



Options for School Governance Reform in South Carolina

**Prepared for the
South Carolina Education Oversight Committee**

Final Report

August 15, 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Carolina has made major progress in adopting successful school governance reform practices, in part through forward-looking reforms, and in part through implementation of new roles now required under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. As the state continues striving to improve its governance, the challenge lies in forcefully pursuing those education reforms that research shows will provide the greatest impact.

To identify such reforms, this analysis begins by reviewing research on what types of governance reforms can improve student achievement. It then presents research documenting specific state practices that have proven successful in implementing such reforms. Finally, it applies those lessons to the specific case of South Carolina to identify which successful practices have already been implemented, and where opportunities for reform remain.

The framework for this analysis is defined by the specific question posed by the EOC: “How can schools be governed in a way that maintains their communities of interest while supporting dynamic impact with fiscal efficiency?” Embedded in this question are three critical functions expected of an effective school governance system: supporting student achievement, managing financial resources wisely, and maintaining communities of interest. These functions serve as the focus for each section of this analysis.

A key finding of this paper is that there is no conclusive evidence from academic research that demonstrates a clear and direct connection between school governance structures and improved student performance. From charter schools to mayoral takeovers, from site-based management to policy governance, research shows that there is no simple, large-scale change in school governance that will improve student performance, let alone do so with fiscal efficiency while maintaining communities of interest.

Despite this finding, education leaders would be mistaken to conclude that governance does not matter at all. To the contrary, research indicates that it matters a great deal, but in reality it matters less as a direct driver of student performance, and more as a driver of *other factors* that, in turn, impact student performance. In other words, school governance does impact student performance, but it does so indirectly. Recognizing that governance pertains not only to formal structures, but also to the policies, standards, and resource allocation made within those structures, many opportunities can be identified for education improvement in this area.

For this reason, this analysis presents two types of recommendations. The first set focuses on formal school governance structures and practices, recognizing that incremental improvements may be possible, but that in general, these efforts do not apply directly to the true drivers of student performance. The second set of recommendations still pertains to education governance, but focuses less on governance structures, and more on the governance standards and resource allocation required from policy makers in South Carolina. The first set of recommendations includes the following:

1. **Streamline education legislation and regulations.** Many concerns have been raised regarding the state’s need to eliminate convoluted, duplicative, and overly burdensome laws and regulations that govern the operations of districts and schools. State leaders should conduct a major review and reduction of these requirements to facilitate reforms currently underway.

2. **Consider eliminating single-term limits on state school board members.** Although there is no conclusive evidence that the selection process for boards impacts the quality of education, the case study of North Carolina and Texas indicates that consistency of leadership over time is essential to successful reform efforts. This conclusion suggests that, at a minimum, the rotation of appointed members among counties – which necessarily limits board members to single terms – should be revised.
3. **Evaluate the use of education service cooperatives as an alternative to district consolidation.** As South Carolina considers further consolidation of districts, the state should further evaluate the effectiveness of these service cooperatives, and consider whether they may be expanded in order to provide the benefits of district consolidation without disrupting the communities that exist under the current district structure.
4. **Enhance the state’s role in providing oversight and technical assistance in order to facilitate the successful devolution of budget and policy control.** As South Carolina provides local schools greater control, the state can shift its attention to the dual roles of providing technical assistance so that local discretion may be exercised effectively, and monitoring the use of this discretion to identify new and promising practices. Knowledge gained from these state roles can be shared with other localities and incorporated into more broad policy.
5. **Avoid school choice initiatives that lack a clear research foundation.** As South Carolina’s leaders continue their debate over the Governor’s proposed school choice initiative, this analysis offers several considerations. The Governor has proposed a broad set of tax credits to offset the costs of education expenses outside of traditional public schools that, in essence, create a voucher system for private schools. Due to the limited implementation of school choice nationwide, and to the mixed results from research, there is no evidence that this type of reform can have a significant impact on student performance on a state-wide basis.
6. **Recognize that debates over the election of the state superintendent are a distraction from real governance improvements.** There is no evidence that states with elected state superintendents achieve better results than those with appointed superintendents. Of special note is the fact that North Carolina, which is widely recognized as a national leader in education reform, also maintains an elected state superintendent.

The second set of recommendations, focused more on governance standards and resource allocation provides the greatest promise for affecting student performance. This set includes the following:

7. **Enhance state leadership for ensuring teacher quality.** South Carolina has been sharply criticized by the National Council for Teaching Quality (NCTQ) for setting very poor standards to ensure the qualifications of current teachers. In a recent report, the NCTQ gave the state’s standards an “F” grade because the standards fail to employ an objective and rigorous measure of current teachers’ knowledge of the subject matter they teach. Research shows that subject matter knowledge is a critical determinant of a quality teacher. This issue raises major questions of whether the state is performing its governance role appropriately, and merits immediate attention from state leaders.
8. **Increase the state governance focus on expanding early childhood education and health care.** Given the importance of early childhood education to student performance,

particularly among low-income and minority children, South Carolina should expand its state governance role and attention to promoting universal pre-K. South Carolina's investment in pre-kindergarten per child enrolled is less than half of the amount allocated in Texas, and approximately one-fourth of the amount allocated by North Carolina and Connecticut. In terms of health care, which also is critical to student performance, South Carolina ranks behind 47 other states in providing children of low-wage families access to health care.

9. **Ensure that teachers are adequately resourced.** Research indicates that providing teachers with greater discretion over resources, even in small amounts, may impact student achievement. Although South Carolina provides local schools with greater flexibility over funding, it is unclear whether teachers are given a significant voice in how that flexibility is used. Research suggests that resource adequacy for teachers has a positive impact on student achievement, and that this investment is far more productive and cost-effective than investments in teacher salaries or teachers' aides.
10. **Emphasize the need for direct parental involvement with students over parental involvement in policy discussions.** Historically, South Carolina has made significant efforts to engage parents in questions of school policy, and for the purposes of democracy and local control over education, this effort is valuable. From the perspective of improving student achievement, however, research strongly shows that parental involvement makes a large impact when focused on positive interaction with the child and classroom teacher, not at the school or district policy level. Therefore, in the context of school governance discussions, South Carolina's leaders should be cognizant of this research, and should focus their efforts on promoting parental engagement with their children around positive learning activities, while still including parents appropriately in other levels of discussion.
11. **Focus attention of state leadership on how family economic status disrupts student achievement.** Because the economic stability of parents is critical to the educational success of students, school leaders must advocate for state policies that help families manage economic crises that could disrupt their children's education.

Drawing on these lessons from research, South Carolina can enhance school governance to improve student achievement with fiscal efficiency while maintaining communities of interest.

PART 1

A DISCUSSION OF ISSUES RELATED TO SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) has established an aggressive set of goals for improving student achievement in the state by the year 2010. To ensure the achievement of those goals, the EOC commissioned a series of studies to identify promising models for school system improvement in a variety of areas, including teacher recruitment, facility management, curriculum, school readiness, post-secondary education, and school governance. This analysis focuses on school governance. On this specific topic the EOC asks, "How can schools be governed in a way that maintains their communities of interest while supporting dynamic impact with fiscal efficiency?" Embedded in this question are three critical functions expected of an effective school governance system:

1. *Supporting student achievement.* Because the core purpose of school systems is to educate children, varying approaches to school governance must be assessed primarily on their ability to impact student performance.¹ In this analysis, student performance is defined according to the goals set by the EOC, which include performance on standardized tests,² high school completion, and positive behavior (i.e., freedom from drugs, weapons, violence, and teacher victimization by students). Consideration of the gap in achievement between students of different racial/ethnic groups and different economic backgrounds is an essential part of assessing student performance (both in the EOC goals and this analysis).
2. *Managing financial resources wisely.* As with any publicly-funded organization, school governance systems must operate with fiscal efficiency to maximize the impact of their resources on their mission (in this case, student achievement), and to preserve the public trust in spending tax dollars.
3. *Maintaining communities of interest.* As school governance systems strive to improve student achievement, they must also consider and protect the interests of the various communities who hold a significant stake in how the system is operated and the results it produces. These communities include students, parents, teachers, principals, businesses, elected leaders, and society as a whole.

