision making.	1	2	3	4

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Please indicate how the following NJDOE products and activities have helped you implement WSR by circling the choice that best describes your situation. Please choose N/A if you have no knowledge of the resource or activity.

	Not at All ▼	To Some Extent ▼	To a Moderate Extent ▼	To a Great Extent ▼	N/A ▼
56. Written guides and materials (e.g. WSR Urban Ed reform in Abbott Districts)	1	2	3	4	0
57. NJ DOE sponsored regional training	1	2	3	4	0
58. Support and training provided by SRI	1	2	3	4	0
59. Whole School Reform (WSR) Start-Up grants/ Incentives for Success For All/ Roots and Wings	1	2	3	4	0
60. WSR model selection showcases	1	2	3	4	0

Please indicate how the following items correspond with this statement, "As a result of state funding, my school has…" by circling the choice that best describes your situation.

	Strongly Disagree ▼	Disagree ▼	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ▼	Agree ▼	Strongly Agree ▼
61. Sufficient textbooks, materials, and supplies for all students	1	2	3	4	5
62. Additional teachers to reduce class size to state mandated rates	1	2	3	4	5
63. Sufficient computers to meet state ratio of 1:5	1	2	3	4	5
64. Sufficient security guards and equipment to insure a safe and orderly environment	1	2	3	4	5
65. Sufficient training on the CCCS and other pertinent WSR topics	1	2	3	4	5
66. Additional support for students in need of additional assistance and remedial services (e.g. tutoring, before and after school programs, and summer school	1	2	3	4	5
67. Health and social services referral and other support services for students	1	2	3	4	5

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Section III: Open Ended Questions

1. **In your opinion, what has been the <u>most</u> important achievement of your school's WSR efforts to date?** Please describe <u>only</u> one factor in the space provided below.

2. **In your opinion, what has been the <u>most</u> significant barrier to your school's implementation of WSR to date?** Please describe <u>only</u> one in the space provided below.

3. **What is different in your school as a result of WSR?** Please describe in the space provided below.

4. **What type of assistance do you need from NJDOE?** Please describe in the space provided below.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your assistance in providing this information is very much appreciated. If there is anything else you would like to tell us about this survey, please do so in the space provided below.

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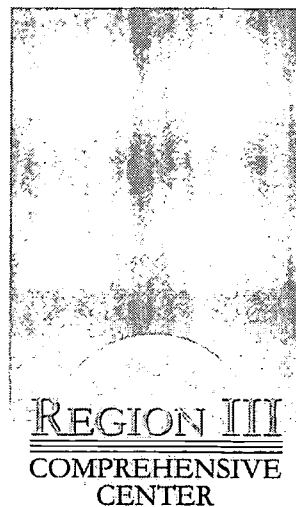
APPENDIX B
NEW JERSEY DISTRICT
STAFF SURVEY

New Jersey Whole School Reform
District Staff Survey
September 2000

District: _____

Section I: General Information

1. **What is your current position or role within your district?** Please mark an x by the choice that best applies to you.

    ☐ Board Member

    ☐ Superintendent

    ☐ Assistant Superintendent

    ☐ School business administrator

    ☐ Whole School Reform Coordinator

    ☐ Federal Programs Administrator

    ☐ Other, please specify _____

2. **How long have you served in this position?** Please mark an x by the choice that best applies to you.

    ☐ This is my first year

    ☐ 1-3 years

    ☐ 3-5 years

    ☐ More than 5 years

3. **What is your district student enrollment?** Please mark an x by the choice that best describes your enrollment.

    ☐ Under 5,000 students

    ☐ 5,001-10,000 students

    ☐ 10,001-15,000 students

    ☐ 15,001-20,000 students

    ☐ 20, 001- 25,000 students

    ☐ Over 25,000 students

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4. **Which of the following Whole School Reform designs are being implemented in your district?** Please indicate your answer by marking an x by the choice(s) that best describe the reform design(s) being implemented. More than one answer is possible here.

- ☐ Accelerated Schools
- ☐ America's Choice
- ☐ Coalition of Essential Schools
- ☐ Communities for Learning
- ☐ Co-NECT
- ☐ Microsociety
- ☐ Modern Red Schoolhouse
- ☐ PAIDEIA
- ☐ School Development Program (Comer)
- ☐ Success For All/ Roots and Wings
- ☐ Talent Development
- ☐ Ventures in Education
- ☐ Alternative Program Design (home grown)

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Section II: Whole School Reform

Please indicate the amount of progress you feel the district has made in each of the following aspects of Whole School Reform by circling the answer that is most appropriate.

