A Qualitative Analysis Of The Mission Statements Of The New Jersey Public Schools

Victoria A. Robertson

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A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MISSION STATEMENTS
OF THE NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BY

VICTORIA A. ROBERTSON

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Though I can’t touch, though I can’t see, an angel watches over me. To this angel, along with Saints Catherine of Sienna, Joseph of Cupertino, Therese of Lisieux, and Anthony of Padua, I utter “thank you”.

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This dissertation is dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This introduction provides the purpose and significance of the study, and a problem statement. A definition of terms section is also provided. The chapter concludes by explaining the limitations of the study.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

No reported empirical studies describe the composition of educational mission statements for the State of New Jersey. The purpose of this study was to gather empirical data with which to investigate and describe the mission statements in the school districts of New Jersey. Its goal was to document characteristics of mission statements. Educational administrators are presently challenged to continually adapt schools to a pluraliform environment. The stated roles which the schools have proposed to undertake were analyzed for the purpose of revealing how the school systems see themselves in society by analyzing the roles they have assumed.

A mission statement is the element of a school district's philosophy that reveals the values of the strategic decision makers and their intent for the district's present and future curriculum. It is a "most powerful tool" in that it will reveal what an organization's values are better than any other document (Jones and Kahner, 1995). When examining a mission statement, one can
gain insight into the underlying assumptions and ways of thinking of the
district's educational stakeholders.

A mission statement is the application of theory to practice. Creating a
mission begins with a process of visioning a preferred future, and follows with
the establishment of the mission. Therefore, a mission statement provides the
guide for a district in planning goals, objectives and action plans. They can not
conflict with the mission statement in any way (Herman, 1989).

A mission statement documents where a district stands in terms of its
beliefs and values. It is a written “statement of beliefs”. It is a crucial step in
strategic planning in its identification to all concerned where a school is going
and how it plans to get there (Herman, 1989). Graham & Havlick (1994) see
the mission statement essentially as a description of what the organization
plans to produce. Goodlad (1994) explains that it drives the elements of the
entire program in a coherent way. All that will be accepted into the program will
conform with the beliefs stated in the mission statement. All others will be
“driven” out. In this way the mission creates boundaries for what the district
does and does not embrace as its values as written in its mission statement.

Pearce & David (1987) report that the components of mission statements
are among the least empirically examined issues in strategic management. In
Graham and Havlick's (1994) book, it is suggested that academic researchers
should undertake the study of missions with great expectations, as much can be
learned about organizations through a comprehensive assessment of their
written statements of values and priorities.
Given this, it appears valid to study the mission statements of New Jersey’s public schools as a way to examine, understand and document the current values, priorities and boundaries (or lack thereof) of the system. Vollmer (1997) discusses in detail the magnitude of responsibilities American schools have accepted just in this century alone. Klagholtz (1995) is “actively seeking” to define what the mission of schools should be, being well aware of the fact that a clear statement of the educational mission of the New Jersey public school system has never been articulated.

It is important to have the knowledge, based on empirical research, of what roles schools have assumed as their own. Graham (1993) alleges that while schools are the only institution whose primary business is supposed to be education, they are more responsive both to public policy and pressure than any other institution.

The researcher collected a sample of New Jersey public school mission statements and analyzed them for the purpose of documenting the primary business of education in New Jersey. The qualitative analysis of the content of these mission statements was an investigation of the values presently held in New Jersey’s educational institutions. This endeavor to understand and record the intentions of the school systems in the state also revealed how the school systems see themselves in its noting of the roles they have accepted in a plural form environment. The findings provide a perspective of education heretofore not chronicled.

An underpinning aspect of this study was the collection of the mission
statements from the districts, as no data bank of mission statements existed at the time the study took place. The compilation of these documents provided what was needed to conduct a meaningful assessment of mission statements, appropriate to the questions the researcher wished to ask.

**Definition of Terms**

The following is a definition of relevant terms used in this study.

Affective curriculum That part of the curriculum which pertains to feeling or emotional reactions rather than from thought. Such curriculums are usually identified as values, morals or self esteem curriculums. Their goal is to focus on the social and emotional development of the student.

District Factor Group (DFG) The New Jersey School Boards Association Data Sourcebook (1992) indicates that the term district factor group, as defined by the New Jersey State Department of Education, refers to a series of eight indicators used to measure the socioeconomic status of all school districts within New Jersey. The eight indicators, derived from the 1980 census and ranked in order of importance in the composition of the factor are:

- educational background of the district
- occupational background of the district
- per capita income of the district
- percent poverty level
- unemployment rate
- population density
degree of urbanization

population mobility

Districts are ranked according to their scores based upon the above variables, and are labeled A through J, with J containing districts with the highest factor scores. Vocational districts are placed in separate categories of “V”. (p.1)

Districts are subdivided economically, with a “J” district being the highest economic level and an “A” district being the lowest.

Mission A mission is a clear and compelling goal that serves to unify an organization’s efforts. An effective mission must stretch and challenge the organization, yet be achievable. It translates the abstractness of philosophy into a tangible, energizing, highly focused goal that draws the organization forward. It is crisp, clear, engaging. People “get it” right away, it requires little or no explanation. (Collins & Porras, 1991)

Some argue that an organization’s purpose is not its mission. A purpose is broader, more enduring; a mission can be accomplished and another mission then begun (Collins & Porras, 1991).

An authentic mission is drafted by top management, using information from teams throughout the organization that have engaged in guided introspections in order to identify hidden, positive root values that the organization does live by. It consolidates values over time and across individual and interest groups and it reflects the organization’s self concept (Pearce in
introduction to Graham and Havlick, 1994).

In school districts, a district mission is established. In addition, the operational missions for each part of the school system should be determined, and conflicting missions should be pinpointed (Herman & Kaufman, 1991).

Mission Statement  A mission statement is the most visible and public part of a strategic plan. As such it is comprehensive in its coverage of broad organizational concerns (Pearce and David, 1987). Other labels used in place of the term "mission statement" are: "value statements", "credos", "principles" (Jones and Kahner, 1995), "statement of philosophy" and "statement of purpose" (Pearce and David, 1987) and "vision, goals, aims, corporate identity and direction" (Mazuris, 1999).

Due to the important issue of public image, a mission statement often reflects the expectations of the public, since this would make the support of goals more likely (Pearce in introduction to Graham and Havlick).

Guiding Philosophy  A system of fundamental motivating assumptions, principles, values, and tenets. It comes from the early leaders who originally shaped the organization and who imprint the organization with their own personal philosophies of life and business. As the organization matures, subsequent leaders must reinforce the fundamental parts of the original philosophy in order to maintain it. The guiding philosophy must transcend the founders. The core values must be preserved through the process of evolution that all organizations progress through. While these values need to be balanced against each other, they should under no circumstances be breached

Stakeholders The local community residents, including parents, students, or other persons who have an interest or stake in what takes place in the school district (Herman & Herman, 1994).

Strategic Planning Long-term planning to achieve a future vision of "what could be" or "what should be"; proactive planning that identifies problems and opportunities or organizations (Herman & Herman, 1994).

Total Quality Management (TQM) A customer-focused, strategy driven approach. It involves six basic principles: customer focus, focus on the process as well as the results, prevention versus inspection, mobilizing expertise of the work force, fact-based decision making, and feedback (Herman & Herman, 1994). In response to this philosophy of quality, educational organizations are recreating their work processes, systems of human interaction, mission statements, and their long-term vision and strategies. School leaders use TQM to focus on establishing the context in which students can best achieve their potential through a system of continuous improvement of teachers' and students' work together (Bonstingl, 1992).

Types of Mission Statements: Broad, Vague, Academic The sample of mission statements used in this study was broken down into three categories by the researcher as a result of information stated in the literature review. Goodlad (1990) suggested claims about "we educate" or "we are committed to excellence" were too broad. He showed preference in his writing for singularity of mission, expressing that a desirable mission statement should mention very
few functions. Thus, those mission statements in the sample that were comprehensive in nature were classified by the researcher as "broad". Furthermore, Goodlad (1990) described vague, hollow, nonexistent mission statements as those which left people "from within and without of the institution in the position to make up their own minds about the institution’s function". This provided the vague classification category for the researcher. The third type mission statement, "academic", was classified as such by the researcher due to a focus on literacy or intellectual accomplishments. These mission statements seemed to have a main idea, as it were, that had supporting statements towards a mission of developing the academic skills traditionally identified in schools. Other components may have been stated, nonetheless, the emphasis tended toward the academic.

Vision A company’s vision is a developmental part of its mission (Covey, 1992). It is “an over-arching concept under which a variety of other concepts are subsumed” (Collins & Porras, 1991). A company should contemplate their potential, which is their vision. They must then ground the accomplishment of the vision with “marching orders”, which is the mission. A vision is what strategic planners expect or desire their organization to deliver at some point in the future (Herman & Herman, 1994).

**Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to an investigation of 308 mission statements. There were a total of 574 school districts at the time the study took place.
The study was further limited in its broad acceptance of what was offered by some districts as their 'mission statement'. Graham and Havlick (1994) state that there is no standard definition of what a mission statement is. They discuss two schools of thought regarding this issue. One view holds the mission statement to a straightforward recitation of a firm's line-of-business. Another view is that the mission statement should be a list of goals or aspirations for the organization. Other labels used in place of the term "mission statement" are: "value statements", "credos" and "principles" (Jones and Kahner, 1995). Pearce and David (1987) report that when prepared as a formal organizational document, a mission statement may be presented under a maze of labels, including "statement of philosophy", "statement of purpose", or "creed statement". Because of this, and along with the fact that it was sent to the researcher as a response from a request for a mission statement, the researcher did accept documents with labels other than "mission statement" from some districts into the study as their 'mission statement'. At the time of the study, there were 574 districts in the State of New Jersey, each to which a request was sent asking for a copy of their mission statement (see appendix A). At the time the responses were received, there was one less district in New Jersey (573) due to the fact that two districts had combined to form one regional school. The researcher received a response from 336 districts. 18 districts wrote to state they did not have a mission statement; 10 other documents were considered unusable by the researcher. The remaining 308 documents were analyzed for this investigation. 235 (80%) of those 308 documents were actual
mission statements. 62 (20%) documents were a combination of labels. The following is a breakdown of the type and quantity of the 62 documents accepted for this study: philosophies, 42; vision statements, 9; goals and objectives 8; school report cards, 1; mission statement/philosophy, 1; statement of beliefs, 1.

Also noteworthy were the 19 vocational school mission statements. By some standards, it may be stated that these schools are specialized and their mission statements were not as viable for this study as were those of the regular school districts. However, the researcher found no literature which singled out vocational schools for their mission statements, so she chose not to either. They were included in the investigation.

Three classifications which basically represented the sample of mission statements collected for the investigation were presented in this study. Mission statements which were either broad, academic or vague in style were named and described by the researcher as one of the fundamental findings. It may be said, however, that not every mission statement fit "perfectly" into its category. "While working inductively, the analyst is looking for emergent patterns in the data" (Patton, 1990). Patterns were visible. Yet each mission statement was a respected document. There were examples of mission statements that did not fit into any one classification "neatly". Creating cross-classification matrices in such cases would have complicated the findings beyond what the researcher considered logical, since the basic three patterns explained in this investigation were an accurate enough depiction of the mission statements studied. Therefore, the three classifications do not claim to be precise portrayals of every
mission statement, but rather they are three standards, having arisen from the data, by which to discuss the investigation.

Another limitation of the study calls to mind Goodlad’s (1984) comment, “education is as yet something more envisioned than practiced”. A mission statement does not necessarily reflect what an organization is actually doing. This investigation is limited in that no research was done towards verifying the actual practice of a school district as opposed to its mission statement. A district may not be practicing what it has stated in its mission statement.

There is a limitation of the study in what its lacks in the accumulation of mission statements. Not every district sent a mission statement, which leaves a gap in the investigation. Districts that did not send in a mission statement may have a pattern of alternate behavior which contrasts that which this study has revealed as shown in its analysis of those mission statements which were collected. While the random sampling satisfies over 50% of the districts, there is still the unknown factor of districts not represented in the research.

Finally, due to constraints in the boundaries of the study, other possible elements of a content analysis of mission statements were not carried out. There are many more components of mission statements which could be studied but were not approached by this researcher. Such studies would provide back-up and more rounded findings in regards to the roles and values which exist in public education in New Jersey today.
CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to review related research and literature pertaining to the study of educational mission statements. To accomplish this task this chapter is divided in five sections: an introduction, educational philosophy, corporate mission statements, educational mission statements, and a summary.

The section on educational philosophy discusses the purpose of schools, expanding on areas such as intellectual development, promotion of democracy, and moral and ethical formation. Included is a review of literature regarding the importance of teachers and family, and a perspective on the mission of education.

The section on corporate mission statements begins with various definitions of the term mission statement. Literature pertaining to the strategy and use of mission statements was also reviewed and organized into four sections: (a) core values/culture, (b) motivational factors, (c) focus, and (d) communication/strategy. A report on the research of corporate mission statements concludes the section.

The last section, educational mission statements, begins with a review of the importance of mission in education. The review of literature also provided information regarding the process required for schools to create mission
statements. The educational mission and society closes this third section.

**Educational Philosophy**

Since a philosophy of education forms the basis from which educational mission statements are written, it was important to explore the literature in order to understand those values and beliefs which presently have an impact on the operation of today's educational institutions. The review indicated there is a broad spectrum of beliefs about what schools should or should not be doing. The literature review suggests the need for more empirical data which verifies which ideas work, and which do not. This treatment of the philosophy of education lays a foundation for understanding corporate and educational mission statements.

**The Purpose of Schools**

The review of the literature of educational philosophy revealed that there are many different views of the purposes of education.

**Intellectual development.**

Public education is primarily a place for the development of the intellect. Sizer (1992) maintains that school is the place to acquire facts, learn how to use them, and get students into the habit of using them. The school's central focus must be on the intellect, on helping each young citizen learn to use his or her mind resourcefully and well. Other enterprises, however worthy, must yield if
they conflict with this goal. This applies to all students, even those weakly disposed or those who have difficulty with serious intellectual effort. Sizer prescribes more exercise in development of the intellect for such students rather than something less demanding or pressing. Sizer does not believe in self-esteem curricula as part of ideal schools.

Sowell (1993) states, “American education is undermined by numerous dogmas and numerous hidden agendas.” He claims there are two categories of dogmas: dogmas about education and dogmas about the larger society. “Self-esteem”, “role models”, “diversity”, and other such buzzwords dominate educational policy, yet no one is asking or being given evidence that the beliefs they represent be substantiated. Such sweeping beliefs about the general society, or about how life ought to be lived likewise become prevalent among educators without empirical verification being required. These dogmas have intruded into the classroom, crowding out the basic skills American students require. This represents the changing views among educators as to the role of education. Furthermore, Sowell believes that behind much of the “world saving curriculum” is an organized effort by special interest groups to get their own propaganda into the classroom. He cites pharmaceutical companies as one such example. Finally, commercial interests are joined by psychological experimenters and “innumerable other causes that invade the classroom to absorb time needed to teach children to read, write and think critically.” The educational establishment itself becomes involved with concerns such as AIDS, diet and cancer, aging and dying, which, according to him, are non-educational
issues. The "affective education" phenomenon has spread across the country, with its goal to reshape the moral values, personal habits, and social "mind sets" of American children. These take time away from intellectual development. Teachers are cast in the role of amateur psychologists, though they are unqualified. Sowell calls it all the antithesis of education. Rather, schools should be giving students the intellectual tools to analyze, and to reach conclusions based on logic and evidence. Education is being handled poorly because of the attempts of schools and colleges to encompass far more than they can handle. He caustically refers to public school teachers and administrators as people of marginal intelligence who are taking on the "God-like" role of reshaping the psyches and values of children. He quips, "fools rush in where angels fear to tread". He additionally believes that other countries whose educational systems achieve more than the United States do so because they attempt less. His contention is that schools are permeated with the idea that self-esteem precedes performance, rather than the reverse. Self-esteem, cries Sowell, is something earned, not given out in a prepackaged handout from the school system. Problems such as avoiding to give failing grades and watering down courses are due to such aforementioned dogmas about self-esteem. The retreat from academic education must not be justified any longer.