To ensure clarity, *school governance* is defined to mean the structures and policies that dictate the roles and authority of individuals and organizations managing school operations and finances within a state. These individuals and organizations include governors, state legislatures, state boards of education, state superintendents, county-level and city-level executives and councils, district-level school boards and superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, and their related associations. Discussions of governance also can include the effectiveness of leadership in managing people and systems under existing structures and policies.

Based on academic research, Part 1 outlines key issues related to school governance. First it provides a contextual overview of general research on student performance, fiscal efficiency, and communities of interest. Second, it describes current challenges faced by states and

localities related to school governance. Third, it presents research on specific governance reform models to assess their potential for affecting desired outcomes. Finally, it identifies the most promising governance reform models for states to consider. The overview of research is presented first.

Research Overview

As discussed throughout this paper, there is no conclusive evidence from academic research that demonstrates a clear and direct connection between school governance structures and improved student performance. From charter schools to mayoral takeovers, from site-based management to policy governance, research shows that there is no simple, large-scale change in school governance that will improve student performance, let alone do so with fiscal efficiency while maintaining communities of interest.

Despite this finding, however, education leaders would be mistaken to conclude that governance does not matter at all. To the contrary, research indicates that it matters a great deal, but in reality it matters less as a direct driver of student performance, and more as a driver of *other factors* that, in turn, impact student performance. In other words, school governance does impact student performance but it does so indirectly. Given the importance of other educational factors in this causal chain, it is important to review the research on these factors before beginning a discussion of governance reform models. Most important among these factors are those believed to directly impact student achievement.

Student Performance Research

Although researchers often disagree about which components of an education system truly impact student performance, they have reached general consensus on several system attributes that are widely believed to have a strong and positive impact.

Teacher quality. A teacher's cognitive intelligence, as measured by verbal ability, is considered a major contributor to student performance.³ In math and science, research shows that teacher knowledge of the subject taught contributes to student performance in higher grades, although this connection does not hold true for younger students.⁴ Little research has been done on the connection between subject matter knowledge and student performance in English or social studies.⁵ Most researchers also agree that teaching experience contributes to student performance, although it does so only for the first few years of a teacher's career, after which the impact of experience declines.⁶

Early childhood education. A very strong body of research supports the value of early childhood education in improving student performance throughout life. Research on brain development shows that critical development happens in the early years of life,⁷ and that quality early childhood education can effectively prepare children for kindergarten,⁸ and have positive impacts on their learning beyond.⁹

Parental involvement and assistance. A strong body of research shows a strong connection between parental involvement and student achievement.¹⁰ This effect includes improvements in students' attitudes, attendance, behavior, and aspirations.¹¹ While researchers agree less on the forms that effective parental involvement takes, there is agreement that encouraging

learning and a value for school in the home is essential.¹² Less uniform, but still important evidence indicates that student performance can also be enhanced through parental partnership with teachers through activities such as classroom volunteering and parent-teacher conferences.¹³ On a related note, research shows that parents' economic stability and educational attainment are strong drivers of a child's school performance.¹⁴ This finding implies that a key element of improving education outcomes for children lies in setting policy that impacts the economic stability of families.

High expectations. Multiple literature reviews conclude that both teacher and school-wide expectations of students can impact student performance.¹⁵ At the classroom level, the communication of expectations occurs through straightforward interpersonal interaction. At the school-wide or system-wide level, researchers have included multiple systemic factors in the definition of expectations, including policies that protect instructional time, coaching for teachers who encounter challenging classrooms, and a positive learning climate (i.e., the appearance of buildings and a sense of order and discipline in the school).¹⁶

To a lesser, but still important, extent, research suggests that other attributes of an education system can also have a positive impact on student performance, and therefore merit some consideration in this analysis.

Class size (pupil-teacher ratios). Research on class size provides some evidence that smaller class sizes can improve student achievement, particularly if implemented in conjunction with other education improvement initiatives.¹⁷ Some evidence also finds that in Kindergarten through 3rd grade, class sizes should be limited to no more than 18 students in order to enhance student performance.¹⁸ For grades 4-12, research suggests class sizes of up to 25.¹⁹ In states with disproportionate numbers of low-income and minority students, smaller class sizes appear to have an even greater impact, particularly when implemented for the lower grades.²⁰

Alignment between strong standards, curriculum, assessment and accountability. Standards-based reform has become widely endorsed by states across the nation,²¹ and many experts assert not only that standards are critical, but that these standards must be linked to curriculum, assessment, and accountability to be effective.²² Little cross-state quantitative evidence has been performed to validate this attention to standards, although a number of influential studies have been conducted on a smaller scale, providing evidence that standards-based reform impacts student achievement.²³ Of critical importance within these reforms are effective accountability systems that are designed to ensure that teaching and learning are focused on those factors that will most benefit students.²⁴

Spending levels. Many studies have been conducted to assess the impact of funding levels on student performance, yielding very inconsistent results, but leading to a generally positive interpretation that spending levels may make a difference.²⁵ A recent cross-state quantitative study of scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) found that spending may have an impact on student performance when made at teachers' discretion.²⁶

District size. A literature review performed for the Education Oversight Commission found evidence that smaller school districts appear to promote student performance in lower socioeconomic areas, and that larger districts are more beneficial in higher socioeconomic areas.²⁷ This general finding was validated by a detailed analysis of South Carolina schools, but only at the middle and high school level.²⁸

Because these system attributes demonstrate some bearing on student performance, they should be incorporated into any discussion of school governance reform. New governance models that promote these attributes offer a greater likelihood of improving student performance.

Potential governance models also should be evaluated based on their potential to promote fiscal efficiency. As background for that assessment, the following section reviews research on fiscal efficiency in school systems.

Fiscal Efficiency Research

For the purposes of this analysis, *fiscal efficiency* refers to the use of public funds in a manner that maximizes the performance of students and those who support them. Distinct from this definition of efficiency is the extent to which school governments exercise taxing authority. Also distinct is the issue of equity in finance, which receives some attention in this analysis but, for the most part, remains outside its scope.

Research shows no clear, conclusive, or direct connection between overall spending levels and student performance. In the absence of such a finding, researchers conclude that school leaders must focus their attention on particular educational strategies that are most likely to make a difference in student performance.²⁹ A recent cross-state quantitative assessment of NAEP scores performed by the RAND Corporation yielded evidence indicating which strategies accomplish this aim, and concluded that the most cost-efficient means of improving student performance are:³⁰

- Reducing student-teacher ratios. The RAND study found that for states with exceptionally high minority and low-income populations, this strategy is most cost effective when reducing the per-pupil ratio to a level below the national average. For states with average socio-economic characteristics, it found that ratios should be reduced to the national average.
- Expanding participation in pre-kindergarten. This strategy was found to be most cost effective for states with exceptionally high minority and low-income populations.
- Providing teachers with more discretionary resources. The RAND study found this strategy to be particularly cost-efficient.

Based on these findings, the study concluded:

This analysis suggests that investing in better working conditions for teachers to make them more productive (lower pupil-teacher ratios, more discretionary resources, and improved readiness for school from pre-kindergarten) could produce significant gains in achievement scores. Conversely, efforts to increase the quality of teachers in the long run are important, but this analysis would suggest that significant productivity gains can be obtained with the current teaching force if their working conditions are improved.³¹

Despite their cost-efficiency, these measures are resource intensive. The RAND study suggests that other, less resource-intensive strategies can also prove to be effective and therefore more cost-efficient. Specifically, this study refers to state-level reform efforts, including standards-based reform, undertaken in Texas and North Carolina, which are examined in Part 2 of this analysis.

