



An investigation of school board responsiveness in rural school districts participating in a planned educational change strategy
by Hans Harvey Johnson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
Montana State University
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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of the Rural Futures Development (RFD) Strategy on rural school boards. The RFD Strategy was developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon and was recently initiated in five school districts in Washington state's Educational Service District (ESD) 101.

The intent of the RFD Strategy in relation to school boards was to assist them by putting into their hands the means of systematically receiving citizen, school staff and student demands, and to further help board members identify ways to respond to and deal with information coming from these groups. Therefore, the subjects analyzed in this study were: (1) demands formally presented to school boards, (2) the manner by which these demands were converted to actions, and (3) the responsiveness of school boards to demands presented by citizens, school staff, and students. Data was obtained from a structured review of the official minutes of school board meetings. School board meeting minutes were collected for two time periods, the first representing a pre-RFD Strategy initiation period, the second representing a post-RFD Strategy initiation period. A comparison group of five ESD 101 school districts not participating in the RFD Strategy was used as a control, and data was analyzed utilizing the Mann-Whitney U Test.

Overall, the analyses of the hypotheses generated for this study showed no change of statistical significance between pre and post-RFD Strategy initiation periods. Two findings of statistical significance were achieved however. (1) The change in the number of demands formally presented to school boards by students in districts involved in the RFD Strategy was determined to be different from the change in the number of demands formally presented to school boards by students in districts not involved in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy, and (2) the change in the number of demands formally presented to school boards by local citizens in districts involved in the RFD Strategy was determined to be different from the change in the number of demands formally presented to school boards in districts not involved in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy. Due to the configuration of the data the change in the number of student demands in the involved districts could not be attributed to the influence of the RFD Strategy; however, the change in the number of local citizen demands could. These conclusions must be considered tentative however, in that at the time this study concluded the involved districts had only proceeded a portion of the way through one complete cycle of the RFD Strategy. Particular trends in the data did appear however, which allowed for speculation of the possible influence of the RFD Strategy over time. It was recommended that this study, with suggested refinements, be essentially duplicated at such time when one complete cycle of the RFD Strategy had been completed, and that future hypotheses on the influence of the RFD Strategy consider the speculations achieved in this study.

Though overall, findings of statistical significance were not achieved in this study the use of school board meeting minutes as a means of obtaining data on the functioning of entire school boards proved

useful and feasible. The minutes utilized in this study were of sufficient quality to determine the origins and dispositions of most demands. The directions produced in this study for categorizing demands and determining demand processing style also proved useful and adequate.

AN INVESTIGATION OF SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSIVENESS
IN RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN A
PLANNED EDUCATIONAL CHANGE STRATEGY

by

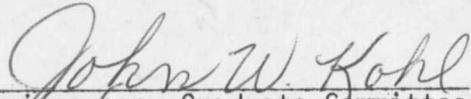
HANS HARVEY JOHNSON

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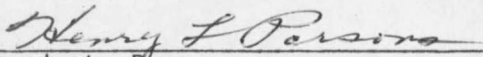
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of the Rural Futures Development (RFD) Strategy on rural school boards. The RFD Strategy was developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon and was recently initiated in five school districts in Washington state's Educational Service District (ESD) 101.

The intent of the RFD Strategy in relation to school boards was to assist them by putting into their hands the means of systematically receiving citizen, school staff and student demands, and to further help board members identify ways to respond to and deal with information coming from these groups. Therefore, the subjects analyzed in this study were: (1) demands formally presented to school boards, (2) the manner by which these demands were converted to actions, and (3) the responsiveness of school boards to demands presented by citizens, school staff, and students. Data was obtained from a structured review of the official minutes of school board meetings. School board meeting minutes were collected for two time periods, the first representing a pre-RFD Strategy initiation period, the second representing a post-RFD Strategy initiation period. A comparison group of five ESD 101 school districts not participating in the RFD Strategy was used as a control, and data was analyzed utilizing the Mann-Whitney U Test.