While Lickona (1991) agrees that the chief business of schooling is the academic curriculum, he also thinks schools must be able to "mine" their curriculum for its ethical potential. A great opportunity is wasted if a curriculum
is not used as a vehicle for developing values and ethical awareness. It is important for people in schools to go through the process of working up their own list of values that they want to teach. The actual list that a school or district reaches will bear its own special stamp and distinctive properties. From this list, educators decide how to make particular issues more salient to their students. This is the challenge now before schools (Lickona, 1991).

Promote democracy.

Thomas Jefferson believed that without public education for all citizens, there could not be a democratic process. The teaching of democratic principles in American schools has always been a mainstay of the curriculum. The review of literature revealed support for this tradition. Schools make a better bargain if they are committed not just to intellectual education, but also active in the preparation of children in becoming good citizens (Barber, 1997). Schools should have children ready when they are adults to preserve and extend our democracy. Education is partly a process of enculturation into the human family, a process of socialization. Each individual must be prepared to take an active place in the specific society in which he or she lives. Society being understood as the entire human race, the society with which public education in the United States must concern itself most specifically with is that composed of the country's citizens. One function, therefore, of education is to perpetuate and reshape society (McMannon, 1997). Darling-Hammond (1997) considers public education fundamental for the continuance of American democracy. Citing an historical perspective, she points out that public schools began in our
country so as to prepare citizens with skills to debate and decide among competing ideas. Thus, good decisions would be made. Therefore, schools need to teach more than book knowledge. An American education must arm students with an ability to think freely so as to be able to embrace values which allow people to live together. Darling-Hammond is emphatic in her position that education for democracy requires an experience by the students that develops democratic thinking. In order to inculcate the necessary social understanding of democracy, it must be taught by participation in a democratic community which includes a direct experience of various perspectives. To accomplish this, schools must enact democracy rather than merely preach about it." Her's is more a call for reform in education, the priority being toward structural change that emphasizes teaching democracy. Her vision is a serious enactment of acknowledging diverse points of view in schools. This will form a common point of view that takes into account the ordeal of others. Schools presently have a narrow focus, which they must get beyond. They must expand their knowledge, and search for truth, if democracy is to flourish.

Follow through with such reform does not necessarily mean that an actual democracy will follow. For Democracy to actually work, character formation must be involved, not simply intellectual awareness (Kerr, 1997). Kerr believes that if we want to use education as a way to create a democracy, new strategies would have to be used. New questions would have to be asked, such as, "How are we to understand what it means to be responsible for oneself and responsive to others?". "Being present to others" is key. Educating
others depends on how “present” teachers can be and thus model genuine
democratic behavior to those around them and in their care. She ascertains, “If
persons live in relationships of domination and subservience, no rhetoric of
democracy can render their relations democratic. Democracy pertains to how
we human beings are with each other.”

Other purposes.

Courts defining the purposes of public education develop long lists of
skills necessary for full functioning in today’s economy and society (Clune,
1997). “In many municipalities, schools have become the sole surviving public
institutions and consequently have been burdened with responsibilities far
beyond traditional schooling.” Schools must serve the needs of its students and
address their problems as if they were “all-purpose” centers (Barber, 1997).
Underlying such behavior is the common belief that educating the young is a
task that simply must be done. Along with enculturation and socialization,
education imparts knowledge. Yet schools have been continually expanding
their goals beyond the single mission of imparting knowledge. The abdication
of the family, church, marketplace and peers in their educative function have left
schools responsible for imbuing the young with morality, facility in interpersonal
relationships, good hygiene habits, and the list goes on. It is understandable if
schools fail to teach subject matter well, they were never meant to be the sole
indicates that recent studies of schools and their districts suggest that parents
are not choosing among academic, social, vocational and personal goals for their students. They want “all of the above” in their curriculum.

The problem of poor parenting in homes is one major reason why schools have gotten involved in values education. However, formal research does not show strong evidence that values education works. This is due to the fact that few studies subjected to a controlled research evaluation have been done. Credibility is thus in question about such curriculums, especially when the family’s role in teaching values has been abandoned. Without support at home, the impact from school is diminished. Few students in attendance at schools today present attitudes of respect for authority. If schools are to have a measure of success in values education, the curriculum must be in harmony with the teachings of the family, religious institutions, and the community. Such broad support helps to identify and gain support for the values being taught at school. Government also must be part of the effort. Current policies often contribute to the subversion of parenting and family life (Lickona, 1991).

The home is the primary source for moral formation. Children are not automatically moral or ethical. Schools may participate in reinforcing the morals taught at home, as it takes a great deal of effort to help children attain their full humanity. Developing curriculums which help direct children toward making choices to living lives that incorporate the values acceptable in our society can be helpful. Pluralism can be respected by transcending a particular parochial viewpoint and incorporating statements which regard all of humanity (Honig, 1990).
Wynne (1990) agrees, yet makes a distinction between teaching ethics and morals to school children. Defying the idea that ethics can be taught, he does support the teaching a moral code. He defines ethics as the effort to apply moral rules. He does not consider an adolescent one with enough maturity, wisdom or experience to be able to apply such rules. Calabrese (1990) believes that in order for America to continue to exist as a democracy, schools must teach ethics. Harris and Hoyle (1990) admit there are complex reasons both for and against teaching ethics, yet understand it as the “most important job” schools are asked to do.

Garbarino (1997) opines that the foundation rule for educating children today so as to help them emotionally, as well as intellectually, is stated in the Declaration of Independence: “to secure these (human) rights governments are instituted.” His perspective slants towards schools being the provider to those children whose needs are not being met by their parents at home. He thinks children are displaying signs of serious problems because their development is taking place in a world filled more so than ever in history with violence, poverty and economic pressures on parents. Lewis (1997) also thinks it is the role of the school to accept parenting roles. He believes increased child abuse, children with poor nutrition and children who are less prepared for school are signs of lack of adequate preschool programs. Sizer (1992) believes monetary support from the state should be provided to each school to allow it to examine its students’ needs and respond to the fullest possible extent. He specifically mentions coordinated related services for adolescents such as
health clinics, special psychological or psychiatric services, employment agencies, and others. His justification is that the school is one of the last few settings left in which mediation can occur between the individual and the large institutions of our culture. Sizer depicts schools reform as dependent on social and economic reform. He requires the nation be less focused on economic competition and more serious about each child's hopes and fears and need for respect.

In legal terms, there is no single right answer or series of guidelines to resolve the problems of how or if schools are the places to transmit society's ethical values (Janes, 1990). We are a pluralistic society. Creating a minimum shared value system is a challenge in itself. Asking schools to be the transmitters is asking the educator to unify the almost unifiable (Wager, 1992). While a good case may exist for teaching values in school, a specific "values curriculum" should not be created or executed; nor should a regular time be set for the teaching of such a curriculum. Rather, there should be a nurturing in all children of an ethical conscience. Children will grow up as functioning citizens when they are raised in an environment of respect and honesty (Cavazos, 1990). Gallagher (1998) aptly states, "When we talk about school reform, we may really be asking for societal reform." He explains that to expect the schools to counterbalance all of the negative forces affecting many young children today is to expect too much. Education alone will not suffice. The educational system has a significant role to play in any reform movement, but as a team member. Education can not singularly reverse the numerous
problems of our society. The educational effort must work simultaneously with other efforts to address the drug problem, the disintegrating family unit, the rotting nature of our inner cities and the isolation of many rural areas. Going forward alone is simply ineffective.

**Importance of Teachers**

Regarding progressive education of early this century, Cremin (1965) stated it failed because enough good teachers could not be found. Darling Hammond (1997) would agree, and adds that a new mission for education must acknowledge that the job of teachers can no longer be to just cover a curriculum. She thinks teachers need to be able to enable diverse learners to construct their own knowledge and develop their talents in effective ways. She believes that a real connection can be made between students and teachers and meaningful accomplishments. Lickona (1991) refers to the origins of education when he writes that the founders of our democracy required the people to be committed to the moral foundations for which it stood. Schools accomplished this goal in those days via "discipline, teacher's good example and the curriculum." Lickona's concept of the work teachers can do today is one that admits to the limitations of one person. Teachers need the help and support of the home. A teacher, though, must also have moral vision. A teacher must be able to see the "moral significance of social interactions and even small events, imagining the long-range effects of children's experience at school on their values and character and the kind of society they will someday help to
create.” He sees teaching as a special calling, something a person is naturally attracted to...to make a difference in students’ lives, to affect the kind of human beings students would become.

The literature continues to focus on the important bearing good teachers have in relationship to good education. Goals 2000 focuses on simultaneous objectives in two areas: creating challenging standards and improving professional development of teachers. Likona (1991) paints a picture of a joyful learning environment where all people are respected, feel safe, and are engaging. Strengths and weakness, worries and hopes of each young person are understood and accommodated. Adolescents, he contends, learn only what they want to learn, what they are convinced is important, what inspires them. Rogers (1998) affirms that children learn their values from the adults they love.

Glasser (1992) criticizes the report, “A Nation at Risk”, claiming that it requested a longer school day and year, more difficult graduation requirements and other coercive practices. Coercion is not effective in his opinion. It is not desirable. He prefers to acknowledge that we need teachers teaching in need-satisfying ways while unfortunately we presently have teachers who, as a rule, use coercion. Glasser predicts failure in any type of school when coercive teachers are dominant. Charter schools are included in his assessment. It will be through better administration that we can increase the numbers of effective teachers. We will not have to create a whole new structure of education. The starting point in his plan is to desist using low quality standards to measure quality. High quality is measured through in-depth type strategies such as
observation. High quality work is not measured by test scoring machines. Glasser cites the work of Deming’s control theory and applies it to education. Control theory contends that force does not increase productivity. Management by quality demands a noncoercive method of management called lead-management. With such management, there is no adversarial relationship between management and workers. Managers manage so workers can easily see a strong connection between what they are asked to do and what they believe is quality. The outcome will be the essence of good managing, he says, which is caring and hard work. Glasser compares teachers and administration to managers; students to workers. “A manager is responsible for consistency of purpose and continuity to the organization” (Glasser, 1992). A lead-manager must understand motivation, must continually keep the needs of the workers in mind, must listen to what the workers have to say. A lead-manager is never deceptive. Such managers empower workers. Empowered workers (students, in Glasser’s analogy) have long-term satisfactions as their motivation. Unfortunately, as it stands now it is students who feel powerless that make up the vast majority of those who do not work in school. Most competent teachers recognize that they are asked to push as much knowledge as possible, hoping students will retain enough information to rally high numbers in standardized tests, thus making the school look good. These teachers are aware that their input is ignored or depreciated by the politically motivated standardizers who are in charge. But he warns determinedly that we must build quality schools where concern is not dominated by outside measures of productivity. We must
reduce compulsory homework drastically and emphasize the importance of quality classwork.

To have education be effective, Glasser wants good teaching practices. With that he underscores the need for the community to support the educational institution and what it stands for. He mentions a wide variety of subcultures in our country, many of which do not value the education offered in our schools. Or, if they do value education, they do not value the way it is offered. Along with good teachers, there is a need for strong cultural support of education.

**Families Need Support**

Kagan and Weissbourd (1994) argue that the literature on educational philosophy in current times must be discussed in the context of the idea that all institutions in society work together to support the basic family structure. Goodlad (1992) calls for nationwide family support which provides nutrition, health care, and parent education for all. Slater (1993) thinks possibly that schools may be actually doing a good job, but today’s society has lost vital parts of a good education: the neighborhood and family. Schools have picked up some of these roles but can not succeed alone. He wants families, business and the community to help educate our youth.

**The Mission of Education**

Prior to the nineteenth century, education was not a function of formal schools. The community, family and church were the typical institution for the
transmission of knowledge. However, by the late 1800's, job specialization, industrialization, technological advances and other developments created a situation whereby populations centered in towns. Groups of learners could then be brought together under one teacher. Formal schooling, under the guidance of professional teachers, became a dominant presence in America (McMannon, 1997).

Regarding education presently, Goodlad (1997) perceives and articulates: "There is tension between private purpose and the common good and how this tension enters into public understanding of what education is and what schools are for." He considers education as an adventure of the self, making it a private enterprise. However, it can only be pursued in the company of public purpose. How were are with others is connected to how we are with ourselves, he notes. "Schooling is a sociopolitical invention that seeks to design a context or contexts for shaping many "self" toward predetermined ends" (Goodlad 1997). Schools reflect an ideology, or several ideologies, of what their purpose should be and how to attain them. He continues, "Democracy is the descriptive word most often and consistently applied to humankind's many attempts to define and provide some ideal balance between individual and collective freedom and individual and collective responsibility. Democracy and our educational infrastructure are inextricably entwined and sensitively interdependent (Goodlad, 1997)". Since parenthood does not automatically come attached with the skills needed to enculturate children in habits encouraging democracy, schools have become involved in that role.
Fortifying Goodlad's position, Kagan (1991) reviews the evolution of American education offering the analysis that from the earliest times public attitudes were primarily framed by the superiority of the primacy of home and family. She continues to explain that public values were not in accord with out-of-home nonmaternal care, so the financing of education remained mostly in the private sector. This created a situation wherein governmental attempts to educate were inferior to the private sector's, which caused a permanent segregation of both sponsorship (into public and private sectors) and participants (according to socioeconomic level). Kagan asserts that when publicly sanctioned, child care and education efforts were handmaidens to divergent missions, yielding an confused assortment of governmental programs. She sums up by stating that ambiguity and inequity have caused highly segregated and fragmented services in our present public educational institutions. In her writing, Kagan (1991) acknowledges an "omnipresent value tug between home and nonmaternal care" in the beginnings of schools in the last century. She alleges that public education was in part established to "stave off social unrest" and to provide "personal and moral lessons" for indigent and uneducated children where the parents "could or did not". Presently she sees that while the federal programs begun in the 1960 burgeoned, fragmentation is still pervasive.

Goodlad (1997) states his vision of education. It is to educate the self in a context of civility. The mission of education is that of a formal system of education, whereby the cultural contexts are ensured. Teachers are moral
stewards, students are emersed in knowledge secured from centuries of inquiry. Enculturation of the young into the social and political expectations and opportunities of America is a critically important part of the mission. The creation, development, and refinement of this infrastructure is the most challenging of all efforts. Aforementioned tensions exist, and there are enormous implications involved. Policymakers are unaware of the harm their rhetoric, policies, and interventions of the 1990's have done. Their danger signals have elevated the role of schools to unrealistic levels. They have labeled school reform as the answer to society's problems, confusing the failure in school reform with the failure of schools (Goodlad, 1997).

Darling-Hammond (1993) believes that the mission for education to be one whereby instructional services are delivered with the assurance that students learn at high levels. School reform directs schools to develop their own capacity to be responsible for student and community needs, interests, and concerns. Schools would be of the inquiring, collaborative models.

Brandt (1992) believes schools may have a written mission statement, but the import is to have a set of beliefs that drive their daily behavior.

Drucker (1992) calls our society a knowledge society, as well as a society of organizations. His belief is that the purpose and function of every organization is the integration of specialized knowledge into a common task. He emphasizes that an organization cannot submerge itself in the community nor subordinate itself to the community's ends. Its “culture” has to transcend community. The modern organization must be in a community but cannot be of
it. It is the nature of the task, he notes, and not the community in which the task is being performed, that determines the culture of an organization. If an organization's culture and the values of its community clash, the organization must prevail - or else it will not make its social contribution. He contends that in every school in the world, learning is considered the ultimate good. For an organization to perform to a high standard, its members must believe that what it is doing is, in the last analysis, the one contribution to community and society on which all others depend. Drucker (1992) states that the purpose and function of schools is to educate.