Other components of education systems were found to be particularly *inefficient*. The RAND study found that the use of teacher's aides is not a particularly cost-efficient strategy.³² Higher teacher salaries were also found to be ineffective in enhancing student performance, adding to a growing concern over this issue. One of the study's conclusions effectively summarizes this concern:

Finally, the current [teacher compensation] system rewards experience and education—but neither seems to be strongly related to producing higher achievement. If the system could distinguish and provide higher compensation for higher-quality teachers and those who are more effective with lower-scoring students, for whom there is more leverage for raising scores, one would expect a dollar of compensation to be more effective. However, in the current system, another dollar of compensation is used to reward experience and degrees and to raise all salaries—rewarding both high- and low-quality teachers—and teachers of both low- and high-scoring students. With such a compensation system, lower effects might be expected.³³

This conclusion raises even greater concern because teacher salaries consume a major portion of public school expenditures.

Another concern over fiscal efficiency focuses on the bureaucracies in central administration offices. Central administration typically accounts for 40 percent of school system budgets, whereas only 60 percent go directly to schools.³⁴ Some researchers have raised major concerns about the efficiency of central offices, questioning the value they add to student performance, and many have advocated the reduction of these functions to allow resources to flow more directly to schools.³⁵ Quantitative analysis has shown, however, that across the nation, expenses associated with central administration are relatively modest, both at the school and district level.³⁶ This research suggests that while increased efficiency is a worthwhile goal, it is unlikely that school systems may extract significant cost savings from central administration, and are better served focusing efforts on those areas where research indicates that the productivity and impact of schools may be improved.

Finally, the impact of school and district size on fiscal efficiency must be considered as well. Research shows that, beyond a certain size range, larger districts may produce cost savings through economies of scale, although this research does not define the size threshold where these economies begin to materialize.³⁷ A quantitative analysis of district size in South Carolina produced the same conclusion, and furthermore found that economies of scale appear to begin at districts with 2,500 students, and cease to materialize when districts reach 25,000 students.³⁸

In summary, research finds that the fiscal efficiency of a school system depends on the soundness of education policy, personnel management, and administrative structures. These findings prove useful in evaluating the potential impact of competing governance reform models on the fiscal efficiency of a school system. In addition to fiscal efficiency and student

performance, these governance models will be evaluated in terms of their promise for maintaining communities of interest.

Communities of Interest Research

Although many critics complain that “special interest groups” have distracted schools from their primary mission, research suggests that the right involvement of key communities can enhance the operation of a school system. This idea echoes the belief of John Dewey that a good school is more akin to a family than a factory.³⁹ The communities discussed herein include students, parents, teachers, businesses, and rural, low-income and minority communities.

Students. Remarkably, literature on school governance appears to pay very little attention to the role of students. In terms of systemic school governance issues, one recent study found that among parents, teachers, principals and students, the clear definition of roles – and mutual confidence that these roles would be fulfilled – are essential to supporting the reforms needed in order to achieve student performance.⁴⁰ This concept is referred to as *relational trust*. A conclusion drawn by that study reflects the small regard shown by researchers for the role of students in school governance:

While students are significant school actors, changes in the operation and organization of schools are primarily an adult game. In addition, although student-teacher trust relations are an important social resource in elementary instruction, their impact at the organizational level is more modest. In contrast, in high schools, peer influences and student norms are quite powerful, and these forces must be engaged directly by any school reform effort.⁴¹

The study also concludes that parental involvement can serve as a proxy for student involvement at the elementary school level.⁴²

Parents. Studies show a strong connection between parental involvement and student performance when parents interact directly with their children to encourage and support academic achievement. Research emphasizes that parental engagement is particularly important in disadvantaged communities, where language barriers and lower education levels among parents living in underserved communities makes their involvement more difficult; in these communities, extra encouragement and resources are necessary and beneficial to increase their participation.⁴³ In contrast, research does not indicate any benefit from parental involvement in administration at the school or district level, and shows that school administrators generally disapprove of parental involvement in such matters.⁴⁴

Teachers. Regarding the roles and interests of teachers in school reform, there are two main arguments found in research. One body of research presents evidence that the involvement of teachers in the design and implementation planning for school-wide reforms is essential to the reforms’ success.⁴⁵ A separate and controversial view asserts that teachers associations, i.e. unions, present a great barrier to improved student achievement (see references below). These competing arguments represent one of the most heated controversies in education policy today.⁴⁶ Despite the lack of conclusive evidence in favor of either position, extensive criticisms have been levied against teacher unions and their role in prohibiting the hiring, compensation, and termination of teachers based on performance.⁴⁷

One analysis that emphasizes the importance of trust between school professionals presents an interesting blend of viewpoints on teacher involvement. On one hand, the study asserts the importance of reflecting teachers' interests and input:

Any actions taken by the principal that reduce teachers' sense of vulnerability are...highly salient. Establishing inclusive procedures for decision making affords teachers real opportunities to raise issues and be heard. When such routines are implemented effectively, teachers come to understand that they have a meaningful voice in influencing important decisions that affect their lives.⁴⁸

At the same time, it issues a strong indictment of debilitating effects union protections can have on school improvement efforts.

Of similar importance is the capacity to remove incompetent teachers from a school... Existing due-process safeguards are extensive, and teacher unions are well organized to protect their weaker members.... A common response is to attempt to hide these teachers in less visible schools and teaching roles. Our analysis, however, suggests that much more is at stake than just the subset of students who are directly affected by these teachers' poor practice. Rather, the persistence of such teachers in a school community undermines its social capacity for action.⁴⁹

These seemingly contradictory viewpoints suggest that the role of teachers is essential in school reform, and that the inclusion of teachers in the design and implementation of reform efforts is essential for a reform's success, but that the interests of teachers *as represented by certain union protections* can be contrary to the interests of students in school reform efforts.

Business community. There is very little research on the role of business interests in public schools, but a brief review provides several observations. Businesses have a vested interest in school reform out of social concern as well as in the interest of ensuring a skilled workforce to maintain effective operations. Historically, the contributions of businesses have come in the form of financial contributions to schools as well as advocacy for reform.⁵⁰ Research suggests that businesses can be effective partners with schools to ensure that curricula adequately prepare students for productive employment.⁵¹

Low-income and minority communities. The socio-economic background of a student is proven to play an important role in academic achievement and strategies for teaching and learning; therefore low-income and minority communities hold a unique interest in school reform efforts. Early quantitative studies of factors influencing education were quick to identify race and family income as the only predictors of a student's academic performance.⁵² Since then, methodological corrections to this type of analysis have revealed these factors are still strong, but not complete predictors.⁵³ Nonetheless, race and income remain such powerful influences that controlling for these factors has become basic practice in education research to ensure they do not bias research results. For example, previous sections of this analysis discuss how district size, pre-K enrollment, and student-teacher ratios achieve different levels of impact or cost-efficiency depending on the demographics of the community in which they are implemented.

Rural communities. Nationwide, 28 percent of public school students live in rural areas,⁵⁴ yet relatively little research has been conducted on the educational conditions, challenges, and solutions in these communities.⁵⁵ In general, rural students face unique constraints on their access to quality education. For example, rural communities tend to have less access to quality school facilities and technology.⁵⁶ In addition to geographic barriers, rural communities often tend to be low-income and minority communities as well; many states have rural communities with exceptionally high rates of poverty, disability, limited English proficiency, and “minority students disadvantaged by generations of racial and ethnic discrimination.”⁵⁷ Attention to the needs of these communities may sometimes fall short because in all but four states rural populations fail to compose a political majority, and therefore may lack the political clout to garner sufficient attention in state policy.⁵⁸

These communities hold significant stakes in the effective governance and operation of school systems, and therefore their interests must be incorporated appropriately in new model. The discussion of these interests serves as useful background considering the merits of competing governance models. Based on the research presented, the next discussion provides a focused analysis of challenges in current school governance systems.