Overall, the analyses of the hypotheses generated for this study showed no change of statistical significance between pre and post-RFD Strategy initiation periods. Two findings of statistical significance were achieved however. (1) The change in the number of demands formally presented to school boards by students in districts involved in the RFD Strategy was determined to be different from the change in the number of demands formally presented to school boards by students in districts not involved in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy, and (2) the change in the number of demands formally presented to school boards by local citizens in districts involved in the RFD Strategy was determined to be different from the change in the number of demands formally presented to school boards in districts not involved in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy. Due to the configuration of the data the change in the number of student demands in the involved districts could not be attributed to the influence of the RFD Strategy; however, the change in the number of local citizen demands could. These conclusions must be considered tentative however, in that at the time this study concluded the involved districts had only proceeded a portion of the way through one complete cycle of the RFD Strategy. Particular trends in the data

did appear however, which allowed for speculation of the possible influence of the RFD Strategy over time. It was recommended that this study, with suggested refinements, be essentially duplicated at such time when one complete cycle of the RFD Strategy had been completed, and that future hypotheses on the influence of the RFD Strategy consider the speculations achieved in this study.

Though overall, findings of statistical significance were not achieved in this study the use of school board meeting minutes as a means of obtaining data on the functioning of entire school boards proved useful and feasible. The minutes utilized in this study were of sufficient quality to determine the origins and dispositions of most demands. The directions produced in this study for categorizing demands and determining demand processing style also proved useful and adequate.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

Realizing that rural education is unique and requires unique functional structures, the Rural Education Program at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon developed the Rural Futures Development (RFD) Strategy. It was hoped by the developers of the RFD Strategy, that this strategy would encourage and support the development of processes, skills and structures required for change in rural communities and their schools. The RFD Strategy's primary purpose was to strengthen local educational problem solving capabilities through the combined efforts of educational support agencies, community members, school employees, and students. The strategy was intended to provide these audiences with processes and skills for improving their communication, decision making, and problem solving skills (Rural Education Program, 1975:3-28).

The RFD Strategy was guided by four general principles:

1. Participatory Decision Making. Support for school programs increases when those who feel that a decision

affects them are given the opportunity to influence the decision and the way it is made.

2. Choice. Educational solutions are not the same for every community; communities improve the quality of their educational programs when they become skilled in selecting solutions that match their values and resources.

3. Process. When people follow a systematic procedure for making choices and changes, they can make the best use of existing resources.

4. Comprehensiveness. Because complex relationships exist between students and adults, between teaching and learning, and among schools, communities, and support agencies, a global change strategy, not a parade of separate innovations, is needed. (Rural Education Program, 1975b: 9)

Additionally, several assumptions underlay the RFD approach to educational change:

1. All individuals have the right to participate in decisions that affect them.

2. When decision making is shared, the decisions that are made accurately reflect the opinions and knowledge of the entire group.

3. Change is inevitable, but if change is planned, educational opportunities are more likely to improve than if they are simply allowed to "happen."

4. When people from the community and school communicate, support for school programs increases.

5. As people develop skill at solving problems and communicating with one another, they become more self-reliant and the chances that educational improvements will succeed increase.

6. Every individual has worth and dignity.

7. Conflict is natural and common and can be dealt with constructively.

8. A process facilitator is helpful to persons seeking to bring about planned change. (Rural Education Program, 1975b: 10)

Participation in the RFD Strategy was carried out through a school-community group (SCG) which was made up of individuals who

represented all community opinion groups, the school staff, and the student body. The SCG served as the mechanism by which participants influenced local educational decision making (Rural Education Program, 1975: 10-21)..

Participants in the RFD Strategy were assisted by trained process facilitators. The process facilitators worked in the local communities and schools, assisting people to become better problem solvers and decision makers. Further, process facilitators helped local decision makers organize, employ systematic procedures, and gain skills (Rural Education Program, 1975b: 10-11).

The school board links the community and the school. It was this link which led to the focus of this study. It was the intent of the RFD Strategy to assist school boards by putting into their hands the means of systematically receiving citizen, school staff, and student recommendations, and to further help local boards identify ways to respond to and deal with information coming from these groups. The goal of the strategy with reference to school boards was the active participation of board members in giving leadership to and effectively utilizing school staff, student, and community participation in planning for school change (Rural Education Program, 1975c: 16-21).

The following table outlines the phases of the RFD Strategy and activities which accompanied them.