**Corporate Mission Statements**

Berliner (1993) believes that problems with American productivity can not be referenced to the failure of schools in their job of educating children. He thinks poor management of companies is the cause of any economic hardship, not the educational level of the labor force.

Rudestam and Newton (1992) state that research in one discipline may be isolated from another not by differences in philosophical orientation but rather by sociological barriers. In order to be thorough in researching the topic of educational mission statements, the study included a literature review of corporate mission statements. Corporate America's venture into writing mission statements was the forerunner of the present day use of educational mission statements. The literature about corporate mission statements offers educational institutions an important, experience-based perspective. The
purpose of this section has been to explore the literature regarding those forces that have made an impact on the roles of corporations, which eventually impacted the roles of educational institutions.

Definitions

The literature review on corporate mission statements revealed a large amount of discussion about what a mission statement is. Covey (1992) defines a mission as an expression of vision and stewardship, not goals and processes. He believes a mission attempts to encompass, in one brief sentence, the core values of the organization. To be functional, mission statements should be short so that people can memorize and internalize them. However, being comprehensive is important. It should also be simple, general, generic. It should direct the goals and provide context and coherence for everything else the organization attempts. Netton (1990) writes that everything in a company grows out of its mission statement - its behavior, its structure, and all of its strategic planning and decisions. The whole company's focus is provided by its mission statement. Darazsdi (1993) defines a mission statement as an essential element of a comprehensive communication program, an actual tool which company members use to carry out their responsibilities. Calfee (1993) states that when well crafted, a mission statement not only provides information but also inspiration. It outlines clearly and explicitly the way ahead for an organization. Farnham (1993) refers to the common occurrence of using mission and vision interchangeably. A mission statement may be termed
mission or vision or whatever one prefers, but they are all attempts to capture a company's "elusive essence". Unfortunately, most statements are "empty phrases that become a cause for chuckling by employees" (Covey, 1992). He explains this is because many organizations do not develop their statements with patience and a long-term perspective. They do not involve members of the organization in any meaningful way. The mission statement, as a result, is not part of the company's culture. Jones and Kahner (1995) list other labels used in place of the term "missions statement", such as value statements, credos, or principles. They denote that mission statements by any name are the "guiding lights" of companies. A corporate mission statement is a manifesto, it outlines in specific terms who the company aspires to be and how it intends to realize its aims. No other document will reveal what a company's values are more than this "manifesto". They continue to declare that the mission statement is a map for the high road; it is the most powerful tool to with which to implement change; no other way is as effective for ensuring that all employees understand the goals of the organization. Mission statements are not mottoes or slogans. Along with articulating goals, they express the dreams, behavior, culture and strategies of companies. Jones and Kahner compare it to a company's constitution. Ireland & Hitt (1992) liken a mission statement to the glue that binds the organization together, that which helps an organization sharpen its focus and use its resources wisely. They state that all parties interested in the success of the organization must be represented in the mission statement.

Deming's philosophy for organizations is that they have a mission to
produce products and services that help people live better (Aguayo, 1990). Providing those goods and services is the “raison d’être” of an organization. Deming’s teachings focus on quality service. Top management’s view of the purpose of the organization should be to provide quality. He articulates fourteen points for companies to follow. His first point requires a company to clarify and acknowledge its purpose and maintain its focus in good times and in bad. If the company should lose sight of this purpose, it will suffer and so will its customers. Covey (1992) agrees: without a corporate constitution by which to govern all else by, other chronic problems “in spades” will exist within the organization...like an unseen iceberg.

**Strategy and Use of Mission Statements**

The literature review on corporate mission statements explained concepts about: (a) core values/organizational culture, (b) motivational factors, (c) focus, and (d) communication/strategy.

**Core values/organizational culture.**

According to Drucker (1992), every organization, be it a business or not, has a theory of what it stands for. There are three parts to an organization’s theory of itself. First, there are assumptions about the organization: society and its structure, the market, the customer, and technology. Second, there are assumptions about the specific mission of the organization. Third, there are assumptions about the core competencies needed to accomplish the
organization's mission. The assumptions about mission define what an organization considers to be meaningful results, or, how it envisions itself making a difference in the economy and in society at large. Covey (1992) explains that as the vision of what a company could become is communicated throughout the organization, a strong sense of mission will develop within the company. The culture will change as a sharing begins that confirms the vision. Senge (1994) notes that visions and goals which focus on pleasing an outsider are transitory; once accomplished they become defensive and rarely can they strengthen an organization in the long term. A shared value should never be breached in response to outside pressures according to Collins & Porras (1991). Core values must be brought into line with its people. Pieces of the business that are not central to the value of the company must be eliminated. Human beings want to pledge allegiance to something. The desire to belong is a foundational value. The real locus of learning in a corporation is with an informal group of people who have a shared interest in a subject. This is where the work of the mission statement should begin (Stewart, 1996). Dust (1996) aligns himself with this theory by saying that every action of staff should be in agreement with the mission statement. A mission statement should keep the focus on what the staff is working to accomplish. It should not mention goals. Goals and objectives for achieving a mission are different from the mission. The mission may not change over time, while goals to achieve it may. For example, with a mission to control drugs, one year the goal may be to seek street dealers, another year the focus would be on producers, another yet another time on
Motivational factors.

Argyris (1994) makes the point that twenty-first century corporations are facing competitive pressures earlier generations never could have imagined. They need managers and employees who think constantly and creatively about the needs of the organization. Employees need intrinsic motivation and a sense of organizational stewardship as much as a company executive. To make this happen, corporate communications must demand more of everyone involved. When the work of creating a mission statement is done correctly, intrinsic motivation such as Argyris describes is begun. Without such processes taking place, Senge (1994) states: when leaders have personal visions that never get translated into shared visions, the organization fails to galvanize and change. Senge sees two ways to motivate: fear and aspiration. He says: “The power of aspiration drives positive visions. Fear can produce extraordinary changes in short periods, but aspiration endures as a continuing source of learning and growth.”

Focus

Peters (1982) refers to Wal-Mart’s success because it has stuck to doing what it knows best how to do. It has overpowered better financed and more deeply experienced organizations such as K-mart in its chosen area. Senge (1994) quotes the chairman of Fluor who comments that he does not try to be
everything to all people. Senge talks about Rumelt’s clear principal about business: organizations that branch out somewhat, but basically stick close to their central skill, outperform all others. Ireland & Hitt (1992) illuminate this point for schools: they would have to sharpen their focus and use their resources wisely to be successful in the future.

Peters (1982) knows that controlling quality in a service business is a particularly difficult problem. He states the importance of having simple, “beautiful” values. Also, objectives being kept to a minimum: “Focusing on a few key values lets everyone know what’s important, so there is simply less need for daily instructions”. Excellent companies seems to have incorporated the values of great leaders. When such values become part of the culture of the organization, they can survive for decades after the leader has departed. Senge (1994) understands the necessity of core values for helping people with day to day decision making. Core values must be translated into concrete behaviors, or they are not helpful.

Bethel (1999) states the “part practical, part magical” nature of a mission statement: the practical part is evidenced in the results achieved, the magical part is what the mission does to the mind and heart. Economist Russell Roberts, Ph.D stated two good purposes for having a mission statement (Chatterjee, 1999). One is that while they state the company is not about making money, of course the organization does want to make money. Yet since focusing on money, ironically, is regressive, highlighting customer service is a more indirect- and successful way of earning money. Second, company slogans show
workers that they are selling not just objects, but an idea. This keeps a company more flexible in terms of actual sales products, allowing the company to stay in business better. Russell also believes it most important that the leadership truly believes in the mission statement. George (1999) states that transcendent leadership envisions a clear mission. Bart (1999) believes that to be effective, a mission must be a collective learning experience that creates among all employees a widely shared understanding of the organization’s purpose, making it a “mission-driven” organization. As such, an organization has a high probability that its mission will become a reality.

**Communication/strategy.**

Once there is a strategically sound mission statement developed, it must be well communicated and receive support and commitment from employees and other stakeholders. This is critical to the process of successful execution of the mission. Then this “blueprint” must be translated into objectives for all employees so that there is meaningful, relevant performance standards (Calfee, 1993). Kotter (1996) strongly believes in the process of communication of detailed plans. It will encourage dramatic shifts essential to successful transformations. While it may be slow, it has great potential to break barriers to change and cause a highly incremental type of change in the corporation. Campbell (1999) reports about research indicating that an organization’s mission is less understood than many think. He concludes the most important factor of an organization is its communication program, and he presents a
method for developing a plan to determine how well an organization's mission is understood.

Covey (1992) delineates chronic serious problems universal to any organization. The top of the list is that of having no shared vision and values: "either the organization has no mission statement or there is no deep understanding of and commitment to the mission at all levels of the organization." Without a mission statement, Covey (1992) specifies, there will be an alignment problem. Every person coming into the organization are not similarly committed in their allegiance to the mission. Rules and regulations will not correct such a situation. To avoid such a problem, there should be in place good reinforcement between structure and systems via shared values and visions. A key bonus of having such this in place is that many different leadership styles can be tolerated in the organization as long as people are "anchored" in the same governing principles. Here Covey has defined a mission statement: that which embodies deeply held values, based on timeless principles. He does not believe a mission statement can be done quickly. It requires a slow process. The process, he believes, is vital to its life. It must be broad based and become a compass in the hands of every person in the organization. It will provide the reward of unleashing commitment and creativity in all stakeholders.

Mazuris (1999) believes a mission statement is crafted to reflect what senior management considers the defining characteristics of the organization. In contrast, Collins and Porras (1991) are more focused on the concept that a
mission statement, being the guiding philosophy of an organization, transcends the need for a great leader. They believe it is a myth of modern management that building a visionary organization requires the presence of a charismatic leader, calling such substitution of charisma for substance "destructive". The role of a leader is to catalyze a clear and shared vision of the organization and to secure commitment.

Words featured in mission statements have become overused. Hanes (1999) cites research which found that 55 mission statements from 55 global blue-chip companies were all alike except in their length. They all mention customer care and they all boast of excellent product and service quality. Collins and Porras (1991) state that mission statements are usually a "stew of values, goals, purposes, philosophies, beliefs, and descriptions". As such, they do not focus attention. Furthermore, they are often ineffective as a compelling guiding force due to the fact that they are usually a boring stream of words. These authors set the boundaries for what a mission statement must be. It must be a clear, compelling goal that serves to unify an organization's efforts. It must stretch and challenge the organization, yet be achievable. In reference to a philosophy, the mission statement will translate the abstractness of the philosophy into a tangible, energizing, highly focused goal that draws the organization forward. It is "crisp, clear, engaging - it reaches out and grabs people in the gut." Strategic analysis should not limit the mission. It is proactive, not reactive in nature. Strategy is subservient to mission; strategic analysis shall be done after setting the mission, not during its setting process. A
good mission is risky, and it falls in the "grey area". It has a finish line, a specific
time frame for its achievement. People "get it" right away; it requires little or no
explanation.

Collins and Porras (1991) make a distinction between the guiding
philosophy of an organization and its mission statement. The guiding
philosophy of an organization is based on a purpose and core values. The
philosophy, along with the environment, will drive the course of what the
mission will be. They assume there will be instances when core values need to
be balanced against each other, but "under no circumstances should a core
value be breached in response to outside pressure". As for setting the purpose
of an organization, it need only be meaningful and inspirational to people inside
the organization; it need not be exciting to all outsiders. It is the people inside
the organization who need to generate long term commitment to the
organization's success.

Again making distinctions between the guiding philosophy and mission
of an organization, Collins and Porras (1991) explain that the guiding
philosophy is generated relatively free of current environmental conditions
(coming from the people within the organization). The mission, on the other
hand, will be affected by the environment - missions are affected by timing,
trends, technology, and other external factors. The example of NASA's space
mission exemplifies this concept. NASA could not have had their mission in the
19th century.

However, Collins and Porras (1991) make note that a mission should not
be "unduly dampened" by the pervasive human tendency to say "we can't". It should walk the boundary between possible and impossible. To be able to find that boundary, good intuitive sense is needed.

**Research**

Senge (1994) mentions people not realizing the "incredible extent" to which traditional organizations are designed to keep people comfortable and inhibit risk taking. Rhetoric about change is more common than actual environments which actually encourage taking positive risks. Aguayo (1990) sees the problem with most management as being structural in nature in that management tends to imposes its ideas on workers, attempting to control production, output or results. He determines such practices as detrimental to the health of a firm. He does not agree with the belief that high cost is necessary to create quality products. To the contrary, quality management produces fewer defects and lower costs. His view holds management, not the American worker, as being responsible for poor quality and low productivity. "Workers cannot change the system", he states. It is management's responsibility to do that. Once a corporation is producing quality products, worker's can experience pride in the work and worker input can become a continual part of the improvement process.

Drucker (1994) insists that underlying the malaise of so many organizations is that their theory of the business no longer works. He contends that there are many new major management techniques available today. Kotter
(1996) agrees, commenting that change in organizations has been significant in the past two decades. "Powerful macroeconomic forces" are at work and may get even more powerful in the future. However, because major change is so difficult to accomplish, a powerful force is required to sustain the process. No one individual will ever be able to develop the right vision and communicate it to large numbers in an effective enough manner to create change. He continues to state that team building, in early stages of the effort to change, is essential. Covey (1992) might agree, maintaining that all organizational behavior is actually individual behavior. But, as Senge (1994) explains, with alignment, a group of people work as a whole. There is commonality of purpose, a shared vision, and an understanding of how to complement one another’s efforts. “Individuals do not sacrifice their personal interests to the larger team vision; rather, the shared vision becomes an extension of their personal visions”. The fundamental characteristic of the unaligned team is wasted energy. Senge (1994) mentions that no matter how hard individual workers may work, their efforts do not always translate efficiently. When a team becomes aligned, a commonality of direction emerges, and individuals' energies harmonize. If missions become shared throughout the organization, such harmonization will occur.

Lee (1996) indicates research which point toward vision driven companies performing better over time. Visionary companies have clearly articulated core values and a mission. Morrisey (1998) observes negative results when an organization fails to mobilize workers with a mission statement.
Individual units may be operating at cross purposes, diverting the focus from their efforts and causing company resources to become diffused. He reports the importance of a mission statement as foundational. Its principal application is as a guide for all major decision making. Once a mission statement is established, it should remain intact for a period of extended time, unless there is a major change in the nature of the organization. His advice is to keep it to a one-half page document, with an umbrella statement of fifteen to thirty words that identifies the conceptual nature of the business in which the organization expects to be engaged in the future. The vision and mission will make a way for the strategic plan, states Covey (1992). Obsolete products and services will not be produced as a result of this path. Deep commitment, conscience, a deeply shared value system in the organization all are needed. With these intact, vacillation and insecurity from within are negated. Outer approval from forces outside itself is unnecessary. The organization will be invulnerable to fickleness when pressure from the outside is at force.

Bart and Baetz (1998) present data demonstrating that mission statements and some of their specific characteristics are selectively associated with higher levels of organizational performance. Pearce and David's (1987) research suggests that firms engaged in strategic planning outperform firms that do little or no planning. Kotter (1995) notices that an effort to make major change in a company will fail without a strong coalition. Massive sources of inertia exist in transformation attempts. Without the sufficient power of a guiding coalition, apparent progress may appear to be occurring, but in reality it is not
happening. Disappointments, frustrations, and "burnt out employees" will soon sabotage the transformation. However, O'Gorman and Doran (1999) replicated Pearce and David's landmark study of mission statements. Pearce and David studied the mission statements in large organizations. O'Gorman and Doran studied mission statements in small and medium-sized enterprises. Their findings suggested that mission statements per se are not correlated positively with small and medium sized enterprise performance.