	No Progress ▼	A Little Progress ▼	Some Progress ▼	Significant Progress ▼	Goals Achieved ▼
1. Making changes in the functions of central administration decentralized staff to support planning, budget, and decision making at the school level.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Hiring staff in support of whole school reform implementation:					
a) technology coordinators	1	2	3	4	5
b) drop-out prevention officers	1	2	3	4	5
c) health/social services coordinators	1	2	3	4	5
d) teachers	1	2	3	4	5
e) security guards	1	2	3	4	5
f) certified tutors	1	2	3	4	5
g) school facilitator	1	2	3	4	5
3. Providing effective principal leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Ensuring full implementation of school-based management.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Providing access to training and technical support to prepare School Management Teams (SMT):					
a) in their roles and responsibilities					
b) in teamwork and consensus building	1	2	3	4	5
c) to conduct comprehensive needs assessments	1	2	3	4	5
d) to develop sound and realistic goals and strategies to identify needs for additional programs and services	1	2	3	4	5
e) to align curriculum and instruction to state standards	1	2	3	4	5
f) to use zero based budget processes	1	2	3	4	5
6. Allocating sufficient time and resources to SMTs, enabling them to carry out their work.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Ensuring that reform models are implemented to support district goals and state standards.	1	2	3	4	5

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	No Progress ▼	A Little Progress ▼	Some Progress ▼	Significant Progress ▼	Goals Achieved ▼
8. Ensuring curriculum coordination and articulation across grade levels (PreK-12).	1	2	3	4	5
9. Providing professional development to school staff needed to develop implement whole school reform effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Providing timely and useful data to schools for use in assessing student and school needs.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Ensuring that budgets dedicate resources to support school goals and strategies effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Establishing alternative program(s) to meet the needs of middle students who have not succeeded in traditional learning environments.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Establishing alternative program(s) to meet the needs of high school students who have not succeeded in traditional learning environments.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Implementing a district-wide security plan to create safe and orderly school environments.	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate how the following NJDOE products and activities have helped you implement WSR by circling the choice that best describes your situation. The choice N/A indicates that you have no knowledge of either the resource or activity.

	Not at All ▼	To some Extent ▼	To a Moderate Extent ▼	To a Great Extent ▼	N/A ▼
15. Written guides and materials (e.g. WSR Urban Ed reform in Abbott Districts)	1	2	3	4	0
16. NJ DOE Website	1	2	3	4	0
17. NJ DOE sponsored regional training	1	2	3	4	0
18. Support and training provided by SRI	1	2	3	4	0
19. Whole School Reform (WSR) Start-Up grants/ Incentives for Success For All/ Roots and Wings	1	2	3	4	0
20. WSR model selection showcases	1	2	3	4	0

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Please indicate how the following NJDOE products and activities have helped you implement WSR by circling the choice that best describes your situation. The choice N/A indicates that you have no knowledge of either the resource or activity.
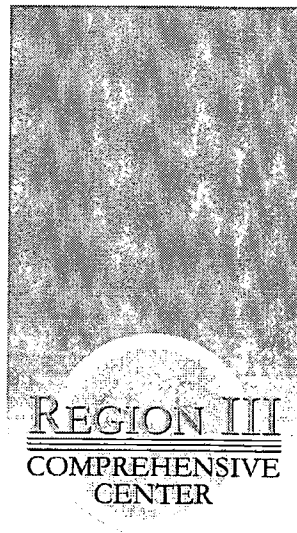
	Not at All ▼	To some Extent ▼	To a Moderate Extent ▼	To a Great Extent ▼	N/A ▼
21. WSR Implementation	1	2	3	4	0
22. Particularized needs	1	2	3	4	0
23. School-Based budgets	1	2	3	4	0
24. Required Programs for Secondary Schools	1	2	3	4	0

Section III: Open Ended Questions

1. In your opinion, what is the district's greatest achievement in implementing Whole School Reform(WSR)? Please describe only one in the space provided below.

2. In your opinion, what has been the district's most significant barrier in implementing Whole School Reform(WSR)? Please describe only one in the space provided below.

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your assistance in providing this information is very much appreciated. If there is anything else you would like to tell us about this survey, please do so in the space provided below.