Table 1

RFD Strategy Activities by Phase

PHASES	COMMUNITY	SCHOOL*	SCHOOL BOARD
PHASE I AWARENESS 1-2 months	Recognize the need for broader based participation in educational improvements and agree to participate in the Rural Futures Development Strategy		
PHASE II GETTING STARTED 1-2 months	Nominate opinion leaders to the School-Community Group (SCG) SCG		Appoints the School-Community Group members
PHASE III FOCUSING ON THE PROBLEM 1-4 months	Conducts a community-wide survey of problems or goals related to education	Contributes to the goals survey Examines the school's organizational capacity	Confirms the School-Community Group report on goals
PHASE IV SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES 2-4 months	Generates alternatives and chooses a solution to the identified educational problem	Participates in the search for a solution Conducts problem solving to improve organizational capabilities	Reviews and confirms recommendations for a solution
PHASE V PLANNING FOR ACTION 1-3 months	Plans for implementing and evaluating the chosen project	Contributes to planning Readies the school for the results of SCG activities	Confirms project plans
PHASE VI CARRYING OUT THE PLAN 4-5 months	Carry out implementation and evaluation of the project		Reviews the progress of the project
PHASE VII ASSESSING THE RESULTS 1-2 months	Summarizes the results of the project and participation in the school-community process Makes plans to recycle the problem-solving effort to the beginning of Phase II; III, or IV	Participates in preparing the report and planning to recycle	Reviews/confirms the evaluation reports Aids in planning the effort to recycle

TOTAL: 11-20 months or 1-2 school years, excluding summer months.

*(Staff, Students, Administrators)

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate school board responsiveness in rural school districts participating in the RFD Strategy. The objects of analysis in this study were demands confronted by the school board in legally established school board meetings and the process by which these demands were converted to actions.

The context for the analysis of demands and the manner in which demands were converted to actions was provided by the following assumptions: (1) the RFD Strategy will influence the number of demands confronted by the school board, (2) the RFD Strategy will influence the frequency of types of demands confronted by the school board, (3) the RFD Strategy will influence the frequency of demands emanating from particular groups, (4) the RFD Strategy will influence the manner in which the school board processes demands, and (5) the RFD Strategy will influence school board responsiveness to demands.

These assumptions identified the major analytic variables investigated in this study. These variables were: (1) level of demands, (2) demand-processing style, and (3) level of responsiveness. By gathering data on types of demands, origins of demands and the manner by which demands were processed, it was ascertained

whether school board responsiveness to constituent demands changed over the course of the study period.

Statement of the Problem

Many people feel that schools have become isolated from the communities that support them. As a result, citizens throughout the country are demanding to be involved, and new laws are reflecting the demand by mandating participation (Rural Education Program, 1976: 1). Part of the problem of rural schools may be seen by viewing school district governance. Another part of the problem may be seen by viewing the unique deficiencies and problems of rural education. Additionally, it is important to ask and find answers to questions such as: (1) Why does a public whose traditions attach great value to education fail in many cases to lend support to its purposes and respond favorably to its needs?, and (2) Why is the American system of education often so rigid and unresponsive to client needs and demands?

Change is a constant in modern society and its educational system. The greater our knowledge of how people react, what motives they are guided by, and how decisions are actually made, the better prepared we will be to follow procedures which lead to systematic change rather than change which is haphazard. The central force in this process within the school system is the board of education. It

determines policy, approves new personnel and programs, speaks with the weight of the community behind it, and maintains a firm grip on any strings leading into the money purse. When change occurs, it is because of, not in spite of, the board's willingness to either make it happen or allow it to happen.

School district boards are legally established in such a way as to provide the expectation of responsive and responsible governance. The presence of elections and other mechanisms of accountability means that school district governance can be judged against the standards of traditional representative governance. Representative governance theory stipulates that a representative body must be responsible to the public for decisions that emanate from the representatives. Representatives may formally delegate their authority to other political actors. When they do so, the recipients of formal authority become accountable for their decisions. Moreover, guidelines are normally included which prescribe certain limits and norms for the decision-making activities of the delegate. An essential element of representative democracy is a responsive and active legislative assembly. At the school district level there is a selection process, there are ongoing linkage relationships between the board and the public, and there is interaction between the board and the superintendent. Ideally the board is selected in accordance with constituency preferences; in response to community demands and

needs the board formulates policy; and the superintendent administers the policy. The board then performs a supervisory function with respect to policy administration. Hence, educational policy is made congruent with constituent needs and demands. Obviously, this ideal is not fully realized in all school districts.