In writing the vision, Langeler (1992) stresses the point to resist writing a vision of corporate grandeur, it will only weaken and set back a company. Trapp (1999) refers to mission statements which are laden with the articulation of visions and values as "sounding so tortured" and as being "at variance with reality". Trapp insists that with few exceptions, business has little to do with values. He comments on the increasingly obvious situation with mission statements, vision and values these days: businesses are involved with such matters because their marketing advisers tell them that is what the customers want to hear. Yet, Trapp also mentions the increasingly sophisticated level of consumers and how they will not necessarily accept that a company has an ethical stance just because it say it has. He concedes that it appears to be true that certain values are essential to success, yet it is impossible to ignore the financial and related aspects of a business and these must not be ignored when considering a mission statement. His conclusion is that the issue of values when writing a mission is not just about ethics, it is also about knowing who or what you are as an organization.
Kotter (1995) would agree with Trapp, suggesting an organization take considerable time to learn who or what it is and not skip the various phases. Skipping steps will create only an illusion of speed. It will never produce the satisfying result hoped for. Making a critical mistake in any phase of the change will have a devastating impact, impeding momentum.

Regarding the "management by objectives" style of management, Aguayo (1990) discusses Deming's opposition to such a philosophy. MBO as well as merit systems seem neat and pleasing; they seem to offer incentives necessary to make people work harder, consequently improving productivity and profit. However, according to Aguayo (1991), Deming "unequivocally" deems these kinds of measures as the "single most destructive force in American management today". This is an important thing to remember, one worth underlining. Deming does not believe in management by objectives and actually considers such methods as destructive. Deming considers objective focused management as antithetical to management which focuses on the company's awareness of its purpose and maintaining that in good times and in bad.

Although the importance of mission statements is accepted in the literature, mission statements are not developed in many organizations. The review of the literature addressed the challenge which managers today face in understanding the criticality of mission statements and learning how to cope successfully with factors and conditions preventing their development and revision. Ireland and Hitt (1992) report that the components of mission
statements are one of the least empirically examined issues in strategic management. Whiteley's (1990) research indicates that the primary reason for front line turnover is the dissatisfaction of workers. Unable to use their ability to do their job well because they feel their hands are tied by senior management, they are prevented from doing their best work. Seventy percent of the quality initiatives started in the United States over the past several years are failing because senior managers are not leading the company in the way of customer-driven quality producers. Furthermore, Morrisey (1988) finds that most managers have a very superficial concept of mission statements. The majority of organizations are focused on making money. On the hopeful side, Ruddell and Pettigrew's (1988) study shows that there are corporations who have an increasing interest in the qualitative aspects of management. These companies are aware that they can no longer focus only on profit margins and expect success. Attention to structure and function are being diverted to issues of an organization's ability to communicate its missions and its goals, its values and cultures and strategic visions. As Anderson (1987) simply says, "Writing a mission statement has become a favorite activity for those businesses caught up in their corporate culture."

**Educational Mission Statements**

**The Importance of Mission In Education**

Where Berliner (1993) states that poor management of companies, not
poor educational institutions, is causing problems with American productivity. Mahoney (1992) would disagree. Mahoney's perception is that in order to have good business management, we must have high quality educational facilities. Students graduating from schools with low standards will have distorted concepts about what excellence is.

This section of the literature review examined the evolution of mission statements from corporate tools to educational instruments. Once the domain of corporate America, Deming's philosophy of Total Quality Management is now an established practice in America's public schools.

It makes sense that a concept such as TQM should be pervasive in educational systems, since it is a basic truth about doing things correctly. According to Walton (1986), Deming encouraged American schools to learn how to 'work smarter, not harder' by adopting a new focus on quality. This approach requires the whole school system to be involved with processes. (Walton, 1986).

Most experts credit Deming's work with the theory and application of total quality management (TQM). His "14 points" are the basics of a customer-focused, strategic and systematic approach to continuous performance improvement. It is basically dedicated to bringing out the best qualities in oneself, in others, and in the work people do together (Herman, 1992). The literature review supports the fact that the practice of TQM in educational organizations around the country is occurring. It indicates that school districts are recreating their work processes and systems of human interaction. Mission
statements, and long-term vision and strategies are being written, all with the tools and philosophy of TQM (Bonstingl, 1992). Herman (1992) adapts corporate strategies of TQM to educational strategies, assigning the student in the role of the primary customer. He continues the analogy by offering that the school's stakeholders (parents, family, businesses, members of the community, and other taxpayers) are the secondary customers. All have a right to expect progress in students' competencies for the long term benefit of the next generation and for generations to come. Applying TQM to a school district provides the district with a set of ideas meant to develop and maintain high quality school services and products. Herman (1992) requests that local districts use Deming's 14 points as anchors upon which they can apply and maintain the TQM structure.

Wolwerton (1998) states that strategic planning ties an institution's mission to its budgeting process, thus coordinating institutional planning efforts in the face of environmental uncertainty. She discusses how schools must arrange those systems that determine how strategies will be aligned with the schools' underlying mission and core values. Kagan (1997) believes same, the emphasizing that in today's world, it is no longer appropriate, or the norm, to be an organization which is driven by and understood in terms of categorical funding. Schools must embrace change, and understand themselves in terms of mission and results. She acknowledges the many other changes occurring in schools. Formally charged with education, they are now becoming partners in the social agenda. She questions whether the link is a result of an impetus from
the business community or because of pressure from parents and consumers. She mentions an increase in the practice of collaborative decision making currently being practiced by schools. More power is given to staff, and in some cases, parents.

Concerning the influence parents presently have in the district's educational planning, New Jersey's Commissioner of Education, Klagholtz, (1995) mentions his desire that educators be in partnership with parents, and also community members, neighborhood business and organizations, and some agencies of state government. He believes each group has a role to play. However, he is concerned by the fact that the academic focus of schools has been critically weakened. He is intent on defining the mission of districts as well as the mission of the Department of Education so as to enhance student academic achievement through high quality instruction and closely related educational services. He also wants to avoid the expansion of mission that is a consequence of the accumulation of mandates. Klagholtz (1995) is aware that the mission of schools over the years has become increasingly complex and ill-defined as society has added to the list of tasks it expects educators to accomplish. He comments that schools cannot function under such conditions.

The purpose of this section has been to explain the natural progression of TQM from corporate to educational institutions in America. A focus on process and mission are bottom lines in TQM philosophy, and have been adapted by the public school districts which have accepted TQM as their method of management. This section also presented literature which
established the pressure put on educational institutions from outside sources to define their mission along non-academic criteria, and the consequences for schools that such a practice has drawn. Reports have been written (Bailey and Averianova, 1999) in response to conflicts that have arisen over missions. Some claim that the missions of educational institutions have lost the way in an attempt to be all things to all people, while others say that the missions of these institutions is precisely to play a broad educational, social and economic role in society.

Understanding what a mission statement is, the significance of the planning involved in writing it, and how and why it should be written are treated in the following section.

Creating a Mission Statement

While never using the word “mission statement”, Sergiovanni (1994) seems to describe the essence and purpose of what a mission is. He discusses ideologies as the means by which people make sense of their life. Ideologies in communities shape what people believe and how to practice their beliefs. He states that emergent courses of action communicate and validate meanings that ensure what we do is both purposeful and sensible (Sergiovanni, 1994). He notes that a recently popular strategy to becoming a purposeful community is for a school to identify and commit to “core values”. These core values should be significant, permeating every aspect of the school organization. Each and every decision made in the school system should reflect the commitment to these
values. Sergiovanni explains a tight-loose connectedness between the individual values of each of the district schools to the district's overarching commitments and goals. Schools can be organized differently within the system. Teaching styles differ; teachers select their own materials and often develop their own curricula. What unifies the schools and creates the school system, as opposed to "nine ships sailing in many different directions", is the commitment to the specific core values of the district. Members of the community are "linked together" in what they do by these shared values, conceptions and ideas. Sergiovanni concedes that this undergirding educational focus in a school is an important aspect of creating a successful school. He goes so far as to say that the subject and matter of this focus may be secondary. The success seems related to the school having a focus which is shared and embodied by all in a unified practice.

Sergiovanni (1994) has identified what Herman and Kaufman (1991) consider the first step is establishing a mission. They believe a school must first identify its ideals, its beliefs and values. Following this, the school's current education mission can be established. Trapp (1999) would refer to the mission as knowing who and what you are as an institution. This step is basic in Deming's TQM philosophy, and requires a focus on the process of planning. Sybouts (1992) states that the planning must be directed toward change. Herman and Kaufman (1991) define the planning as that which deals with what is and what should be, and adds what could be over the course of several years. They consider planning as the part of the design which will get an
educational system to reach current goals and objectives efficiently, as well as bring forth missions that contribute to society, now and in the future. Herman & Herman (1994) makes clear that strategic planning is the way to achieve a future vision for the school district and to keep the many desires of all involved in the experience of planning from becoming a “wish list”.

The literature is not all in agreement on the nature of the mission statement. Stainback & Stainback (1992) suggest that the mission statements of schools must be broad, qualifying that they are not scope and sequence charts. Pearce (1994) also believes in a broad mission statement, which has an enduring statement of purpose. Pearce (1994) states that a mission statement must distinguish itself from other similar organizations, and project an image. It provides the organization’s philosophy, strategic plan, and image to insiders and outsiders. It indicates to the public its self-concept, the image it wants to project. The mission depicts the organization so as to reflect the values and priorities of the strategic decision makers (Pearce, 1994). He considers the ultimate aims of the organization are captured within its framework.

Goodlad (1990) shows preference for singularity of mission. Mission statements should mention very few functions. He opposes broad mission statements. He believes a mission must define the main focus of an institution, and depict the responsibilities and boundaries of those involved with it. (Goodlad, 1990). He decries mission statements using the claims “we educate” or “we are committed to excellence” claiming they are too broad. He disapproves statements that are vague, hollow or nonexistent. Such statements
leave people from within and without of the institution in the position to make up their own minds about the institution's function and worth.

While on different sides of the argument about broad mission statements, both Pearce (1994) and Goodlad (1990) agree that a mission statement promotes a public image. Pearce (1994) expresses that a mission statement reflects qualities that will attract and maintain customers, and in this respect, mission statements often reflect the expectations of the public.

Herman and Kaufman (1991) opine that a mission statement should be expressed in terms of performance and results. They give for example that a mission statement should answer the questions, "Where are we going, and how will we know when we have arrived?". They also comment that operational missions for each part of the school system should be determined, and conflicting missions should be pinpointed.

The literature would fuel inspiration to write a mission statement, highlighting assets of submitting to such a process. Goodlad (1994) perceives the mission, when shared among the faculty, engenders a sense of passion, hope and motivation. Herman (1989) states that when a mission statement is in place and accepted by all the stakeholders, the school principal will know where the school is going and how it will get there. Greenlee (1995) documents with her research that the cornerstone of successful education is the establishment of uniformly understood mission and vision statements and philosophies. Stansky (1993) found mission statements as one of eight core path components needed to achieve improved organizational climate. Barth
(1993) believes taking time to write a mission statement is like mining gold nuggets, because valuable ideas are derived.

The purpose of the next section has been to explore the literature regarding those forces outside of schools that impact on the changing roles of educational institutions.

**The Educational Mission and Society**

The literature addresses the mission statement of an educational institution as it is juxtaposed with the wants of society. Goodlad (1994) states that schooling should be an educative function. He believes that a suitable mission must be coherent and be focused on education. Sizer (1992) thinks the goals of schools should be simple, with each student mastering a number of essential skills, and being competent in certain areas of knowledge. Noddings (1986) considers the ethic of caring as the guide for school personnel. She understands the need to attend to the affective domain of students. However, this must be accomplished without diverting from an academic curriculum. As she explains it, school personnel must embrace a value of concern for their students.

Goodlad (1994) maintains that presently, schools' primary focus seems to be on child care. He discusses the research presenting large percentages of parents who want greater attention paid to the personal development of their children. Goodlad considers this an unrealistic expectation, and does not buy into the schools picking up the "slack" for the family, church, media, workplace
and any other group in society who must work along with the schools in raising the children. He is adamant that until this issue is addressed, there will be no school reform occurring. All components of society must work together in healthy relationships for any of them to effectively serve children.

Cremin (1990) points to our nation’s focus on school as the panacea to all our problems. He examines the fantasy in our country that schools can do well educating children without the other support systems playing their role. He, like Goodlad (1994), specifically notes strong families, healthy peer groups, and “excellence in television productions” as those problems which need to be faced directly. Guba (1995) sees schools as viewed as the “centerpiece for collaborative efforts among child-serving agencies striving to address the mental health and drug/alcohol concerns of student-clients”. Kagan (1997) notes that schools, formally charged with education, are now becoming partners in the social agenda. This link may be a result of an impetus from the business community or because of pressure from parents and consumer, but either way, she mentions an increase in the practice of collaborative decision making currently being practiced by schools. More power is given to parents and staff.

Parents’ expectations of what schools can accomplish are increasing. Thompson (1976) noted that schools are asked not only to teach traditional subjects but also to develop and equip the student so that she/he can adjust to life. He explains the route by which educational policymaking occurs. School board members bring with them the dominant values of the local community, fostering a path linking the school system to the community. The board of
education is the community's informal power structure. In this manner, the attitudes, values and the role expectations of parents infiltrate school systems. The fact that parents are concerned with the happiness of their children involves even students in a degree of control in the policymaking process. Thompson remarks that school policies, prior to being put into effect, are considered for the reaction of the student body and parents.

In this respect, the organization is somewhat controlled by the consumer. The literature mentions the adverse effect this can have on an organization. Murnane & Levy (1996) note that market based initiatives are not a durable form of school reform. Consumer choice, they say, does not have the expertise to tell an organization how to change; it often seeks “magic” answers to painlessly solve problems. This “saps” energy from the real work change requires. Gorman & Johnson (1991) see the challenge as being for everybody to be responsible for doing their part - community, business, and government. They advocate the schools must decline their obsession with testing and false-starts on various reforms, incorporating only those practices that have tested successfully. Only well-researched practices will contribute significantly to student success. Sybouts (1992) further denounces those outside education having a powerful influence on the role of educators. He believes that those who criticize education may not understand what education is supposed to accomplish. He feels it is a complicated question, and everyone does not agree on the answer. He cites these facts: educational planning is difficult; the social setting in which schools are set and in which educational planners must work
are complex; change is a constant factor; what people do or how they react
cannot be predicted; and there can be uncertainty about value judgements and
how people will act out on value-laden situations. McCracken's (1994) study
indicates that people do not all agree on what effective education is.
McCracken remarks that parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in the
educational process must understand as an underlying concept in school
improvement that they need a shared perception of what school effectiveness is
in order for school improvement to occur. Goodlad (1998) bolsters this idea
when he states that unlike most other professions, the teaching profession has
varied perceptions and assumptions regarding its purpose and nature.

Drucker (1992) comments about the serious nature of allowing an
outside community to dictate an organization's values. He emphasizes that an
organization cannot submerge itself in the community nor subordinate itself to
the community's ends. Its "culture" has to transcend community. It is the nature
of the task, he notes, and not the community in which the task is being
performed, that determines the culture of an organization. If an organization's
culture and the values of its community clash, the organization must prevail - or
else it will not make its social contribution. He contends that in every school in
the world, learning is considered the ultimate good. For an organization to
perform to a high standard, its members must believe that what it is doing is, in
the last analysis, the one contribution to community and society on which all
others depend. Drucker (1992) states that the purpose and function of schools
is to educate.
Goodlad (1994) believes that the teaching profession cannot be detached or autonomous from its relationship with the public in general. He indicates the need for public schools to deal with parents and communities who want it all. He also is concerned about the federal and state messages to schools, asking schools to prepare better workers and a more competitive economy. He asserts that teachers will never fulfill educational missions if other agencies, especially the home, fail in the educative role. Goodlad predicts that the more we become conscious of and disposed to improve current practices, the more we will understand what schools can and can not be expected to accomplish.