Current Challenges in School Governance

During the 20th century, school governance changed from a highly decentralized system, where local school boards and superintendents controlled virtually all aspects of education, to a mixture of local, state, and federal control.⁵⁹ This centralization of control advanced several important interests, such as eliminating nepotism in district decision-making, enhancing operational management, and improving opportunities for disadvantaged students.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, this transformation also gave rise to new complexities that created confusion in the roles of local boards and state leaders.⁶¹ To add to that confusion, courts became more involved in schools,⁶² and teachers’ unions transformed from primarily professional associations to powerful bargaining agents heavily focused on seeking benefits for their members.⁶³ The following discussion highlights key challenges currently faced in the governance of schools as background for the subsequent examination of governance reform models that attempt to address these challenges.

State-wide systems. In many discussions of school governance, critics focus on state-wide governance, including leaders at the state level. The combined effect of state and local governance structures and policies are said to propagate a bureaucratic system that emphasizes process and regulatory compliance, instead of the creativity and focus that will produce results.⁶⁴ One criticism focused on South Carolina’s education governance system cited a misalignment between the authority and accountability of educational governance bodies and a misdirected focus of overseers as fundamental flaws permeating the state-wide system.⁶⁵

Funding. In school governance debates, finances also receive a tremendous amount of attention centering around three issues: equity of funding among districts (and schools within a district), adequacy of funding, and mechanisms used to raise revenues for schools. Over the past five years, lawsuits over funding equity have been settled or decided in 20 states, and an additional 16 states are currently in litigation over this issue.⁶⁶ Equity litigation has dominated state discussions over recent history, but states are now moving toward a discussion of funding adequacy, i.e., whether funding levels sufficiently support student achievement.⁶⁷ As states

estimate these funding levels, they invariably must examine their systems of revenue collection. These discussions are particularly difficult because they require consideration of the larger complexities of state, local, and federal responsibilities for funding all public services, of which education is only a part.⁶⁸

District size. District size is another element of school governance structure that appears to have some impact on both student performance and fiscal efficiency. To improve both performance and efficiency, states across the country undertook a major effort to consolidate school districts in the 20th century. Between 1938 and 1999 states eliminated over 100,000 districts through consolidation, which amounts to a 90 percent reduction.⁶⁹ South Carolina had 1,500 school districts in 1950, and now has 86.⁷⁰ Many states are considering further consolidation in order to achieve economies of scale and enhance the capacity of district administration.

Superintendents. Superintendents may receive the greatest blame in debates over failing schools, resulting in a high rate of turnover in these positions.⁷¹ Major inefficiencies of central school district bureaucracies prohibit the flow of resources to the school system, where they belong.⁷² Given the primary role of superintendents as district administrators, this criticism is placed squarely at their feet.

School boards. Research has documented an arsenal of blame aimed at local school boards for multiple shortcomings, which include being out of touch with the public, failing to work cooperatively with superintendents and each other, micromanaging schools, and being overly influenced by special interest groups.⁷³ Surveys have shown that the American public often sees school boards as obstacles to education reform.⁷⁴ They also show that only 10-15% of voters participate in school board elections,⁷⁵ and that in urban areas only 39% of the public believes that school boards should have a significant role in setting policy for school operations.⁷⁶ To a lesser degree, other researchers defend school boards by demonstrating that they often do not resist reforms, that external reformers at times fail to partner with school boards, and that boards often work to implement reforms but their efforts are hampered by barriers such as funding limitations and the complexity of state mandates.⁷⁷

Principals. Critics focus on governance at the school level state that effective principals are in short supply, perhaps due to ineffective training programs.⁷⁸ Research has documented a culture of intransigence that often exists among local schools leaders, where reform efforts from the state or district level are resisted and subverted due to the deeply established roles and practices.⁷⁹ Alternatively, other researchers point to the many constraints placed on principals, hampering their ability to make basic decisions regarding the operations of their schools. Specifically, three key areas receive strong attention in the discussion of flexibility in school-level governance: personnel, finances, and teaching methods.⁸⁰

- **Personnel.** One of the most controversial governance issues centers on the principal's authority to hire, fire, and determine compensation for teachers. States place many restrictions on a principal's authority in this area, and now the federal government has also assumed a major role in determining which teachers can be hired. The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) requires that every new teacher hired must have a bachelor's degree or pass a state competency test before beginning to teach in a public school.

- **Financial control.** Considerable debate also centers on the flexibility of districts, principals, and to some extent, teachers, to raise and spend funds. Some reformers argue that decentralizing decision-making to the district and school level ensures that resources will be better focused on improving student performance. A recent study in two selected districts found that spending contributed to student success.⁸¹ The 2000 RAND study of NAEP data suggested that teacher discretion over spending may improve student performance, and may be a relatively cost-effective approach to doing so, especially in low-income and minority communities.⁸²
- **Standards, curriculum, assessment and accountability.** In recent decades, the major trend in state-level reform efforts has been to focus on these elements, with states now playing a far greater role in this process.⁸³ Through the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the federal government established a role for itself by mandating that all states (1) set standards for “annual yearly progress” to be made by schools, as measured by disaggregated groups of students, (2) develop a standard state assessment, (3) report on student performance by subgroups of students on an annual basis, (4) hold schools and districts accountable for the performance of their students, and (5) participate in NAEP.⁸⁴

Proposed Models for School Governance Reform

As they seek to address the challenges described above, researchers, education leaders, and politicians have devised an assortment of governance reforms. These reforms are perhaps best understood in terms of the direction in which they migrate authority: (1) centralization, (2) decentralization, or (3) a “hybrid” combination of the two. The most prominent school governance reforms currently being advocated are assessed in this part of the paper.

Centralization

The most prominent effort to centralize school governance authority is through the state and mayoral takeovers of school systems. As of 2001, 24 states established mechanisms to take over failing schools and districts, and over the past 15 years, mayors have assumed strong control over failing school systems in Chicago, Boston, Detroit, and New York City, and partial control over schools in Oakland, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Washington, DC.⁸⁵

In terms of *student performance*, the limited amount of analysis conducted on the effectiveness of mayoral takeovers finds no clear evidence that these takeovers have had a positive impact on student performance.⁸⁶ Although a more recent quantitative study performed in 2003 indicated that there is some limited evidence that mayoral takeovers may improve student performance.⁸⁷

Regarding *fiscal efficiency*, an early set of studies suggest that state and mayoral takeovers improve financial and administrative management.⁸⁸ Contradicting these earlier findings, however, the more recent examination suggests that mayoral takeovers do not improve fiscal health or significantly reallocate resources.⁸⁹

Regarding *communities of interest*, takeovers have met with mixed results. Most of these takeovers are executed through elected state legislatures, mayors, or direct ballot initiatives,⁹⁰

so in this regard they provide democratic representation for public communities of interest in the control of education. Questions have arisen in some states, however, over whether the suspension of powers for local school boards violates voter rights, prompting involvement of the U.S. Department of Justice.⁹¹ There is little research evidence of public concern over takeovers, especially in light of the fact that the public often sees school boards as obstacles to education reform,⁹² only 10-15 percent of voters participate in school board elections,⁹³ and that takeovers respond to gross mismanagement of schools by elected boards.⁹⁴ With regard to teachers, research findings suggest that takeovers actually improve relations with teachers' unions.⁹⁵

The mixed results on mayoral takeovers provide no clear evidence that this approach enhances student performance. Given the relative emergence of takeovers, researchers and education leaders will continue monitoring its development. Yet despite the high profile of these centralization efforts, they have received far less attention from policymakers than have the efforts to decentralize authority.

Decentralization

In the opposite direction, advocates of decentralization assert that governance authority should rest with the individuals at the school level, where the day-to-day work of teaching actually takes place.⁹⁶ The theory behind this change is that governmental bureaucracy inhibits effective teaching, and those closest to the students can manage more effectively without bureaucratic constraints. Specifically, this means a reduced role for state and district authorities, and a greater role for principals, and to a lesser degree, teachers, parents, and students. States have pursued decentralization most commonly through two mechanisms: site based management and charter schools.