The apparent disparity between theory and practice has generated questions concerning school district governance. Such questions include: Is a publically elected board, responsible to the citizens an appropriate model of governance for school? If so, how can boards determine more accurately their constituents' desires and aspirations? And how can they utilize this information? Has advancing technology made school district governance with respect to the ideals of representative governance theory obsolete? Should both technical and policy issues be determined by professional teachers and administrators who possess the requisite technical training? If so, who is to protect the clients (pupils) from self-indulgent and self-serving acts of the professionals? In response to questions such as these and to the notion that public schooling, responsive to the citizenry and controlled by a publically elected governing board, Zeigler (1973: 38) suggests that there are two important historical antecedents to the present malaise in public education. The first has to do with the original socializing function of American

education; the second with attempts by reformers to separate education and politics.

In an attempt to free education from the control of political machinery, reformers pushed through institutional changes which greatly increased the authority of professional educators within the school system, thus promoting the values of centralization, efficiency, professionalization, and expertise. The essential institutional reform required to achieve these values was non-political control. Hence, the governance structure was revised so that school board members would be chosen in at-large, non-partisan elections. Although this is not the case in all states, it is true of the state in which this study was conducted.

These reforms, in effect, have created institutions which are not designed to respond to shifts in client needs. Zeigler contends that "any change in the 'outputs' of education will have to be preceded by undoing the work of the reformers: by politicizing the education system (1973: 40)."

In the Report of Task Force on Rural Education (United States Office of Education, 1971) it is noted that most of the deficiencies and problems in rural education stem from a combination of personal poverty, community isolation, limited public services, lack of leadership and insufficient taxable resources to support educational services and programs.

Rural poverty is a problem of major proportion which affects individuals as well as the communities in which they live. The larger the community, the more readily available are its social services. Conversely, the poorest, most isolated communities have the fewest services, at the highest per capita cost, although they are least able to pay for them. Migration to the cities of young adults in the productive ages has left behind a large proportion of those in dependent categories, including children as well as the aged. The needs of these groups are great and their resources are limited.

The relative isolation of many rural communities, their relative population decline, their scarcity of local leadership, their inadequate tax base, their economically irrelevant political boundaries, their shortage of well trained personnel and their resistance to change have, in effect, conspired to keep public services inadequate: schools are poor; transportation is often unavailable; and health and social services are frequently nonexistent (Rural Education Program, 1972: 12-30). Given such conditions it is not difficult to understand why taxpayers in rural communities are becoming more and more critical of where their dollars go and what they are being used for. This reluctance of taxpayers to approve increasing costs of education has in effect forced school officials to become more knowledgeable of the opinions of the educational community.

Though the majority of studies concerning the relationships between schools and the communities they serve have not been conducted in rural areas, many of their findings are generalizable to rural areas. Stearns (1955) and McCloskey (1959) discuss the concept of mutual understanding as it applies to the relationships between the school and the community. Mutual understanding is not simply a concern with how the educational leadership can inform its public. It is vitally interested in determining how the community can transmit information to provide the leadership with an understanding of its desires.

In the decade of the sixties Richard F. Carter of the Institute for Communication Research and the School of Education of Stanford University did extensive research on the effect of school-community relations on public support for education. In a study dealing with the attempts of school districts to increase acceptance of financial programs, the authors concluded:

We see grave trouble ahead for school-community relations based on a consumer orientation among voters and a model response of political manipulation among school and community leaders. The one path that would seem to lead away from this type of relationship is the path to better understanding Communities with greater understanding among their leaders have better records in financial election; they enjoy longer records of success. (1960: 1-15)

Carter found that a third of the voters felt that they have little to say about what schools do. Almost half felt that the only voice

the voters have is the act of voting. A fourth felt that public school officials do not care what the average voter thinks (1960b). In a later study Carter suggested that understanding relative to a situation comes from providing an "exchange of information that makes it possible for two or more persons to have the same situation in mind (1966: 197)."