This section of the literature review examined the transition of mission statements from corporate tools to educational instruments. Once the domain of corporate America, Deming’s philosophy of Total Quality Management is now an established practice in America’s public schools. Also treated in the literature review was an understanding of what a mission statement is and the surrounding confusion about missions, the significance of the planning involved in writing it, and how and why it should be written. This section was brought to conclusion by exploring the literature regarding those forces outside of schools that impact on the changing roles of educational institutions, and consequences of such practices.

**Chapter Summary**

The purpose of this literature review has been to present the scope of the
literature treating the philosophy of education, the use of mission statements in
the corporate sector of America, and the present use of mission statements in
American public educational institutions.

**Educational Philosophy**

There are many different philosophies in existence today regarding the
function of educational institutions. The traditional philosophy that our schools
should advance intellectual development and inspire good citizenship is no
longer the dominant ideology. Other purposes for educational institutions
abound, include a wide range of thought, and are held strongly by various
pressure groups. McMannon (1997) believes the abdication of family, church,
marketplace and peers in their educative function have left schools open to
become responsible for imbuing the young with morality, facility in interpersonal
relationships, and good hygiene habits, with a long list to follow.

Part of the literature search revealed existing theory about the important
bearing good teachers have in relationship to good education. Glasser (1992)
underscores the need for good teaching practices if education is to be effective.

A need to redirect support to the basic family unit was also found in the
literature. Kagan and Weissbourd (1994) state that all institutions in society
should work together to support the basic family structure. This proves to be
semantically different from most of the literature, which calls for support of the
school from all institutions in society. Kagan and Weissbourd do not want to
support the schools so that the schools can provide all the childrens' needs, but
rather they advocate support of the family so the family can provide the children's needs. When the family unit provides the needs of children, the schools can return to focusing mainly on the provision of intellectual development. Goodlad (1992) and Slater (1993) are in alignment with this subtle yet important distinction of supporting the family institution.

The literature suggests that there is currently confusion in society regarding the mission of education. Goodlad (1997) states that schools have become involved in the role of parenting, via the need to enculturate children in the habits encouraging democracy, which have lost their place from being learned in the home. This is a challenging effort for the schools to attempt. The enormous implications have caused problems. There is tension between private purpose and common good which makes the effort even more complex. Furthermore, rhetoric and politics have caused the roles of schools to be elevated to unrealistic levels; society believes school reform is the answer to all its problems.

**Corporate Mission Statements**

In order to discuss the nature of mission statements in educational institutions, it was necessary to first determine the role served by mission statements in United States' corporations. This section defined the nature of mission statements and established the value of mission statements for corporate institutions.

Deming's philosophy for quality in organizations is grounded in
communication processes, and commitment to a mission endeavoring to produce products and services that help people live better. The literature is replete with various definitions of what a mission statement is, and how vital it is to be drawn up by members of an organization. Covey (1992) states that for the most part, unfortunately, mission statements are not taken seriously by employees because many organizations do not develop their statements with patience and long-term perspective. They do not involve members of the organization in any meaningful way. The mission statement, as a result, is not part of the company's culture.

The literature about the strategy and use of mission statements was embedded in discussion about core values, organizational culture, motivational factors and focus, and communication and strategy.

Collins and Porras (1991) make an important distinction between the guiding philosophy of an organization and its mission statement. The guiding philosophy of the organization should be generated relatively free of current environmental conditions, coming from people within the organization. It can last for a century or longer. The mission statement, however, is more short term and should be affected by the environment. Trends, technology, and other external factors must be taken into account when deciding a mission.

The literature about research on mission statements reveals that most organizations are designed to remain static. The more common experience is to find an environment fostering the use of the rhetoric of change rather than actually enacting change (Senge, 1994). Aguayo (1990) sees the problem with
most management as being structural in nature. He believes that management tends to impose its ideas on workers, attempting to control production, output or results. Such practices, he opines, are detrimental to the health of a firm.

Lee (1996) indicates research revealing that vision driven companies perform better over time. Pearce and David (1987) research suggest that firms engaged in strategic planning outperform firms that do little or no planning. Morrisey (1988) finds that most managers have a very superficial concept of mission statements.

Ireland and Hitt (1992) find the components of mission statements one of the least empirically examined issues in strategic management. Ruddell and Pettigrew's (1988) study reveals that there are corporations who have an increasing interest in the qualitative aspects of management. They state that these companies are aware that they can no longer focus only on profit margins and expect success. Attention to structure and function are being diverted to issues of an organization's ability to communicate its missions and its goals, its values and cultures and strategic visions. Anderson (1987) finds businesses who are caught up in their corporate culture are in the practice of writing mission statements.

Educational Mission Statements

This section of the literature review examined the transition of mission statements from corporate tools to educational instruments. Once the domain of corporate America, Deming's philosophy of Total Quality Management is now
an established practice in America's public schools. Using the tools and philosophy of TQM, educational organizations in America are recreating their work processes and systems of human interaction, and are writing mission statements, and their long-term vision and strategies (Bonstingl, 1992). The literature suggests that TQM, Deming's philosophy of "working smarter, not harder," has become part of the school system (Walton, 1986). Herman (1992) maintains that applying TQM to a school district will provide the district with a set of ideas meant to develop and maintain high quality school services and products.

Kagan (1997) sees it as no longer the norm to have an organizational strategy understood in terms of categorical funding. She maintains that in today's world, schools must embrace change, and understand themselves in terms of mission and results. New Jersey Department of Education Commissioner, Klagholtz, is concerned that the academic focus of schools has been degraded. He wants to focus schools back toward academia (Klagholtz, 1995).

The review of literature provided information regarding the process required for schools to create mission statements. Planning is essential, and in educational institutions, it must be directed toward change (Sybouts, 1992). Some of the literature suggests that mission statements of school systems must be broad (Pearce, 1994). Goodlad (1990), however, shows preference for singularity of mission, mentioning very few functions in the statement. He nods in disapproval on broad statements.
The literature encompasses discussion regarding the conflict between the "educative function of schools" (Goolad, 1994) and the many wants of society as to the purpose and function of schools. Parent's expectations of what schools can accomplish are increasing. School boards are the community's informal power structure, enabling such expectations a path into the school curriculum (Goolad, 1994). A study by McCracken (1994) indicates that people do not all agree on what effective education is. This contributes to the complexity of the conflict between educational institutions and society. Goodlad (1994) opines that the teaching profession cannot be detached or autonomous from its relationship with the public in general. Public schools need to deal with parents and communities who "want it all". His response to the situation is that teachers will never fulfill educational missions if other agencies, especially the home, fail in the educative role.

The following are some of the salient points made in each of the three sections of the literature review.

In the educational philosophy section, the dominant perspective demonstrated in the literature was that the boundaries are almost non-existent when discussing the role of educational institutions in American today. The roles of schools have been elevated to unrealistic levels, and their is confusion in society regarding the mission of education. The involvement with parenting is most notable, and while the preponderance of the literature demonstrates that the support of the schools by all institutions of society is a popular demand, there is only some literature suggesting the need to support the family so that
schools can return to a solely educative role.

The section on corporate mission statements explained the Deming philosophy of Total Quality Management, which calls organization to make a commitment to a mission to produce quality products and services to help people live better. Distinction is made in the literature review in this section between an organizational philosophy and a mission statement. A philosophy should be made free of current environmental conditions. It can last perhaps a century or more. However, a mission is a short term statement and should be affected by the environment. Trends, technology and other external factors must be taken into account when deciding a mission. Furthermore, the literature review indicated that managers in most organizations have a superficial concept of mission statements and maintain a culture that supports being static.

The last section of the literature review, educational mission statements, revealed an emphasis on the process and planning stage of writing a mission statement, and the rewards of doing so. There is debate about how the mission should be written. The authors argue whether it should be written in broad terms, or should it mention very few functions or whether it should be written in terms of performance and results. Most importantly in this section is the literature supporting the necessity of an organization to remain faithful to the task which it can perform regardless of outside pressure to conform to other standards than its own. It is the nature of the task and not the community in which the task is being performed, that determines the culture of an
organization. If an organization's culture and the values of its community clash, the organization must prevail - or else it will not make its social contribution. For an organization to perform to a high standard, its members must believe that what it is doing is, in the last analysis, the one contribution to community and society on which all others depend. Although various literature supports opinions of specific groups, all groups would agree that a primary function of schools is academic education.

The literature illustrates the wide range of educational philosophies proliferating today. Such an environment establishes the need for districts to have a mission statement in order to establish boundaries on educational commitments. Currently there is no study that has collected educational mission statements and analyzed them so as to determine what boundaries are being drawn in educational establishments. The balance of this study will constitute a report and analysis of empirical data resulting from the collection of the mission statements of the public school districts in the State of New Jersey.
CHAPTER III

Methodology

Chapter Three discusses the methodology utilized in this study in terms of the researcher’s procedure, the design of the study, and the treatment of the data.

Overview

The components of mission statements are among the least empirically examined issues in strategic management (Pearce & David, 1987). The purpose of this study was to gather the educational mission statements from the public school districts of New Jersey in order to improve understanding of the premises on which the public schools in New Jersey are operating. The methodology conducted to complete this study was survey research. Kerlinger (1979) stated that in survey research large and small populations are studied by means of sample to discover the relative incidence, distribution, and interrelations of social and psychological variables. It has been used mainly, but not exclusively, to find out what exists and how it exists in the social environment of a group, a geographical or political area, or even a whole country. Survey research suited the purpose of this particular study because it allowed the researcher to collect samples of mission statements from school districts, study their content, and become aware of existing values of
educational district decision makers and curriculum planners.

Jaeger (1988) stated that the purpose of survey research is to describe specific characteristics of a large group of persons, objects or institutions. Through the use of survey research, characteristics of the mission statements were studied. Qualitative research methodology was used. Rudestam and Newton (1992) point out that qualitative research designs are typically not intended to prove or test a theory, and therefore it is more likely the theory will emerge once the data are collected. After each reading of the mission statements by the researcher, patterns emerged from the data, providing an the organization of the study.

The collection of interpretive data from the district mission statements encouraged a meaningful organization of the data which fulfilled the expectation of the researcher that much can be learned about organizations through a comprehensive assessment of their written mission statements. Patton (1990) describes the practice of researching certain aspects of a program while being quite open and naturalistic in pursuing other aspects of a program. The mission statements were read by the researcher with some preconceived questions about their content. Yet as the readings proceeded, other aspects of mission statements arose, were questioned and pursued.

Patton (1990) emphasizes that human reasoning is sufficiently complex and flexible so that it can be both deductive and inductive at the same time. “The evaluator will begin to focus on verifying and elucidating what appears to be emerging- a more deductive approach to data collection and analysis.”
(Patton, 1990, p. 397) Such was the experience of the researcher in this study. As initial questions about educational mission statements were being satisfied, other observations were deduced. Patton (1990, 392) explains this “spirit of adaptability and creativity” on behalf of a researcher as “being responsive to real-world conditions and meeting stakeholder information needs.” It is the hope of the researcher that all stakeholders in the educational system of New Jersey will benefit from the information presented in the study.

**Description of the Sample**

The New Jersey State Department of Education, Division of Information, Management and Financial Services, Office of Publications and Distribution Services, provided addresses for each superintendent in each of the public school districts of New Jersey. A letter to each superintendent in the five hundred and seventy four districts was sent requesting that they return to the researcher a copy of their present mission statement in an enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope (see Appendix A). The mission statements were returned to the researcher through the United States mail. The process of analysis began.

**Analysis of Data/Study Design**

Patton (1990) states that ideas about analysis will occur as data is collected. These ideas constitute the beginning of analysis; they are part of the record. It is important to keep track of analytical insights that occur during data collection. This overlapping of data collection and analysis improves both the
quality of data collected and the quality of the analysis so long as the evaluator is careful not to allow these initial interpretations to distort additional data collection." (p. 377) As the researcher conducted an initial reading of the mission statements, ideas about categories of analysis ensued. Such analytical insights provided the researcher with the classifications of categories by which the mission statements were further examined. Three categories typing the nature of mission statements were labeled: broad in scope, narrow in scope, academic in scope.

“Content analysis is the process of identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns in the data” (Patton, 1990). Further substantive categories emerged directly from the data as the data was read a second time. Patton (1990) remarks on the extensive data generated by qualitative methods. With each subsequent reading of the data, the focus yielded to a particular category for study, data collection, and presentation by the researcher. The data was organized into four classifications: (a) a breakdown of mission statements according to three categories: broad, narrow or academic; (b) a profile of DFG groupings represented in the response rate to the study and in the breakdown of broad, narrow or academic type mission statement; (c) the presentation of basic themes which existed in the sample of mission statements; and (d) an explanation of the existence of parental roles written into the mission of the schools.

This fourth pattern of parental roles found in mission statements was studied by using inductive analysis and sensitizing concepts. “Inductive
analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data, they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis. The analyst looks for natural variation in the data" (Patton, 1990, 390). Patton also explains about "sensitizing concepts". Sensitizing concepts are concepts that the analyst brings to the data. They have their origins "in social science theory, the research literature, or evaluation issues identified at the beginning of a study" (Patton, 1990). They give the analyst a "general sense of reference" and provide "directions along which to look" (Blumer, 1969). Patton notes: "The inductive application of sensitizing concepts is to examine how the concept is manifest in a particular setting or among a particular group of people".

The researcher used the sensitizing concept of "parental roles" as they are expressed as school responsibilities, to study the mission statements. The concept had its origin in the research literature. Goodlad (1997) stated that schools have become involved in the role of parenting. Both Garbarino (1997) and Lewis (1997) comment on how schools are and should be accepting parental roles.

The researcher used the idea of parental roles to examine how often the functions which arguably belong to parents are expressed in the mission statement. This particular analysis defines the extent to which the schools have adopted parental roles. The researcher considers this information, based on empirical data taken from primary sources such a mission statements, relevant and important. It is both basic research, which "contributes to fundamental
knowledge and theory" regarding current educational practices, and applied research, which "illuminates a societal concern" (Patton, 1990).
CHAPTER IV

Findings

Chapter Four presents the researcher’s findings in the qualitative analysis of the mission statements in New Jersey’s public school districts. This chapter (a) defines three basic types of mission statements: broad, vague or academic; (b) profiles DFG classifications as they are represented in the sample and in the three types of mission statements; (c) presents six basic themes that run through the mission statements, and (d) demonstrates the occurrence rates of parental roles as they are written into the mission statements of school districts.

At the time in which the researcher sent out requests to the districts for their mission statements, 574 districts existed in the State of New Jersey. At the time in which the responses were received, 573 districts existed in the State of New Jersey. This was due to the fact that two districts had combined to form one regional school. The school districts of New Jersey enthusiastically responded to the request for their mission statements. The researcher received a response from 336 districts. While 18 districts wrote to state they did not have a mission statement, and despite 10 districts which returned documents considered unusable as mission statements by the researcher, their remained 308 documents, as indicated in Table 1, that were analyzed for this investigation. At a return rate of 53.6%, a good sample was provided for the investigation.
Types of Mission Statements

The researcher examined the sample of mission statements using qualitative inquiry. Patton (1990) clearly states that with qualitative inquiry, the evaluator who has studied the data and reflected at length about the patterns and themes that run through the data is qualified to make conjecture about their meaning.