Site-based management (SBM). In this model, Governance is changed to combine deregulation of school policy and greater decision-making at the school level over budgets, curriculum and personnel. Most states have endorsed SBM at some level, but typically in the form of a pilot program or recommendation.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, there have been numerous small-scale efforts to implement SBM, and a broad body of research on these efforts has been assembled. This general type of governance change has been known by many names, but the essential decentralization concept remains the same.⁹⁸ This governance reform calls for the following role changes.⁹⁹

- Superintendents move from issuing mandates to serving as a team member, encouraging innovation and flexibility among principals, serving as a resource to provide for needs identified among schools (such as training and development), and assessing progress and providing follow-up assistance as needed;
- Principals assume more authority, given their new autonomy, but at the same time are expected to engage teachers, parents, and sometimes local policy boards, in consultative leadership;
- Teachers are expected to work more collegially in order to define improvements and innovations;

- Students are expected to provide advice and input on school matters; and
- Parents and community members are expected to provide more input into school planning and decision making.

Multiple literature reviews have found no compelling evidence of a link between SBM and improved student achievement.¹⁰⁰ In maintaining communities of interest, research shows that SBM can generate both a positive and negative sense of engagement among involved parties. Principals have generally shown a high degree of satisfaction (despite increased workloads), parents and teachers have shown improved satisfaction as well; but the satisfaction of teachers and local board members tends to depend on whether they are truly engaged in decision making on relevant issues.¹⁰¹

A review of the limited amount of available research yielded the conclusion that managing funds at the school level can produce significant efficiency if implemented properly with the appropriate amount of guidance and training.¹⁰² For example, local budgetary control creates incentives to reduce waste so that freed-up resources can be made available for locally-defined needs, such as new supplies, staff, or professional development. Without the proper guidance, however, principals may fail to consult with other staff effectively, or decisions may be made to purchase low-quality or high-maintenance equipment, resulting in wasted funds.

An issue not identified in the research is that of reduced central administration costs due to SBM. An argument could be made that if SBM schools can achieve the same performance as traditional schools – *while consuming fewer services from central administration, which typically consumes 40% of school system budgets* – then it would appear that SBM schools are performing with greater fiscal efficiency.

School choice. Another approach to school governance is school choice, which decentralizes the assignment of students to the individual level in an attempt to create market competition that provides new incentives for schools to improve. Advocates argue that parents should have the right to decide where their child goes to school. The movement has exploded in recent years as an alternative for students in high-poverty, high-minority schools with lagging achievement scores. School choice includes magnet schools, charter schools, private school vouchers, and public school choice that allows for both inter- and intra-district enrollment.¹⁰³

Public school choice is usually either inter-district or intra-district -- a policy option that 44 states are testing. Inter-district enrollment refers to enrollment from one school district to another. Intra-district enrollment refers to enrollment from one school to another within the same school district. Magnet schools usually offer specialized programs, and are typically placed at schools that are considered undesirable within a district. An example of a magnet school may be a science magnet or an arts magnet. Charter schools are funded with public dollars; however they are free of many of the rules and regulations governing public schools, and usually are held accountable for student achievement. Vouchers provide public funds to allow a student to attend the school of their choice -- usually a private or parochial school. The manner in which the funds are provided can vary, but a tax credit is one way of giving families the funds for school choice.

The *No Child Left Behind Act* included provisions for school choice.¹⁰⁴ While all of the provisions are voluntary, if schools fail to achieve “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) for two consecutive years, then school districts must offer intra-district choice and cover the costs of transportation.

The choice provisions of NCLB are the most far-reaching school choice initiatives of any reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Research shows that the impact of school choice varies by the type of school choice program. There are a small number of studies showing higher achievement scores when school choice is employed, however, more research is needed to make any generalizations about school choice models. Magnet schools have seen higher achievement results, however the true impact is difficult to gauge because of the selection process at these schools.¹⁰⁵ Many schools, in practice, have become competitive schools for high achieving, non-minority students. Open-enrollment programs (inter- and intra-district) show even less conclusive results.¹⁰⁶ Again, white middle- to upper-class parents and students traditionally take advantage of the programming, as opposed to minority parents and students in low-achieving schools.

Literature on *fiscal efficiency* of choice programs is scarce, although there are certainly many questions that need to be addressed, such as the costs of the various school choice options and the impact of diverting funds from public schools.

Finally, research on the impact of *communities of interest* reveals a high level of parental satisfaction and parental involvement with school choice.¹⁰⁷ Other studies have also cited the positive impact of choice on low-income families who cannot choose to buy homes or rent property in high-achieving school districts.¹⁰⁸ Studies of Florida's statewide school choice program have also revealed a positive impact on students with disabilities.¹⁰⁹ For programs that do not target choice opportunities to low-income or special needs populations – particularly vouchers – there is a strong concern that only the wealthiest can take advantage of the flexibility provided, although such programs are rare. Regardless of the targeting, vouchers also raise questions regarding separation of church and state, as most voucher programs allow students to transfer to private schools with religious affiliations.

Charter schools. One form of school choice that merits special attention is the creation of charter schools. These schools are independently operated public schools that receive public funding, but are generally exempt from most of the rules and restrictions applied to traditional public schools. Since 1991, 41 states and the District of Columbia have established laws authorizing the creation of charter schools, resulting in nearly 3,000 charter schools.¹¹⁰

There is no conclusive evidence that the impact of charter schools on *student performance* is different from the impact of traditional public schools.¹¹¹ In terms of *fiscal efficiency*, there is a lack of research on charter schools, but the argument can be made that if charter schools have no different impact on student performance than traditional schools, while consuming fewer services from central administration (which typically consumes 40% of school system budgets) then it would appear that charter schools are in fact performing with greater fiscal efficiency. Proponents of charter schools could make this case even more strongly in the 19 states where public charter schools are not provided standard per-pupil funding equal to that received by traditional public schools.¹¹²

Finally, in terms of maintaining *communities of interest*, a recent U.S. Department of Education study concluded that “charter schools are more likely than traditional public schools to have high levels of parental involvement in the areas of budget decisions, governance, instructional issues, parent education workshops, and volunteering.”¹¹³ It also appears that in charter schools, teachers play a greater role in school governance.¹¹⁴

Despite the lack of evidence that charter schools impact student performance, the National Commission on Governing America's Schools – established by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) – recently selected charter schools as one of two governance-reform approaches “to develop for consideration by states and districts seeking improvement in their schools.”¹¹⁵ The Commission's support appears to be based more on theoretical grounds than empirical evidence, it also assumes that charter schools would not function through a simple decentralized governance structure, but rather through a hybrid structure that decentralizes select functions, and centralizes others.

A Hybrid Approach

The third category of governance reform is a combination of both centralization and decentralization. Proponents of this approach believe that the education system cannot be improved by clustering governance authority either centrally *or* locally because different governance functions are best performed at different levels. The hybrid approach carves out governance roles that should be performed locally and assigns them to school and district leadership, consistent with the most sound components of the decentralization approach. It then defines roles that should be performed centrally and assigns them to state level authorities, consistent with the most compelling evidence in the centralization approach. In its actual implementation, proponents suggest that this approach should become less of a binary separation of governance roles, and more of a continuum from the teacher to the principal, superintendent, school board, local government, and the state.

Perhaps the most well-known presentation of the hybrid approach comes from the Education Commission of the States (ECS), which is a commission of representatives from 50 states and the District of Columbia, each of whom has officially ratified a compact supporting ECS as a network for developing and sharing information for the improvement of education in the states.¹¹⁶ In 1998 ECS established the National Commission on Governing America's Schools (referred to herein as the Commission), and a year later this Commission issued a report describing “two approaches for consideration by states and districts seeking improvement in their schools.”¹¹⁷ These approaches effectively capture the hybrid approach to school governance reform, and at its most basic elements this approach combines three key reforms: (1) centralization of standards, assessment, and accountability; (2) decentralization of other decision making; and (3) the use of charter schools. This assessment focuses on the centralization of standards and decentralization of other decision making.