Earlier, the question was asked as to why the public often fails to support educational programs. When communities moved away from the direct participation role of the town-meeting to the elected representative style of policy determination, a dilemma arose. As the public became further removed from participation, it increased its tendency to withhold the financial support for the policies initiated by its representatives. Carter states that:

Given only an occasional opportunity to review educational policy, the people have often frustrated the initiation of policies by their elected representatives. Given the power to say "No" to financial issues (bond issues, tax levies, and budgets), the people have shown little reluctance in voting "No" for many reasons -- only some of which were ostensibly at issue. Financial elections are often the battleground of past issues. (1966b: 2)

In addition to asking why the public frequently fails to support educational programs, an equally relevant question is why is the American system of education often so rigid and unresponsive to client needs and demands. Several research projects conducted at the Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration

at the University of Oregon have been directed at this question. These research projects led to the conclusion that unresponsiveness in American education is produced by the "insulation of educational decision-makers from community and client needs and demands, and the consequent inability or unwillingness of schools to adapt themselves to the changing needs of communities and clients (Zeigler, 1973: 38)." Similar conclusions have been reached by others. The National Institute of Education has recently described American education as a system "unable to renew itself by responding rapidly, confidently, and openly to diverse client needs and expectations (National Institute of Education Planning Unit, 1972: 10-11)."

Many responses to the public by administration are crisis oriented. Admittedly when problems arise, they must be dealt with. Frequently, however, changes that occur in a school district as a result are often reactive when there can be little doubt that the situation demands proactive change. As a consequence:

There is a growing sense that teachers, principals and administrators control education through decision-making that favors professional interests rather than the interests of students and parents. (Fantini, 1972: 56)

The State of Washington's Temporary Levy Study Commission investigated why voters vote the way they do. It was reported that "a sizable proportion of the electorate feel alienated from the

school system, unable to get information easily from it or to influence its decisions (Olds, 1971: 23)."

Public schools have rigorous and extensive communication requirements. They cannot operate effectively without the understanding of virtually every community segment. Students, parents, administrators, teachers, and the larger community must be brought into a continuing dialogue about what the school is doing. As Goodlad pointed out:

Clearly the individual school with its parents, students, teachers and community is the truly organic unit for educational change. And yet ironically, the single school probably is the weakest link politically in the entire structure of the decision-making process. (Goodlad, 1971: 8)

The many publics of the school want responsiveness to their concerns and needs. This often results in a direct confrontation between and among groups. The current lack of participation and communication results in a collision course.

We need a process today in which each user of our public schools can make decisions concerning the type of education which makes the most sense for him. This means giving parents, students, teachers, and administrators a direct voice in decision making. (Fantini, 1971: 586)

There is evidence that attempts are being made to find methods of entering into this new form of participation, e.g., the RFD Strategy. The trend is to break away from the old familiar "top down" flow of authority which has characterized our educational

system and replace it with a "bottom up" input for decision making. Such decision making is more relevant to the public it serves even though it may vary distinctly from community to community. The uniqueness of the school district that results from this is the most desirable outcome.

To argue that individuals and groups should have their own unique goals is not to argue against common goals for an open democratic society. Having unique goals is indeed itself a common goal. The point is that the individual is as important as the common goals. Allegiance to uniqueness and diversity does not imply a conflict with allegiance to common purpose. It does imply a pluralistic society rather than a melting pot where the major culture assimilates the minor ones. (Rankin, 1971: 576)

Need for the Study

The need for this study was derived from a need to add to the knowledge base of rural education and a need to develop methods and procedures for analyzing the functioning of entire school boards.

In preparation for a paper presented to the National School Board Association Symposium, Jongeward (1975) conducted computer searches of six data banks comprising a total of 1,445,000 stored articles. This search yielded fewer than 100 articles on rural school boards and led Jongeward to conclude, "that very little research exists on school boards in rural communities (1975: 16)."

Further, in preparation to conduct this study this investigator undertook a computer search of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) files for articles relating to rural school boards. Out of a total of 226,289 articles housed in the ERIC files 6797 articles were scanned by the computer and only 38 articles were selected. Following a suggestion offered by Jongeward, this investigator also undertook a search of Dissertation Abstracts between the years 1965-75 for research related to rural school boards. In setting up this search design specific attention was paid to eliminating those studies dealing with urban school boards. The search was conducted by Xerox University Microfilms of Ann Arbor, Michigan and yielded 536 references. Of these, 150 of the most recent references were reviewed. None of the 150 references reviewed dealt specifically with rural school boards. Given this effort to locate research on rural school boards, this investigator agrees with Jongeward concerning the paucity of research on rural school boards.