The present findings are a result of the researcher's examination of the data. Each of the mission statements were read initially as they were received. A second comprehensive reading followed this once the entire collection was complete. Pursuant to the second reading, the researcher was able to discern three basic patterns present in the comprehensive sample: (a) those mission statements which were broad in their nature; the mission statement focused on numerous agendas, (b) those which were vague in their nature; the mission statement left the researcher in the position to make up her own mind about the institution's function and worth after reading it, (Goodlad, 1990), and (c) those mission statements which were academic in nature; the mission statement's prevalent focus was directed toward providing an academically structured educational program. Table 2, 3 and 4 provide examples of the language used in the classification process of a mission statement being considered broad, vague or academic.

Upon being separated and counted into these 3 categories, there were there were 228 broad, 51 vague, and 29 academic type mission statements
(see Table 1).

As is apparent in Table 1, a significant majority of public school districts in New Jersey have broad mission statements. Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 follow.
DFG Representation of Mission Statements

Economic Representation of General Sample

The researcher next decided to organize the data using the DFG classification system. This system was utilized in order to analyze the DFG type of the mission statements returned for the investigation. This, in turn, allowed a determination to be made regarding the field from which the sample was collected. The findings indicated that the sample was not limited to districts from particular economic standings. The returned mission statements were a good sample, representative of all the economic levels of New Jersey districts. Table 5 shows that there was a consistent response rate of returned mission statements from all the New Jersey public school districts. There was a comparatively low return rate of 40.2% from the F/G districts, and a comparatively high return rate of 73.3% from the J districts. The other districts returned their mission statements at rates between 44.9% through 60.2%, all fairly close to a rate of 50%. Even considering the lowest (F/G: 40.2%) and highest (J: 73.3%) extremes, they were close enough to 50% to consider the return of mission statements as a balanced perspective of all economic levels. Districts from all DFG classifications sent enough mission statements to provide the investigation with an adequate sample. This finding confirms that regardless of its economic standing, a district's mission statement was represented in this study.
Table 1

Response Analysis to the Request to Districts for Their Mission Statement

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of mailings</td>
<td>574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>238 (41.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>336 (58.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses replying:

- That the district did not have a mission statement: 18 (3.1%)
- With material that could not be considered a mission statement: 10 (1.7%)
- With usable mission statements: 308 (53.8%)
  - Broad: 228
  - Vague: 51
  - Academic: 29

Note. At the time of the mailing, there were 574 districts. At the time the researcher received the responses, there were 573 districts, as two districts were joined together to form one regional school district.
Table 2

Samples of Mission Statements Classified as "Broad"

__________________________________________________________
Sample 1:

"The (school district's name) will continually improve its programs and educational environmental striving to:

1. Maximize academic, social, and physical growth for all students.

2. Instill a sense of responsibility; develop positive self-concepts, emphasize good citizenship behaviours;

3. Provide exemplary curricular and extra curricular offerings and activities for all students;

4. Maintain state of the art technology related resources to enhance student learning;

5. Foster community pride; and encourage community involvement;

6. Employ the best trained personnel; utilize top quality materials, equipment and resources; and

7. Foster the awareness that knowledge is valued as well as a positive life long attitude toward learning.

__________________________________________________________
Sample 2:

"The mission of the (district name) is to prepare all of our students for their future role in society. Our objective is to provide an educational program designed to enable all students to acquire knowledge and to assume constructive self-direction to their fullest potential through the following:
To acquire basic skills which will enable each student to obtain information, solve problems, think critically and communicate effectively.

To acquire knowledge concerning physical, biological and social sciences, family life, and history.

To acquire the knowledge, skills, and understanding that permit each student to play a satisfying and responsible role as an active participant in the democratic process.

To develop the basis for the acquisition of job entry skills, and to be flexible, future leaders, with an understanding and appreciation of people from different cultural backgrounds.

To develop an understanding of her/his own worth, and potential abilities while developing a love of learning that will last a lifetime.

To acquire those habits, attitudes and ethical principles that promote both physical and mental public health.

To acquire the ability and desire to express herself/himself creatively in one or more of the arts, and to appreciate the aesthetic expressions of other people.

The (district's name) is committed to education of the highest quality and the continuous improvement of programs and instruction. This is accomplished through individual and group instruction, comprehensive guidance, facilities,
and services. In addition specialized services are provided to students in need. An environment is created in which competition is positive.

A positive working environment is fostered by securing the cooperation of parents and community groups. Teachers of the highest quality are recruited and opportunities are provided for teaching staff members and pupils to make recommendations concerning the operation of the schools.

The (district's name) endeavor(s) to provide resources for education, emphasizing maximum efficiency."

________________________________________________________________________

Sample 3:

"Our mission is to create an educational environment which: provides learning experiences that enable each child to reach his/her potential; prepares students for the future; creates opportunities for personal growth, self-esteem and success; respects cultural differences while promoting acceptance and understanding.

________________________________________________________________________

Sample 4:

"With the verbal, fiscal, and spiritual support of the people of (district's name), the children who attend (district's name) public schools shall be intellectually stimulated, instructionally challenged, and emotionally motivated to visually display and mentally portray their own unique gifts and talents as enhanced by the type of education offer by (district's name)."
Table 3

Samples of Mission Statements Classified as “Vague”

Sample 1:

“We will provide a quality educational environment which will prepare our community of learners to succeed in an ever changing world.”

Sample 2:

“(District’s name) will ensure for each child, meaningful and challenging educational experiences in a supportive caring environment.”

Sample 3:

“To provide an educational environment where all children learn and find success.”

Sample 4:

“To partner with parents, community and educators in preparing our youth with skills and tools to meet the challenges of the 21st century.”
Table 4

Samples of Mission Statements Classified as "Academic"

Sample 1:

"The (district’s name) promotes the idea that learning is the stepping stone to opportunity and that opportunity in tomorrow’s society will be a true advantage to be used carefully. Students must be taught to think critically and to write and speak with accuracy and meaning.

Students at all levels will be cognitively challenged in a continuing and spiraling fashion. The areas of physical education, fine arts and the processes of socialization and decision making are important components of a student’s life that will be correlated and integrated into the daily academic program.

The basic skills, including reading, writing and mathematics, will be highlighted and reinforced on a daily basis."

Sample 2:

"The mission of the (district’s name) is to provide an educational program for all students in order to build a strong foundation of knowledge and decision-making skills. Our students will need these skills to meet the challenges they will encounter as citizens in the 21st century society. In order to accomplish this, the district will engage in an energetic partnership with all components of our culturally-diverse community. The (district’s name) will seek to marshal
Table 4 - Continued

Sample 2 - continued

resources which will provide the highest quality intellectual and human relations necessary for the development of all students.”

Sample 3:

“The district’s primary mission is to help our youth develop the powers of literacy and the competencies for living in the Information Age. The term “literacy” is used because it connotes a classical education, and, in many ways, that is still the best preparation we can give to our youth. Literacy in the future, however, will demand more than knowledge of books and letters, more than know how to read and write - as important as those abilities are. To be literate and competent will require understanding that complexities of the technological world: how it works, how it got the way it is, how one relates to it, how one influences its direction, what are reasonable expectations for the future. To fulfill this mission, we must create a climate and design programs that emphasize the components of a sound education: mastering language; thinking, learning, and a problem solving; making decisions and working together; feeling confident; feeling confident in a turbulent world.”
Sample 4:

"All...students will demonstrate mastery of academic skills and requisite competencies which will enable them to achieve their goals for higher education and chosen career opportunities. We shall increase the percentage of students achieving those goals each year. In pursuit of this mission we will form meaningful and productive partnerships with parents, citizens, and business to bring about change and acquire resources needed to accomplish our mission."
Table 5

Profile of Return Rate of Mission Statements by DFG Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DFG Classification</th>
<th># of Mission Statements Received</th>
<th>% of Mission Statements Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of Districts in DFG Classification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18/35</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>35/78</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/D</td>
<td>35/75</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/E</td>
<td>47/100</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/G</td>
<td>35/87</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G/H</td>
<td>47/78</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>58/105</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>11/15</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>286/573</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Although there was a sample of 308 district mission statements for this investigation, only 286 were usable with any DFG research. This was due to the fact that 12 districts did not identify themselves and could not, therefore, be classified into a DFG category.
Economic Representation of Broad, Vague or Academic Type Mission

Statement

A second deliberation was made utilizing the DFG classification system. The researcher wanted to determine if any particular DFG category district returned more broad, vague or academic type mission statements. This analysis provided information indicating whether a lower, higher or middle class DFG district had a tendency to write a broad, vague or academic type mission statement.

The finding, as indicated in Table 6, revealed that there was no particular DFG category district which had a tendency to write a broad, vague or academic type mission statement. Rather, the findings show that all DFG category districts write a proportionately high number of broad mission statements. Economic classification did not single out one class district over another for writing a particular type mission statement. The pattern which existed reflected the singular experience that each district wrote many more broad type mission statements than any other type mission statements, regardless of economic classification. Also revealed as indicated in Table 6 is the preponderance of districts to have written vague mission statements more often than academic mission statements. Vague mission statements were written more often than academic mission statements in six out of eight DFG districts: A, B, D/E, F/G, G/H and I. Academic mission statements were the least written in six out of eight DFG classifications, and they were only written more than vague mission statements in one DFG classification: the highest DFG classification ("J") had
one academic and no vague mission statements. The C/D DFG classification had a tie; there were three vague and three academic mission statements.

These findings confirmed that all economic levels of New Jersey public school districts wrote a majority of broad mission statements. Vague mission statements were written second most frequently, and academic mission statements were written the least. Table 6 follows.
Table 6

Profile of Returned Mission Statements by DFG Classification and Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DFG Class</th>
<th>Total # of mission statements returned</th>
<th>Breakdown by category:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/D</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/E</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/G</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G/H</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL     | 286                                   | 21      | 7.3   | 216   | 75.5  | 49    | 17.1  |

Note. Although there was a sample of 308 district mission statements for this investigation, only 286 were usable with any DFG research. This was due to the fact that 12 districts did not identify themselves and could not, therefore, be classified into a DFG category.
Themes Occurring in Mission Statements

The qualitative analyst's effort at uncovering patterns, themes, and categories is a creative process that requires making carefully considered judgements about what is really significant and meaningful in the data (Patton, 1990). The outcome of such an endeavor would not be an "elegant theory or carefully conceptualized typology". Rather, the process of going over the data, organizing the data, and checking the findings with care will have insured a "practical, utilization-focused evaluation." (Patton, 1990).

The process of reviewing the data proceeded. The next emergent pattern gradually observed by the researcher was that of certain similar, comparable themes written into very many mission statements. Six themes became apparent and familiar to the researcher due to their repetitive occurrence in the sample. These themes were charted, organized and checked against the data. The results of this evaluation are presented next. This information provides empirical data as evidence in documenting New Jersey public school districts' expressions of beliefs, values, aspirations, and philosophical priorities.

Identifying Six Dominant Themes Found in Mission Statements

Due to their widespread repetition in the data, it became apparent to the researcher that most of the New Jersey districts were familiar with certain concepts for inclusion in their mission statement. These concepts, found frequently in the sample, were identified, categorized and labeled as six themes. The themes, listed along with examples of their actual language in
Table 7, were: (a) statements indicating that students would become self-directed learners; (b) statements promising students would reach their maximum capacity to learn; (c) statements insuring the best possible education shall be provided for all students; (d) statements referring to the support of the affective domain of the students; (e) statements enlisting support from the parents and community in the educational endeavor; and (f) statements acknowledging the district’s responsibility to develop students into good citizens. Table 7 follows.
Table 7

**Six Dominant Themes Running Through Sample of Mission Statements**

I. Students will learn to be self-directed learners.

Samples of actual language:

"students will become lifelong learners"

"a lifetime of continuous learning"

"students will develop a love of learning"

"a lifetime love and appreciation of learning"

II. Students will reach their maximum capacity as learners.

Samples of actual language:

"enabling all students to reach their full potential"

"prepares students to reach their fullest potential"

"maximize each student's potential for acquiring, using and enjoying knowledge"

"fulfill their individual potential"

III. Students will be provided with the highest quality of education.

Samples of actual language:

"exemplary educational foundation"

"diverse and challenging educational program"
Table 7

Six Dominant Themes Running Through Sample of Mission Statements

I. Students will learn to be self-directed learners.

Samples of actual language:

"students will become lifelong learners"
"a lifetime of continuous learning"
"students will develop a love of learning"
"a lifetime love and appreciation of learning"

II. Students will reach their maximum capacity as learners.

Samples of actual language:

"enabling all students to reach their full potential"
"prepares students to reach their fullest potential"
"maximize each student's potential for acquiring, using and enjoying knowledge"
"fulfill their individual potential"

III. Students will be provided with the highest quality of education.

Samples of actual language:

"exemplary educational foundation"
"diverse and challenging educational program"
Table 7- Continued

Theme III- continued

"exemplary educational experiences"

"an optimal learning environment"

IV. Students’ affective domain needs will be met.

Samples of actual language:

"we will provide a nurturing environment"

"encourage all areas of self-expression"

"foster the physical, social, and emotional well being of each student"

"meet each student’s emotional needs"

"self-esteem is promoted"

"fostering self-confidence"

"develop respect for themselves"

V. The educational endeavor includes parents and the community.

Samples of actual language:

"fostered only through the cooperative efforts of the home, school and community"

"with an environment that supports the involvement of students,
Table 7 - Continued

Theme V - continued

parents and professional staff

"a joint venture involving the student, the family, the school, and
the community"

VI. Good citizenship is an educational goal.

Samples of actual language:

"fostering social responsibility"; "develop civic responsibility"

"empower them to be productive and responsible citizens"
Frequency of Themes in Mission Statements

A coding system was next developed to tabulate the incidence of the occurrence of each theme in the entire sample of mission statements. Each theme was coded by color. Then, as the theme was identified within the body of each mission statement, it was highlighted in its color code. When each theme in each of the mission statements was identified and coded, tabulation was performed to determine the number of times each theme was written in the overall sample of mission statements. The calculations showed one theme, Theme IV, stating students’ affective domain needs will be met, was used by a majority of New Jersey districts. Two themes, Theme VI, stating good citizenship was an educational goal, and Theme III, stating students will be provided with the highest quality of education, were used by more than half the districts in New Jersey.

Table 8 illustrates the incidence of the recurrent themes in two ways: (a) the total number of times each of the six themes was written, and (b) the number of times each theme appeared in an Academic, Broad or Vague type mission statement. This second breakdown, by mission statement types, was undertaken in order to identify if any of the three types of mission statements had higher rates of incidence with any particular themes. The discussion of these two aspects of the table follow.

Breakdown of themes by frequency; total times each theme is used.

Upon examination of the last column, “Total”, the findings indicated that the theme most written into complete sample of mission statements was Theme
IV: that the needs of the students' affective domain will be met by the school district. This theme was recorded a total of two hundred fifteen (215) times in a sample of 308. The theme written with the next highest frequency was Theme VI, that students will be educated in the skills of good citizenship. This theme was written 163 times in 308 mission statements. The theme recorded with the third highest frequency was Theme III, providing a high quality standard of education, written 161 times in the mission statements. Theme V, including parents and community was written 134 times; Theme I, students becoming self-directed learners was written 127 times; and Theme II, students being brought to their maximum capacity as learners, was used the least of all the themes, having been written 111 times.

In summary, three themes occur in more than half of the districts' mission statements: Theme IV, used 215 times out of a sample of 308; Theme VI, used 163 times out of a sample of 308; and Theme III, used 161 times out of a sample of 308. The other three themes were used in more than one-third of the mission statements: Theme V, used 134 times; Theme I, used 127 times, and Theme III, used 111 times. It can be stated, therefore, that half of the six themes were used in more than half of the sample of mission statements and that the remaining three themes were used in more than one-third of the mission statements.

Breakdown of themes by type of mission statement.

Analyzing the themes using the breakdown into Academic, Broad or Vague type mission statements was undertaken to establish if any of these
themes were written with most or least frequency in all three types of mission statements. The following presentation explains the findings.

No one theme was found to have the most or least usage by all three types of mission statements.