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APPENDIX C
NEW JERSEY STATE
STAFF SURVEY

Survey- Process evaluation of WSR (schools, districts and NJDOE)

A. **From your perspective, please indicate the extent to which the school districts have supported the schools in implementing WSR.**

	Not at all Services non-existent	To a small extent Services available but not well coordinated	To a moderate extent Services available and utilized by schools	To a great extent Services available, utilized by schools with follow-up from districts	Don't know
Aligning curriculum and district assessments to state standards					
Providing professional development					
Supporting the development of a school budget and its implementation					
Hiring personnel to support WSR					
Performing meaningful and timely performance and demographic data for planning and decision making					

B. From your perspective, please indicate the extent to which the following initiatives have been helpful to schools in implementing WSR.

	Ineffective Services non-existent	Somewhat effective Services available but not well coordinated	Moderately effective Services available and utilized by schools	Extremely effective Services available, utilized by schools with follow-up from NJDOE	Don't know
Written guides and materials (ex. *Guide for Implementing Urban Education and Urban Reform in Abbott Districts*)					
NJDOE website					
NJDOE Regional Training					
Support and training provided by SRI team staff					
Incentive grants					
Professional development credits for model developer training					

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C. From your perspective, please indicate the extent to which schools have made progress in implementing WSR in the following areas.

Progress Rating Guide	No progress Schools have not made any fundamental changes in governance	A little progress made Schools are making attempts to change process but without structured WSR plans	Some progress made Schools are implementing WSR plans with some results	Significant progress made Schools are implementing WSR plans with significant results	Goals achieved Schools are implementing WSR plans with significant results while internalizing the process	Don't know
Planning						
▪ Conducting needs assessment						
▪ Goal setting						
▪ Involving community						
▪ Choosing the reform model						
▪ Using data						
School Management Teams						
▪ Using the needs assessment						
▪ Working together						
School-Based Budgeting						
▪ The school budget is utilized to support the objectives of the WSR program.						
Personnel						
▪ Personnel decisions and staffing levels support the WSR program.						

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Progress Rating Guide	No progress Schools have not made any fundamental changes in governance	A little progress made Schools are making attempts to change process but without structured WSR plans	Some progress made Schools are implementing WSR plans with some results	Significant progress made Schools are implementing WSR plans with significant results	Goals achieved Schools are implementing WSR plans with significant results while internalizing the process	Don't know
The Academic Program						
▪ Curriculum is aligned to NJ Core Curriculum Content standards						
▪ Instructional strategies enable students to reach standards						
▪ Classroom assessment supports the objectives of the WSR program.						
▪ The WSR model meets the needs of all students, including Special Education, Limited English Proficient and Gifted and Talented						
Training/Professional Development						
▪ SMT training has been provided to members regarding conducting needs assessment, using data, setting goals/objectives, budgeting and curriculum						
▪ Faculty and staff receive sufficient professional development to implement WSR plan						
▪ Teachers receive professional development to implement practices aligned to state standards						

Progress Rating Guide

	No progress Schools have not made any fundamental changes in governance	A little progress made Schools are making attempts to change process but without structured WSR plans	Some progress made Schools are implementing WSR plans with some results	Significant progress made Schools are implementing WSR plans with significant results	Goals achieved Schools are implementing WSR plans with significant results while internalizing the process	Don't know
Integration and Alignment of Resources and Functions						
• Staff roles and responsibilities are coordinated with WSR plan						
▪ Financial resources and school structures are aligned with WSR plans.						
School Environment						
• The school provides students and staff with a safe and orderly work environment						
▪ Relationships between students and staff provide a productive and positive learning environment						
Student and Family Services						
• School conducts needs assessments for families and local community.						
▪ School maintains program designed to provide needed services to families (health, family planning, job training and/or employment, etc.)						
Family Involvement						
• Parents and guardians are involved in school decision making						
▪ Parents and guardians are welcome in the school						
▪ The school provides ongoing support to strengthen the home-school partnership to improve student learning						

C-5

APPENDIX D
NEW JERSEY STATE
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Protocol for Telephone Interview with NJ DOE Staff

Overarching Question – How do members of the NJ DOE perceive the implementation of WSR?

Name	Position.
Date	Interviewer

Lead In	• What was the DOE's role in implementing WSR after the specific Abbott decision? • What was your role in that process?
Past	• What are the goals/mission of WSR? • How were they determined?
Evaluation	• How will you know if WSR is achieving its goals? • Are there any milestones and or benchmarks?

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