Increasingly, political scientists are taking a look at school boards as an area of study to determine how members of society go about the process of making and enforcing decisions that regulate and set guidelines for daily life. Several of these studies are concerned with role behavior at an aggregate level, that is, they study the functioning of the entire school board focusing on variables and issues such as level and type of influence exercised on the board

and effects of demands and interest groups on the board. Studying the entire school board represents a break from the majority of school board studies which focus on individual board members.

In the early part of this century school board studies were generally in the form of surveys and typically provided data relative to the social characteristics of school board members. A classical example is George Count's monograph, The Social Composition of Boards of Education (1927). In more recent years, though far more analytical in nature than earlier writings on school boards, school board studies are still largely concerned with the individual board member rather than with the functioning of the entire board. Interestingly, two-thirds of the Dissertation Abstracts reviewed by this investigator were focused on the attitudes, values, or motivations of individual board members. Charters described the procedure that is common to many of these studies:

. . . (a) establishing some criterion by which highly-qualified board members can be singled out from among the less qualified members and (b) isolating those social characteristics which distinguish the highly-qualified members from the others. (1954: 450)

In addition, Charters made a generalization about the nature of school board studies that appears appropriate today. He suggested that before determining what constituted a competent board member, research was needed to discover the functions of the entire school board (1954: 451). Therefore, consistent with these needs this

study focused on rural school boards and the development of a procedure for analyzing the functioning of entire school boards.

Questions Answered in Study

1. Are changes in the total number of demands formally presented to school boards in districts involved in the RFD Strategy different from changes in the total number of demands formally presented to school boards in districts not involved in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy?

2. Are changes in frequency of demands within demand categories (extractive, symbolic, regulative, and participative) in school districts involved in the RFD Strategy different from changes in frequency of demands within demand categories in school districts not involved in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy?

3. Are changes in the number of demands emanating from district superintendents, school professional and non-professional staff, students, citizens, and board members in districts participating in the RFD Strategy different from the changes in the number of demands emanating from district superintendents, school professional and non-professional staff, students, citizens, and board members in districts not participating in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy?

4. Are changes in the number of demands receiving decisions in districts involved in the RFD Strategy different from changes in the number of demands receiving decisions in districts not involved in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy?

5. Are changes in the number of demands receiving decisions by superintendents, receiving decisions through a process of bargaining within the board, and receiving decisions by the board with evidence of community influence in districts involved in the RFD Strategy different from changes in the number of demands receiving decisions by superintendents, receiving decisions through a process of bargaining within the board, and receiving decisions by the board with evidence of community influence in districts not involved in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy?

6. Are changes in the number of demands emanating from the school staff, students, and citizens and receiving decisions in districts involved in the RFD Strategy different from changes in the number of demands emanating from the school staff, students, and citizens and receiving decisions in districts not involved in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy?

7. Are changes in the number of demands emanating from the school staff, students, and citizens and receiving decisions from superintendents, receiving decisions through a process of bargaining

within the board, and receiving decisions by the board with evidence of community influence in districts involved in the RFD Strategy different from changes in the number of demands emanating from the school staff, students, and citizens and receiving decisions from superintendents, receiving decisions through a process of bargaining within the board, and receiving decisions by the board with evidence of community influence in districts not involved in the RFD Strategy subsequent to the initiation of the RFD Strategy?

Methods and Procedures

This study utilized a pre-post-test control group design. Ten rural school districts, five participating in the RFD Strategy and five not participating in the RFD Strategy were utilized. The source of data were the meeting minutes of the school board. The minutes of all ten school boards were obtained and reviewed for two data collection periods; a pre-RFD Strategy initiation period, July, 1975 through December, 1975, and a post-RFD Strategy initiation period, July, 1976 through December, 1976.

The objects of analysis were demands confronted by the school board and the manner in which these demands were processed. The analysis of data was conducted on three major variables: (1) level of demands, (2) demand-processing style, and (3) level of responsive-