Examination of the column for Broad type mission statements in Table 8 revealed an identical order of "most to least" of themes as was shown for the overall Total column. Comparing the Broad column with the overall Total column, the exact same themes were first most commonly written, second most commonly written, third most commonly written, fourth, fifth and sixth most commonly written. That is, Theme IV, stating the students' affective domain needs will be met, is the most commonly written theme for Broad type mission statements and it is the most commonly used overall theme; Theme VI, stating that good citizenship skills will be taught, is the second most commonly used Broad theme as well as second most commonly used overall theme; and Theme III, stating that students will be provided with the highest quality education, is the third most commonly used Broad as well as overall theme. The order continued to match through the fourth, fifth and sixth themes. That is, Theme V, stating that parents and community will be included in the educational endeavor, is the fourth most commonly written Broad type and overall theme; Theme I, stating that students will learn to become self-directed learners is the fifth most commonly written Broad type and overall theme; and Theme II, stating that students will reach their maximum capacity as learners was the sixth most commonly written Broad type and overall theme. Theme IV, written 187 times
out of a sample of 228 districts, showed being used in a majority of the districts which wrote broad mission statements. Theme VI, written 136 times out of a sample of 228 districts, was used in over half of the districts which wrote broad mission statements.

Examination of the column for Academic type mission statements showed Theme III, stating that a high quality education will be provided, had the highest rate of usage. It was written 21 times out of a sample of 29 districts. Theme II, stating that students will reach their maximum capacity as learners, was written with the second highest frequency: 17 times in a sample of 29 districts. Theme V, stating that the educational endeavor shall include parents and community, was third highest in frequency of usage: 15 times in sample of 29 districts. Theme IV, stating that students’ affective domain needs shall be met, was used fourth most commonly: found 14 times in 29 districts. Theme VI, stating that students shall learn good citizenship skills, was used fifth most commonly: found 11 times in 29 districts. Theme I, stating that students shall learn to become self-directed learners, was the least used theme. It was found in 6 out of 29 district’s mission statements.

The column displaying the frequency of themes used in the Vague type mission statements revealed Theme III, stating provision of a high quality education, had the highest rate of usage: it was used 27 times in 51 districts. Theme V, stating that the educational endeavor shall include parents and community, was in second place for rate of usage: it was used 19 times in 51 districts. Theme VI, stating that students shall learn good citizenship skills, was
used third most commonly: it appeared in 16 out of 51 district mission statements. Theme IV, stating that students' affective domain needs shall be met, was in fourth place: it appeared in 14 out of 51 mission statements. Theme I, stating that students shall learn to become self-directed learners, was in fifth place: it was stated in 12 out of 51 mission statements. Theme II, stating that students will reach their maximum capacity as learners, was written least among the themes in vague type mission statements: it was stated 11 times in a sample of 51.

The summary of the findings for the frequency of themes found in the breakdown of mission statements into Academic, Broad and Vague is the following. Within its own category, each type mission statement had a theme which was used more than half of the time. Out of these six themes, one was written most frequently for two types of mission statements. Both the Academic and Vague type mission statements were found to have Theme III, stating students will be provided with the highest quality education, with the highest frequency of usage. This same theme was found written in frequency in third place for Broad type mission statements.

Academic and Vague type mission statements also both had placed Theme IV, which pertained to meeting the affective domain needs of each student, in fourth place for usage frequency. Broad type mission statements had placed this same Theme IV in first place for usage frequency.

Another common finding was found for Broad and Vague type mission statements. Each had Theme V, stating students will learn to be self-directed
learners, in fifth place for usage frequency and Theme II, stating students will reach their maximum capacity as learners, in last (sixth) place for usage frequency.

Generally speaking, no one theme was found to have the most or least usage by all three types of mission statements. Table 8 follows.
Table 8

Amount of Times the Six Dominant Themes Were Stated in the Entire Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Mission Statement</th>
<th>Academic (N=28)</th>
<th>Broad (N=228)</th>
<th>Vague (N=51)</th>
<th>Total (N=308)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Students will learn to be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-directed learners.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Students will reach their</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maximum capacity as learners.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Students will be provided with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the highest quality of education.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Students’ affective domain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needs will be met.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. The educational endeavor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>includes parents and community.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Good citizenship is an</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educational goal.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Occurrence Patterns of Themes in Mission Statements

Once the frequency rates of six themes being written in the sample was established, the concern was to determine the number of themes which were written in each mission statement. The endeavor sought to discover a ratio of one out of six themes that might occur in each mission statement. The researcher examined each mission statement, one by one, and kept a count of the number of themes found in each one. The final tabulation recorded the number of mission statements which had incorporated one, two, three, four, five or six of the themes into the body of its statement.

Two tables, Table 9 and 10 illustrate the findings. The tables were labeled respectively into “Half of More” and “Less than Half”. Table 9, “Half or More”, refers to the number of districts which had half or more of the six themes written into their mission statement. “6/6” means that all six themes were stated in one mission statement. “5/6” indicates that five out of the six themes were stated in one mission statement. Table 10, “Less than Half” reveals how many districts used less than half of the six themes in their mission statement. The 2/6 column refers to the number of mission statements which had only two out of the six themes written into them. The 1/6 column refers to the number of mission statements which had only one of the six themes written into them. Both Tables 9 and 10 relay concepts which explain the numbers of themes, out of a possibility of six, which were written into single mission statements.
Half or More

When looking at the Total numbers at the bottom of the 6/6 column in Table 9, there were 7 districts in the state which included all six themes in their written mission statements. Six of these seven mission statements were Broad type mission statements; one was Academic in type. The same Total number grew higher in the 5/6 column where 36 districts included five out of the six themes into their mission statements. The Total grew higher again for the 4/6 column, where 73 districts included four out of the six themes into their mission statements. The Total for the last column, 3/6 showed that the highest number of districts included three out of six of the themes into their mission statement. Districts that wrote Broad type mission statements made up the majority of numbers across all columns.

Less than Half

The pattern found in Table 9 where the Total numbers grew higher as the ratio of themes found in a mission statement grew lower was reversed in Table 10. In Table 10 the Total numbers at the bottom of the 2/6, 1/6, 0/6 columns grew progressively lower as the ratio of themes contained in a mission statement grew lower. There were 67 mission statements with 2/6 themes contained in them, 35 mission statements with 1/6 themes contained in them, and 10 mission statements with no similar themes written into them. Between Table 9 and 10, one can observe that the bulk of the mission statements had two, three and four themes written in them. The highest numbers showed 80
mission statements which had 3 out of 6 themes written in them (Table 9). In both Tables 9 and 10, the Broad type mission statements have the highest rates of multiple themes, except in Table 10, “Less than Half”, where more Vague mission statements than Broad had 1/6 and 0/6 themes included in them. This is the only variation in the pattern of Broad type mission statements consistently having the highest numbers of multiple themes included in them.

In summary, when examining Tables 9 and 10, it can be derived that higher numbers of districts had “half or more” of the six themes in their mission statement than the districts which had “less than half” of the themes in their mission statement. Table 9 reveals 196 (63.6%) districts have half or more of these six themes included in each one of their mission statements. As evidenced in Table 10, 112 (36.4%) districts have less than half of these six themes included in their mission statements.

This finding indicated that the New Jersey public schools had a basis of common ideas about their mission.
Table 9

Occurrence Patterns in Mission Statements: Six Dominant Themes

"Half or More"

Number of themes, out of a possibility of six, written into a single mission statement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6/6</th>
<th>5/6</th>
<th>4/6</th>
<th>3/6</th>
<th>Total half or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic (N=29)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague (N=51)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad (N=228)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N=308)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

**Occurrence Patterns in Mission Statements: Six Dominant Themes**

"Less than Half"

Number of themes, out of a possibility of six, written into a single mission statement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2/6</th>
<th>1/6</th>
<th>0/6</th>
<th>Total less than half</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic (N=29)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague (N=51)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad (N=228)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: (N=308)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Both schools in the 0/6 column with Academic type mission statements were vocational schools.
Parental Roles As Stated in School District Mission Statements

Patton (1990, 422) states: “In the course of gathering data, ideas about possible analysis will occur. Those ideas constitute the beginning of analysis; they are part of the record. It is important to keep track of analytical insights that occur during data collection.”

As the data was collected and read, the idea that parental roles were being included in mission statements in the guise of district responsibilities began to occur to the researcher. This idea had been indicated in the literature review where it was stated that current policies in education often contribute to the subversion of parenting and family life (Lickona, 1991; Barber, 1997; Goodlad, 1992 and 1997; Garbarino, 1997; and Lewis, 1997). Kagan (1991) referred to the tension that existed in the beginning of educational institutions in the last century and continue fragmenting it today between children learning from their parents as opposed to learning “out-of-the-home”. This investigation concluded with an analysis of instances where roles which arguably belong to parents were written into the mission statements as the roles of the schools.

The process of analyzing parental roles in mission statements began with the researcher re-reading each mission statement in the sample again. When identified as such, each “parental role statement” was coded. What was classified as a parental role were statements that the researcher believed arguably reflected a responsibility of parents, not the school. Table 11 gives three samples of such language. The language in the samples was the “strongest” of the language classified as “parental”. Not all “parental role
statements” had the same emphasis as the samples. Phrases such as: the school will “produce responsible...self respecting and motivated graduates”, the district will “encourage respect for oneself”, the school will “teach an appreciation for the value of every individual”, “The school is committed to preparing students to function effectively in a multi-racial and culturally diverse society”, “students will have attained the expertise to become humane”, the school district will provide “excellent role models to provide self-discipline”, and references to the school preparing students for happy and successful lives suggested to this researcher a “parental role”. These type statements seemed indicative that the school undertook to provide for the children something which preferably would be provided for them by their parents.

The number of times parental roles were found in the sample was then counted. This documentation was completed keeping intact the categories of mission statement type: Broad, Academic and Vague. These three categories were kept in order to provide clarity regarding the inclusion of parental roles in mission statements. The categories serve to provide useful distinctions regarding which type of mission statements have the abundance of and/or the least of parental roles. Table 11 illustrates the findings of the investigator for this situation.

The analysis revealed that there were 231 out of 308 mission statements containing parental roles; 77 out of 308 did not. In summary, a majority of the mission statements contain parental roles. Analysis of the mission statements by categories of Broad, Academic or Vague, the research disclosed that Broad
and Academic mission statements contain a majority of parental roles. In the sample of 228 Broad type mission statements, 188 included parental roles; only 40 of the 228 did not. In the category of Academic, there were 20 out of 29 mission statements that included parental roles in the body of their statement; 9 of the 29 did not have parental roles in the body of their statement. In contrast, the Vague mission statements had a close split in the numbers of those that did have parental roles and those that did not. Mission statements classified as Vague included parental roles in 23 out of 51 of their mission statements; 28 of the 51 did not have parental roles in the body of their statement. Also in contrast, the Vague type mission statement was the only type wherein there were less mission statements with parental roles than those that did have parental roles.

These findings supported the researcher's proposal that parental roles were present in the school districts' mission statements. Table 11 follows.
Table 11

Parental Roles Stated in Mission Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Mission Statement:</th>
<th>Broad (N=229)</th>
<th>Academic (N=29)</th>
<th>Vague (N=51)</th>
<th>TOTAL (N=309)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of mission statements with parental roles* written into them</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of mission statements with no parental roles written into them</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Samples of language which signified a parental role:

Sample A:
"...the ...schools are committed to helping students develop intellectual habits and a moral conscience that they can use in their everyday lives."

Sample B:
"Opportunities will be provided for students to develop self-esteem and social values."

Sample C:
"The Board believes that each individual should be...provided with ...opportunities for learning experiences designed to promote behavioral changes that will affect continuing satisfactory adjustments to life" and "...our school system must foster a high level of moral and ethical beliefs as guidelines for influencing the actions of students..."."
Chapter Summary

The current findings suggest four major indications. First, there are three basic types of mission statements: Broad, Academic and Vague. Categorized as such, the majority of mission statements are the Broad type. Vague mission statements are the second most frequently written type mission statements, and Academic mission statements are written with the least frequency by New Jersey public school districts.

Second, using a DFG classification system to analyze the mission statements, the following is true: (a) there was a consistent response rate of returned mission statements from all of the New Jersey public school districts; and (b) all economic levels of New Jersey public school districts wrote a majority of Broad type mission statements, followed by Vague, with Academic type mission statements being the least written.

Third, a pattern of six identifiable themes were found in the sample of mission statements: (a) statements indicating that students would become self-directed learners; (b) statements promising students would reach their maximum capacity to learn; (c) statements insuring the best possible education shall be provided for all students; (d) statements referring to the support of the affective domain of the students; (e) statements enlisting support from the parents and community in the educational endeavor; and (f) statements acknowledging the district’s responsibility to develop students into good citizens. The most commonly written theme was that the affective domain of the students would be supported. Half of the themes were used by more than half
the districts in New Jersey: the aforementioned theme stating that students' affective domain needs would be met, one stating that good citizenship was an educational goal, and one stating that students would be provided with the highest quality of education. The other half of the themes were used by more than one-third of the districts in their mission statement. An analysis of these when the mission statements were broken down into Broad, Academic and Vague did not reveal that any one of the six themes were used with most or least frequency in all three types of mission statements. When compared with each other, the Broad, Academic and Vague mission statements had different frequency-usage patterns with all six themes.

Fourth, and continuing to use themes as an organizing principle, the mission statements were analyzed to determine how many each of the six themes occurred in each single mission statement. The results of this analysis provided the information that the majority of mission statements each contain either 4/6, 3/6 or 2/6 of the themes in them, with the most mission statements containing half (3/6) of the themes. Broad type mission statements had the highest rate of multiple themes in one single mission statement.

The fifth finding confirmed the presence of parental roles mission statements. Parental roles were found in 231 out of 308 of the mission statements.
CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations and Implications

Summary

The purpose of this study was to use empirical data to describe the composition of New Jersey public school educational mission statements. The goal of the investigation was to collect a viable sample of district mission statements, to document their characteristics by use of qualitative evaluation, and ultimately to gain an insight about how the school districts view their roles as educators existing in a pluraliform society. Jones and Kahner (1995) wrote that the mission statement is the element of a school district’s philosophy that reveals the values of the strategic decision makers and their intent for the district’s present and future curriculum. It is the tool which reveals an organization’s values better than any other document. The information gathered from the sample of mission statements collected from New Jersey’s public schools for this research arrived using empirical data. The results of this investigation offer an initial attempt at chronicling a perspective of education as it is in the year 2000. Such a study, never previously done, can provide useful information for all stakeholders in education.

Upon requesting mission statements from 574 districts, responses were received from 336 (58.5%) of them. From these responses, 308 (53.6%) supplied mission statements that were analyzed for this study.
Five areas of concentration characterized the study: (a) Types of mission statements, (b) DFG representation of mission statements, (c) Themes occurring in mission statements, (d) Occurrence patterns of themes in mission statements, and (e) Parental roles found in mission statements.

**Types of Mission Statements**

Three basic types of mission statements emerged from the sample: Broad, Vague and Academic.

**Broad mission statements.**

Broad type mission statements were classified as such due to the numerous agendas they encompassed. There were 228 Broad mission statements in the sample of 308 (74%). An example of such a mission statement follows:

"The (school district’s name) will continually improve its programs and educational environmental striving to: 1. Maximize academic, social, and physical growth for all students; 2. Instill a sense of responsibility; develop positive self-concepts, emphasize good citizenship behaviors; 3. Provide exemplary curricular and extra curricular offerings and activities for all students; 4. Maintain state of the art technology related resources to enhance student learning; 5. Foster community pride; and encourage community involvement; 6. Employ the best trained personnel; utilize top quality materials, equipment and resources; and 7. Foster the awareness that knowledge is valued as well as a positive life long attitude toward learning."