Description of the hybrid model. To begin, the Commission defined specific roles at the state, district, and school level. It is important to note, however, that because this report was issued prior to passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the discussion of this approach must be supplemented by provisions of the Act that now constitute requirements for all states.

State Role -- The state creates “a context for schools and districts to excel” where the state:

- Promotes high expectations
- Establishes academic standards
- Provides adequate financial resources to districts
- Manages education information and reporting systems
- Develops the state's K-12 public education infrastructure

- Holds districts accountable for school and student performance
- Aligns education codes with the demands of performance-based accountability¹¹⁸

District Role -- The district creates “an environment that allows schools to focus on teaching and learning” where the district (i.e., boards and superintendents):

- Creates a vision for the district
- Establishes an environment focused on student learning and achievement
- Provides instructional leadership
- Accounts for results
- Engages parents and the community
- Partners with public and private organizations¹¹⁹

School Role -- The school “creates an environment focused on teaching and learning and is held accountable for results,” where the school:

- Develops, implements, and continuously fine-tunes plans for improving student learning
- Hires, evaluates, and fires teachers and other school personnel
- Writes its own budget and receives funding on a weighted per-pupil basis
- Raises private revenue (up to a limit)
- Allocates resources as it sees fit
- Determines staffing patterns and class sizes
- Determines employee salaries
- Purchases services from the district or from outside providers¹²⁰

Evaluation of the hybrid model. Research on state-wide approaches to standards-based reform is limited, but still instructive. Strengths of this model include the following:

- **Strong focus on standards and accountability.** Research supports a focus on expectations, standards, and accountability. Somewhat unclear, however, is the division of responsibility over standards and accountability between states and districts, which is essential given that recent growth in the state role over education has caused significant confusion over the distinctions between state and local roles.¹²¹
- **Strong new approach to teacher quality.** A potentially promising component of the hybrid approach is the decentralization of decision-making over teacher hiring, evaluation, firing, and compensation. Given the critical importance of teacher quality to student performance, and given the resounding concerns raised over the existing system for managing teachers, decentralization in this area appears promising, although there is little research to validate their importance. Many states are beginning programs to change the way teachers are compensated,¹²² which should yield significant data for future research. In terms of deficiencies, states should note that the ECS report preceded the *No Child Left Behind Act*, and does not reflect the critical state role in defining teacher quality standards for current teachers.
- **Effective decentralization of financial decision making.** Research suggests that providing teachers with greater discretion over resources may improve student performance. Although the Commission did not specifically define the roles of teachers

versus principals at the school level,¹²³ this movement toward decentralization of resources holds promise.

As a weakness, the Commission's model contradicts lessons from education research in the following areas:

- **Excessive centralization for the role of parents.** The Commission calls for districts to take responsibility for parental involvement. Because research shows that parental involvement is critical, but that parents have the greatest impact on students at the classroom level, and not at the district level, a governance reform would be more effective if it emphasized parental support and assistance in their children's learning, rather than interaction with district leadership.
- **No discussion of assistance for parents.** Because parents' economic stability and educational attainment are strong drivers of a child's school performance,¹²⁴ school governance structures must include a mechanism for partnering with other government entities to ensure that state policy helps prevent economic crises that disrupt children's learning.
- **No discussion of policy role of boards.** Much attention has been paid in recent years to the idea that school boards need to refocus on a policymaking role while leaving administrative responsibilities to superintendents. Perhaps the most notable prescription for this role is the "policy governance" model.¹²⁵ Although no definitive research demonstrates that school board activities impact student performance, studies do show a strong correlation between a school board's focus on key roles and districts with high student achievement.¹²⁶ These roles include focusing on student achievement, providing high-level vision and oversight, communicating with administrators and the public effectively, providing long-term service, and demonstrating a strong understanding of the factors that affect student achievement.¹²⁷
- **No discussion of the support role of states.** States implementing a hybrid approach need to provide intensive technical assistance to districts adopting newly decentralized responsibilities. So great is this need that the *No Child Left Behind Act* now requires that states perform this role. Recent research validates this change in governance roles, noting that because schools and districts have operated for so long under rigid constraints, intensive technical assistance is required at times in order for them to fulfill their new roles. This assistance should focus on three domains: curriculum and professional development, data and assessment, and leadership.¹²⁸ Based on this research, the technical support role should be included in school governance reform efforts.
- **Questionable emphasis on charter schools.** In spite of the lack of conclusive evidence that charter schools impact student performance, the Commission included them as a large component of their reform model.
- **No attention to governance over pre-kindergarten schooling.** Pre-kindergarten is proven to enhance the school-readiness of children, and their success throughout school and into adulthood, particularly for low-income and minority students. Therefore, a key governance role that must be discussed is the role of the state in expanding the quality

of, and access to, pre-kindergarten schooling. Other services such as health care also impact school readiness significantly, and therefore these policy issues deserve attention in discussions of school governance reform.

In terms of promoting *fiscal efficiency*, the Commission's version of the hybrid approach displays several strengths and weaknesses:

- **Useful inclusion of legislative and administrative changes.** The Commission captured the criticality of streamlining legislative and regulatory requirements to better reflect and support changing responsibilities, and also of developing appropriate information technology to facilitate the execution of new roles. As discussed later in this report, these considerations appear to be important to a state's school governance reform efforts.
- **No attention to state role in defining district boundaries.** Many states continue to struggle with the question of whether small or isolated rural districts should be consolidated. The Commission made no mention of the role states should assume on the consolidation of small or isolated rural districts.

Finally, in terms of *communities of interest*, the Commission's approach includes one key strength and one key weakness:

- **Disadvantaged communities.** By assigning the state to raise funds for education (and by prescribing distribution through a per-pupil formula), the Commission captured the importance of providing equitable funding for all communities, regardless of their income; however, the omission of a support role for states is especially problematic given that schools in these communities face greater challenges, and sometimes are so small that they lack access to sufficient administrative resources.
- **Teachers.** This Commission does not prescribe how much influence over school matters teachers should exert relative to principals. Research suggests that, at a minimum, teacher discretion may be beneficial in the area of spending decisions.

This discussion of advantages and disadvantages reveals many strengths of a hybrid approach to school governance reform. The relative merits, compared to other approaches that advocate more one-dimensional shifts in authority, are that **the hybrid approach recognizes that central and local authorities both have important roles to play, and that the key to effective governance is to assign those roles correctly.** Based on this general review of school governance research, the hybrid approach to school governance reform appears most promising for states seeking to improve student performance with fiscal efficiency while maintaining communities of interests.

Part 2

A Description of Successful Practices Related to School Governance

For the purposes of this analysis, “practices” refer to actions undertaken in implementing the hybrid approach. To be classified as “successful,” these practices must be implemented in a state showing significant progress in student performance with fiscal efficiency while maintaining communities of interest. The causal impact of such practices should be supported by credible research, but at a minimum these practices should correlate with demonstrated improvements in education outcomes, processes, or structures, and receive some validation from research, at least through case studies or theoretical analysis.

Identifying Model States

The expansion of standardized NAEP testing across states in the 1990s provides a uniquely standard measure for identifying states that have made the greatest improvements in student achievement. The cross-state quantitative evaluation conducted by the RAND Corporation provided a rigorous analysis of these data to ensure that changes in raw NAEP scores were not due to changing population demographics.

The first set of comparable test scores exists for the period of 1990 to 1996, and not all states participated in the assessment in these years. Over that time period, 12 states saw major gains in math scores.¹²⁹ These states are listed below, along with states achieving the smallest gains, and those who fall in a middle category.

Table 1: State Gains in NAEP Scores

<u>Largest Gains</u>	<u>Medium Gains</u>	<u>Smallest Gains</u>
North Carolina	New Jersey	Mississippi
Texas	California	Virginia
Michigan	Wisconsin	Pennsylvania
Indiana	New York	Massachusetts
Maryland	South Carolina	Iowa
West Virginia	Tennessee	Missouri
Kentucky	Nebraska	Maine
Rhode Island	Arizona	North Dakota
Minnesota	Arkansas	Utah
Colorado	Louisiana	Delaware
Connecticut	Alabama	Georgia
Florida	New Mexico	Wyoming

Source: Grissmer, et al. (2000)

In the RAND study, North Carolina and Texas showed the highest rate of improvement.¹³⁰ To identify potential causes of this improvement, the research assessed the statistical impact of various educational investments, including lower student-teacher ratios, higher per-pupil expenditures, or higher pre-kindergarten participation. Although some of these investments

were found to correlate with higher student performance in general, that relationship did not hold for these two states, thereby yielding a conclusion that their education improvements were due to other factors.¹³¹ A more detailed case study, also by RAND researchers, concluded that the most plausible explanation for the gains were reform policies implemented in the late 1980s and early 1990s.¹³² This case study provides a basis for examining North Carolina and Texas as potential sources for successful governance reform practices.

The next question to consider is whether the progress by North Carolina and Texas continued through 2003, which is the most recent year for which NAEP results are available. Raw average test scores for both 4th and 8th grade (focusing on mathematics scores to be consistent with the earlier study) indicate that North Carolina continues to achieve significant improvements in student performance, whereas test score improvements in Texas are of a much smaller magnitude.¹³³ North Carolina ranked first in the nation in test score gains for math between 1992 and 2003, for students in both the 4th and 8th grades, and for white, African-American, and Latino student subgroups.¹³⁴ Interestingly, the 2003 scores in Texas are almost identical to scores in South Carolina, whereas those of North Carolina are significantly higher. In terms of reading tests, the scores of both Texas and North Carolina show little improvement.¹³⁵ Finally, given their geographic proximity, North Carolina and South Carolina exhibit regional similarities that provide a more credible basis for comparison. Based on the totality of these data, North Carolina appears to be a potentially useful source for exploring successful practices in school reform governance from the 1980s through today. Texas appears to serve only as a model for practices undertaken in the early 1990s.

Connecticut also has demonstrated significant improvements in test scores over time, and has employed several governance reforms validated by research. For example, Connecticut has been a leader in attracting and retaining high-quality teachers and school leaders. In addition, Connecticut has used state assessment data to inform curriculum and instructional practice, while providing technical and financial assistance to the neediest districts in the state. While all students in the state have shown improvement in achievement scores, the state's success in improving achievement scores for both Hispanic and African-American students is noteworthy.¹³⁶

Successful Governance Reform Practices

Given the academic progress made by students in North Carolina and Texas, researchers have devoted significant effort to identifying successful practices in these states. In terms of enhancing student performance and fiscal efficiency, research indicates that several practices for implementing governance reform make a difference. Some of these practices are now reflected in the requirements of *No Child Left Behind*; therefore those practices will receive less attention in the descriptions below. Many of the practices involve centralizing functions that historically have been highly decentralized.

Creating New State-level Governance Responsibilities

Based on the experience of North Carolina, and to a lesser degree that of Texas and Connecticut, centralization of the following functions appears to promote improvements in student performance.

Standards and assessment. In 1989, North Carolina enacted the *School Improvement and Accountability Act*, which shifted governance responsibility for standards to the state level, and made efforts to ensure that local decisions for textbooks and curriculum aligned with state standards. Assessments also became a state responsibility in 1992-93 to ensure consistency between standards and assessment. These tools remained consistent throughout the 1990s.¹³⁷ New standards for curriculum also were introduced in the early 1990s, although authority for selecting curriculum remained at the local level.¹³⁸

Accountability. Also during the 1990s, North Carolina began state-level ratings for schools' performance on the state-wide test, taking into account test scores, progress, and background factors such as socioeconomic status. Consequences for schools included recognition through a public rating system, financial rewards, and penalties such as disenfranchisement or principal removal.¹³⁹ In 1996 the state adopted the *ABC's of Public Education*. This law strengthened the state-level focus on, and linkages between, accountability and high-quality standards.

Teacher quality. Beginning in the early 1980s, a new role was created for the state in enhancing teacher quality in North Carolina. The state created a career development program to reward teachers for higher levels of knowledge, launched a program to recruit new teachers and subsidize their college education, raised standards for schools of education, provided mentoring for new teachers, and improved ongoing teacher education and professional development. In Connecticut, the state spent \$300 million beginning in 1986 to increase teachers' salaries, with a special focus on attracting teachers to low-income districts. It also raised content-knowledge standards and provided mentoring and assessment for first-year teachers.¹⁴⁰

Technical assistance and support. Because local school authorities sometimes need assistance in fulfilling their educational leadership responsibilities effectively, North Carolina and other states have taken on the new and different governance role of providing technical assistance, especially for low-performing schools and districts. For example, when North Carolina adopted new standards for curriculum in the early 1990s, the state also provided extensive professional development for teachers across the state to ensure they were prepared to utilize new curriculum effectively.¹⁴¹

In 1995, the North Carolina General Assembly approved the School-Based Management and Accountability Program, which was a key component of the ABCs of Public Education. This program recognized that in addition to accountability and recognition, the state also must provide assistance and, at times, intervention to ensure that local schools meet education standards.¹⁴² In the area of school-level intervention, the state has a long-running and well-respected program. This program addresses the key capacity limitations that diminish instructional quality. Specifically, poor performing schools exhibit the following limitations:

- most principals in struggling schools do not know how to be instructional leaders,
- resources are not aligned to instructional needs,
- instructional time is not protected,
- school reform work does not have an instructional focus, and
- professional development is not coordinated and aligned to needs.¹⁴³

To address these issues, technical assistance teams were hired based on specific expertise and experience in teaching core academic subject areas. The teams received training to

enhance their coaching and technical assistance skills, and of the 65-85 individuals hired each year, several were assigned to each low-performing school. North Carolina reports that in the program's first five years, 200 schools were served; and after working with the intervention teams, most of those schools exited the low-performing category, and 85 percent did not regress after the technical assistance team's involvement ended.¹⁴⁴

Data infrastructure. In the case study of North Carolina and Texas, state-level development of a central computerized data system was considered essential to success.¹⁴⁵ The Texas system served as a template for the NCLB law during its formulation, in large part because of the state's history of requiring all schools and districts to disaggregate student achievement data according to race/ethnicity and poverty. Developing data management systems provides two benefits: states can use the data management systems in setting policy, and disaggregating data forces schools to address the achievement of *all* students.

In North Carolina, the key data system is known as the "Window of Information on Student Education" (NC WISE). Since 1998, the state has already spent more than \$53 million developing the system, which will be fully implemented in all of the state's school districts within the next two years.¹⁴⁶ The state estimates it will need to spend \$200 million in the next five years.¹⁴⁷ Teachers and administrators are able to look at student grades and state testing data for current and previous school years. Other background information also is included in the system, such as attendance, health records and physical disabilities. The state's information management system has been cited as one of the best in the country in a recent report on the status of K-12 education technology.¹⁴⁸

Funding equity. Research suggests that if spending makes any difference, it is when teachers have some discretion over spending, and perhaps when funds are used to reduce class sizes in minority communities at the early grades. Based on these correlations, funding equity could play a significant role in the success of North Carolina and Texas. The case study of these states found that "both states gradually shifted resources to schools with more disadvantaged students."¹⁴⁹ General research suggests, however, that the impact of funding would only make a difference if focused on those educational programs with demonstrated track records, and within a strong system of accountability.