**Vague mission statements.**

Goodlad (1990) stated that if one is left in the position to make up his or
her own mind about an institution's function and worth after reading its mission statement, the mission statement is vague. The researcher classified 51 (17%) of the mission statements in the sample of 308 as this type. An example of the wording in a mission statement classified as vague follows.

"We will provide a quality educational environment which will prepare our community of learners to succeed in an ever changing world."

**Academic mission statements.**

When the prevalent focus of the mission statement was directed toward providing an academically structured educational program, it was classified as an Academic type mission statement. The researcher identified 29 (9%) mission statements in the sample of 308 as Academic. An example of such a mission statement follows.

"The (district’s name) promotes the idea that learning is the stepping stone to opportunity and that opportunity in tomorrow’s society will be a true advantage to be used carefully. Students must be taught to think critically and to write and speak with accuracy and meaning.

Students at all levels will be cognitively challenged in a continuing and spiraling fashion. The areas of physical education, fine arts and the processes of socialization and decision making are important components of a student’s life that will be correlated and integrated into the daily academic program.

The basic skills, including reading, writing and mathematics, will be highlighted and reinforced on a daily basis."
DFG Representation

The next part of the process of analyzing the mission statements involved a two part determination of the DFG make-up of the sample. The first determination revealed the basic economic representation of the sample of mission statements. The researcher was able to qualify that the sample of mission statements was a good representation from all districts in the state, regardless of their economic standing. There was a consistent response rate of returned mission statements from all the New Jersey public school districts. There was a comparatively low return rate of 40.2% from the F/G districts, and a comparatively high return rate of 73.3% from the J districts. However, all other districts returned a mission statement at rates between 44.9% through 60.2%, all equally close to a rate of 50%. This finding confirmed that the sample was not made up of mission statements from any one particular type of economic group, but was rather an accurate portrayal of mission statements from the entire state which included all economic levels of income.

The second determination utilizing the DFG component of the sample was the designation of economic income attached to the type of mission statement a district wrote: Broad, Vague or Academic. The researcher wanted to document whether a situation existed whereby a certain level of economic income was indicative of a certain type of mission statement the district wrote.

The findings revealed that there was no particular type of mission statement written more predominantly by any DFG class district. The findings also showed that regardless of DFG standing, all districts wrote a
proportionately high number of Broad type mission statements. Following this pattern was the finding that Vague type mission statements were written more often than Academic mission statements in six out of eight DFG districts. Those six districts were A, B, D/E, F/G, G/H and I. Again, no pattern is clear that the economic standing influenced the type of mission statement a district wrote. Finally, Academic mission statements were the least written in six out of eight DFG classifications. Academic mission statements were only written more than Vague mission statements in one DFG classification, the highest of the economic classes, a "J" district. This district had one Academic mission statement and no Vague mission statements. The other instance of Academic mission statements not being the least written were in the C/D economic class, where there was a tie between three Vague and three Academic mission statements.

**Themes Occurring in Mission Statements**

One of the more valuable insights the study provided was a realistic account of the themes the New Jersey public school's included in their mission statements. The researcher excerpted six basic themes from the mission statements evaluated.

**Identifying six dominant themes.**

There were six identifiable themes which emerged from the sample of mission statements. They were: (a) Statements indicating that students would
become self-directed learners; (b) Statements promising students would reach their maximum capacity to learn; (c) Statements insuring the best possible education shall be provided for all students; (d) Statements referring to the support of the affective domain of the students; (e) Statements enlisting support from the parents and community in the educational endeavor; and (f) Statements acknowledging the district's responsibility to develop students into good citizens.

Frequency of themes.

The incidence of the recurrent themes was analyzed in two ways: (a) the total number of times each of the six themes was written, and (b) the number of times each theme appeared in an Academic, Broad or Vague type mission statement. This second breakdown, by mission statement types, was undertaken in order to identify if any of the three types of mission statements had higher rates of incidence with any particular themes. The discussion of these two aspects of the table follow.

Regarding the total of amount of times the six identified themes were used, the findings indicated that individual themes were used at least 111 times and at most 215 times, out of a sample of 308. The overall most commonly written theme was that the students' affective domain needs would be met. Half of the six themes were used in more than half of the sample of mission statements, and the remaining three themes were used in more than one-third of the mission statements.
Analyzing the themes using the breakdown into Academic, Broad or Vague type mission statements was undertaken to establish if any of these themes were written with most or least frequency in all three types of mission statements. No one theme was found to have the most or least usage by all three types of mission statements. Vague and Academic mission statements used the same theme most frequently but the Broad mission statements used another, different theme most frequently. Vague and Academic mission statements most frequently used the theme stating that a high quality education will be provided; Broad mission statements most frequently used the theme stating the students’ affective domain needs will be met.

Occurrence Patterns of Themes

Continuing to use themes as an organizing principle, the mission statements were analyzed to determine how many each of the six themes occurred in each single mission statement. The results of this analysis provided the information that the majority of mission statements each contain either 4/6, 3/6 or 2/6 of the themes in them, with the most mission statements containing half (3/6) of the themes. Broad type mission statements had the highest rate of multiple themes occurring in one single mission statement.

Parental Roles in Mission Statements

An intended goal of this investigation was to gain insight into how the school systems view their roles as educators while existing in a pluriform
society. In concurrence with Patton (1990), as the researcher collected and read the data, what seemed to emerge from the data was that parental roles were consistently being included in educational mission statements. The investigation continued in a manner to confirm such a finding. References such as the schools being “committed to... develop...a moral conscience”, “opportunities...to develop self-esteem and social values”, “opportunities to promote behavioral changes that will affect continuing satisfactory adjustments to life” were coded as they appeared in each of the mission statements. The results disclosed that a total of 75% (231) of the 308 mission statements contained parental roles. Only 25% (77) of the 308 mission statements were void of such references. These findings suggest an inclination by school districts to assume the roles of parents.

**Conclusions**

“The mission of all schools in New Jersey as defined by law is to provide all students in New Jersey regardless of socio-economic status or geographic location, the educational opportunity which will prepare them to function politically, economically, and socially in a democratic society.” (N.J.S.A. 18A, 1975).

This quote, taken from a New Jersey public school mission statement, defines the baseline context used in many of the state's public school mission statements. Some districts elaborate more on this theme, others remain as vague. Either way, the mandate provides plausible explanation for the
homogenous nature of the sample of mission statements. As the State of New Jersey has provided guidelines for its districts' mission statements, the findings indicate that there is widespread knowledge and application of this regulation. The contents of most mission statements seem driven by the mandate. It also appears that another major influence on mission statement writing is the National Education Goals and Objectives, declared by the United States Congress (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). Goals mentioned in that document, specifically those referring to students becoming lifelong learners and citing "parental participation", are also often written into New Jersey's district mission statements. While the reasons for so many similar themes has not been determined, that there are familiar themes in the mission statements has been determined by this investigation.

High usage of the theme to "address the needs of the affective domain" was apparent. This may lead one to question why meeting the needs of the cognitive domain were not more present in mission statements. It may be that intellectual pursuits are subsumed in the comprehensive nature of the mission statements. The researcher did not specifically look for the mention of goals of cognitive nature, and therefore they may be stated more than it would appear from this particular study.

It may also be stated that New Jersey has done well in writing mission statements. That so many mission statements were returned to the researcher for this study reflects that New Jersey's school districts are "in the business" of writing mission statements. No evaluation was performed that would have
...determined if the mission statements, having incorporated the general concerns of students, also included the finer, unique needs of its district. Rather, mission statements were evaluated for commonalities. It may be said then, that mission statements could exist within the state which did address both the general themes as well as distinct needs of their districts.

Even were that so, however, it does not appear that districts were clear about the meaningful distinction between a philosophy and a mission statement. A philosophy determines long term goals, goals that would take possibly one hundred years to achieve. A mission statement should focus on short term, achievable goals that take into account the present environment. The ideas presented in most of the mission statements in this investigation were more appropriate for a philosophy. The very nature of a mission statement is to take the lofty goals of a philosophy and ground them in reality, carving a path to make them tangible. A mission statement as broad as the many found in this sample is overwhelming for the intent it was written for, and therefore ineffective.

It may be concluded also that the educational institutions have accepted roles which arguably belong to parents. Definitions of what the family should be doing are becoming garbled with the definitions of what the schools should be doing. Kagan (1991) chronicles an historic presence of tension in public schools over the domain of the parents and the domain of school. This researcher surmises that the tension has ceased to exist, and confusion abounds. The data presents the New Jersey public school districts routinely committing themselves to teach and model values, ethics, and morals. It was
found customary for districts to consent to instill values in students. This led the researcher to conclude that boundaries are confused. By enabling some parents not to do their job by accepting it as theirs, and by intruding on those parents who do want to be the providers of values with their children, districts may be behaving inappropriately. Along with that, no empirical data exists which confirms that values curriculums work. Actually, there is literature which does suggest that this type of curriculum is causing more harm than good. Creating a minimum shared value system is a challenge in itself (Wager, 1992)

**Recommendations and Implications**

1. Further studies with mission statements must take place so as to define the value placed on the integral process of mission development. It would be good to establish the commitment districts have toward the idea of creating a mission. The process is an invaluable tool, which can be likened to a compass which can steer districts through confusion toward accomplishment.

2. The sample of mission statements collected for this study could provide data for future studies.

   (a) It would be valuable to do a contingent study which examined the degree to which cognitive curriculums were determined in this particular sample of mission statements. Such curriculums were subsumed in the category of broad mission statements and not given specific attention in this study.

   (b) Study using a limited amount of mission statements would provide
more detailed information in this area. Using the mission statements from one county, or one DFG category could be the way to define a boundary for a more limited study.

(c) Interviewing those districts whose mission was more uncommon, who had included none of the familiar themes in their statement, would provide information about why their mission statements were so different. Perhaps these districts complied with the wisdom stated in the literature, becoming involved in the process and thus developing a mission which expressed the unique needs of their schools. It is appropriate to develop records of the districts who understand this concept and follow through with it. Stakeholders in education need to listen to and watch these districts as they develop assets which offer educational institutions a chance to excel at what they do. These districts might be able to offer insights about the characteristics of districts which get involved in the process.

(d) There were superintendents who responded in the affirmative to the researcher’s offer to send them the results of this investigation. These superintendents might be contacted and surveyed for their interest in the process of mission development. Perhaps there is a profile for a district with such an interest in the mission statement process. This profile could be studied as a positive model of educational leadership for the state.

(e) Furthermore, comparison studies must be done with the mission statements. This investigation covered New Jersey’s public schools. There are charter schools and private schools in New Jersey with mission statements to
study. Evaluation of other types of schools' mission statements, as well as comparative studies among charter, private and public type mission statements is recommended.

3. Recommendation is made that districts test for the validity of their mission statements when they profess they will meet the affective needs of their students. It seemed that the expectations of the mission statements was to have affectivity as part of the curriculum. In what ways can a school district test for affectivity? The difficulty of testing for such a matter must be examined and brought up for discussion. While districts are responsive to public policy and pressure (Graham, 1993) about affectivity being part of the curriculum, how does one know how to measure if such a goal is accomplished? Empirical evidence about the direction of influence regarding this objective would be especially welcome. A study by Weiss and Piderit (1999) examined the Michigan public school mission statements. Their rationale was that many scholars argue for a strong mission as a useful step toward performance improvement, yet little empirical research has examined whether mission statements have an impact on performance. Their research exposed interesting results about the Michigan schools. New Jersey's schools need the same attention. This study of New Jersey's mission statements was but a beginning step in the rigorous empirical examination of the impact of mission statements, both in regard to the affective curriculum and other aspects of mission statements outcomes.

4. Having stated thus, is must also be recommended to apply current
research and its impending results with wisdom. Knowledge of the field, when used properly, can be an asset for those who write missions. The literature suggests that mission writing is popular presently because it is a useful step toward performance improvement. However, some institutions are more focused on having their “useful marketing tool” in place and are less concerned about defining who and what they are. The former incentive is highly discouraged, the latter is highly recommended.

5. Because of the high levels of diversity in this country, the value of mission statements needs to be addressed by Department of Education in Washington D.C. Perhaps at a Superintendent’s meeting, discussion could be raised about the nature and content of mission statements.

6. There is historical value in the study of mission statements. Were one to look at the literature providing information about what schools were teaching 50 years ago, one would see that presently there are many more “values” curriculums being taught presently. For the purposes of historical documentation, more work needs to be done identifying the work of schools in the year 2000.

7. The study raised questions regarding the use of mission statements in the evaluation process. What a school says it is doing, versus what a school actually is doing, needs to be studied.

8. The sources of mission statements identify philosophical underpinnings. Further research may be done in the area of examining and documenting these underpinnings.
9. The literature offered theoretical rationales to explain why values should be taught in school, yet there is a paucity of research regarding the outcomes of such curriculums. Longitudinal data must become available before and after adoption of such curriculums. Kagan and Weissbourd (1994), Goodlad (1992) and Slater (1993) suggest schools not to step in where the parents are unable to perform in their roles. Their writing indicates the need for society to shift its support from schools to families. When families are doing what they need to do, children will be able to perform in schools. These authors believe that the literature on educational philosophy in current times must be discussed in the context that all institutions in society work together to support the basic family structure, rather than the schools. In the cover story of The New York Times Magazine, Traub (2000) addresses the problem society has in thinking about the limits of school. He tries to direct our thoughts toward those other institutions which might have to be mobilized to solve some of the "social pathologies too deep to be overcome by school alone". Traub notes the proclivity of society to maintain a political discourse "implicitly predicated on the notion" that schools can cure our ills. He explains how easy and satisfying it is to maintain that school reform is the answer: it involves relatively little money and no large scale initiatives.

10. Large scale initiatives and serious money are recommended. Corporate America needs to invest in families. Schering and other pharmaceutical companies close down every year for the last week in December. Workers receive their full pay and forfeit no time from their sick or
vacation bank. The families of such an employer can spend some quantity time together. Publishing houses can contribute with the type of articles they focus on in their magazines. On its precious cover space, one high profile parent magazine enticingly highlighted an inside article, “Want to quit?” The piece, entitled “You Can Afford to Stay Home”, (Tinglof, 2000) educated readers about economic strategies and benefits for parents who may want to stay home with the children (child). Publishers rarely print such articles. More commonly emphasized are “how to work and parent” articles. Esposito (1998) addresses families themselves to become more invested in having a parent stay at home. She acknowledges that both men and women are capable and deserve full and rewarding careers. However, when financially feasible, she recommends one parent to be home for the children. Were this to occur, she postulates, the field of employable workers would diminish and wages would have to rise. The result of such a condition could make it easier for a family to function well. She also believes that as it stands now, the higher income of the two-earner families increases spending power, driving prices up. That, “along with day-care tax breaks for families and corporations, further handicaps the game in favor of two-income families”. Continued thought and inspiration along such lines is needed.
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Appendix A

Letter of Request to Superintendents for Mission Statement
Victoria A. Robertson  
288 Walton Avenue  
South Orange, New Jersey 07079  

March 31, 1997

Dear Superintendent:

I am a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University, requesting your assistance in obtaining information for my dissertation. My field is Educational Administration K-12.

The purpose of my study is to do a qualitative analysis of the mission statements of New Jersey's public schools.

The first phase of the project is to gather the mission statements from all public school districts in New Jersey. The purpose is to look for trends in mission statements. It is believed that the results of this study will benefit educators in their aim to gain further insight into educational reform.

I encourage you to participate with me in this study by mailing me a copy of your district's current mission statement. The mission statement can be enclosed and mailed back to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

This study is conducted under the direction of Anthony Colella, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Administration and Supervision, Seton Hall University. Any questions concerning this study may be addressed to Dr. Colella.

All sources of data will be held confidential, and I would be happy to share the results with you and your staff upon your request.

Your assistance will be most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Victoria A. Robertson