Early childhood education and care. As part of their role in education governance, state leadership in Texas, North Carolina, and Connecticut focused resources on early childhood education. In 2004 state leaders allocated per child pre-school funding of \$2,746 in Texas, \$4,819 in North Carolina, and \$5,601 in Connecticut, placing these latter two states among the top six states nationally.¹⁵⁰

Given the importance of health care to student performance, the effective school governance at the state level also should include attention to this issue. Both Texas and North Carolina make children in families earning up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level eligible for public health insurance, which is the 14th highest eligibility level in the nation. Connecticut makes children eligible up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level, ranking second in the nation.¹⁵¹

Through these practices, North Carolina and other states implemented key centralization components of a hybrid model for school governance. As governance reforms expanded the role of the state, however, reformers began to see the need to change the statutes and state leadership structures through which these roles were performed.

Enhancing State Leadership Structures

Too often, education practitioners find that state governance structures and statutes create convoluted, conflicting, and confusing lines of authority with detrimental impacts on teaching and learning. The following assessment reviews practices for improving both governance structures and legislative statutes.

State-level governance structure. North Carolina's governance structure for K-12 education has experienced a great deal of turmoil throughout its history, culminating in a lawsuit between the state superintendent and the state board of education in the mid-1990s.¹⁵² At issue was a fractured system that had an elected chief state school officer, state board, governor and legislature setting policy for elementary and secondary schools. In 1995, Senate Bill 1 brought an end to the conflict. With this bill, the General Assembly centralized power in the state board of education, which is appointed by the governor, and restricted the role of the superintendent to managing the day-to-day administration of the public school system -- under the direction of the state board. At present, this board is structured as follows:

The State Board of Education consists of the Lieutenant Governor, the Treasurer, and eleven members appointed by the Governor. The Governor's appointees are subject to confirmation by the General Assembly in joint session. Eight of the appointed members represent the eight education districts of the state. Three members are appointed from the state at-large. Appointments are for overlapping terms of eight years. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction serves as secretary and chief administrative officer of the Board. The Governor also appoints two Student Advisors who participate in State Board deliberations in an advisory capacity only. The State Teacher of the Year is selected to serve two years as an ex-officio advisor to the State Board.¹⁵³

Connecticut operates under a similar governance structure:

The State Board of Education consists of eleven members who are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the General Assembly. Nine voting members are appointed to four-year terms. Two non-voting student members are appointed to serve one-year terms. The Commissioner of Education, who serves as the secretary to the State Board, is appointed by the Board for a term coterminous with that of the Governor. The Commissioner of Higher Education serves as an ex officio, nonvoting member.¹⁵⁴

These streamlined political structures seem to facilitate more effective leadership in pursuing education improvements. Research on North Carolina found that the gubernatorial leadership played an important role in promoting student achievement, as governors identified education as a top priority and aligned funding, legislative, and programmatic agendas to maximize progress.¹⁵⁵ This leadership, in concert with supportive lines of authority in the state boards of education, appears to be an essential governance practice in the improvement of public education.

Legislative streamlining. In implementing new state and local roles during the 1990s, North Carolina and Texas also encountered the need to repeal many statutes that governed specific

aspects of school operations and teaching processes.¹⁵⁶ Through their streamlining efforts, these states clarified lines of authority to allow localities to focus on student achievement more effectively. The hybrid model for school reform also calls for decentralizing governance in selected areas.

Creating New Local Responsibilities

In North Carolina, two key components of decentralization include resource allocation and selected waivers of state laws. Another component of governance discussions is the size of school districts. Although district size has received relatively little attention in North Carolina, other states have developed promising strategies.

Resource allocation. In North Carolina, the decentralization program approved in 1995 provided districts and schools new flexibility to make spending decisions. Based on a school improvement plan accepted by the state board of education, local boards of education may transfer funding between previously rigid categories. For example, funds may be reallocated between budgets for teacher assistants, classroom materials and supplies, textbooks, non-instructional support personnel, and vocational education. However, the state provides less flexibility over other budgets, such as those for classroom teachers, exceptional children, driver education, and career development.

Waivers. Waivers of state law provide another means of expanding flexibility to North Carolina schools. For schools seeking to employ innovative measures outside of prescribed procedures, local boards may request such a waiver, and the state school board decides whether the waiver should be granted. According to state policy:

Waivers may be granted in the following areas: class size in fourth through twelfth grades (this excludes class size limitations in grades K-3), providing financial incentives to encourage principals to accept employment in schools identified as low-performing, and other state rules and policies.

Waivers will not be granted in the following areas: salary schedules and employee benefits; instructional program required under the Basic Education Program; system of employment for public school teachers and administrators under health and safety codes; compulsory attendance; minimum lengths of the school day and year; Uniform Education Reporting System; and placement of state-allotted office support personnel, teacher assistants, and custodial personnel on the salary schedule adopted by the State Board of Education. School systems may request waivers of state laws, rules, or policies that affect the organization, duties and assignment of central office staff only.¹⁵⁷

Through these waivers, local schools benefit from greater flexibility in tailoring their strategies to meet local needs.

Small district coordinating entities. The argument in favor of consolidation has traditionally focused on two benefits: fiscal efficiency through economies of scale and improved curriculum. Much of the research in recent years has focused on the link between school consolidation and economies of scale. Yet researchers are just beginning to grapple with the impact school district consolidation has on student achievement.

School district consolidation is a phrase that often conjures negative images. Researchers and education observers alike have noted some of the drawbacks of district consolidation, which mainly impacts rural schools and communities: students spending hours on a bus to get to school, the loss of a sense of community and control among parents, and the large bureaucracies often created as a result of consolidation.¹⁵⁸

Regional education service cooperatives (ESAs) provide one approach to rural school governance that may address some of the negative aspects of consolidation.¹⁵⁹ ESAs primarily serve schools unable to provide a full range of services for students and the educational community. The structure of ESAs can vary from a legal unit of school government, a regional branch of the state education agency, or school districts that have joined together to provide services, for example purchasing. The promising aspect of ESAs is they address many of the criticisms of district consolidation, while still reaping some of the benefits. As cited earlier, research has shown some benefit to smaller learning environments, which can be kept intact with ESAs. ESAs also provide smaller schools with access to more diverse curricula, especially for advanced courses. Further, schools can "consolidate" in theory for purchasing power, while not taking on the high costs of transportation associated with actual school consolidations.

States that researchers have mentioned as having strong programs focusing on rural education include California, Iowa, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington. In Washington, for example, state law requires the creation of regional committees that in part make decisions about schools within each region on issues such as consolidation, funding, school facilities and administration-related issues.¹⁶⁰ The state further requires voters of affected districts to approve consolidations before they can occur. New York has a long history of regional governance to address service needs among small school districts.¹⁶¹ The state has supervisory districts as well as Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) within the supervisory districts. Services vary among the different BOCES across the state, but they typically focus on six key areas: career and technical education; special education; itinerant services; general education; instructional support and non-instructional support. The goal of the BOCES is to equalize the services provided to students in schools throughout the state.

Engaging Key Communities of Interest

In its school reform efforts, North Carolina engaged key communities of interest at both state and school level, including teachers, parents (representing all socioeconomic groups), and the business community. One of the six principles of the School-Based Management and Accountability Program prescribes that the state "relies on schools and school districts to involve all parents, teachers and community representatives in the planning process and to develop and implement local accountability and program evaluation systems that complement the state ABC plan."¹⁶² Specific practices are discussed below.

Teachers and other school personnel. In engaging teachers and other school personnel, each school must have a "school improvement team" that includes the principal, representatives of teachers and teaching support staff, and parents. The representatives must be elected by their peers, and the school improvement team exists to develop, review, and revise school improvement plans. Their level of authority varies from strong decision making role to a strictly advisory role.¹⁶³

Parents. School improvement teams also include parents. Those who serve must have children in the school, and parents serve terms of up to three years. The state specifies that parents' representatives must reflect the racial and socio-economic composition of the student population, and that "school improvement team meetings must be held at times that are convenient for parents to attend."¹⁶⁴ In addition, given the critical role parents play in a child's education, the *No Child Left Behind Act* requires states to engage parents at multiple levels.¹⁶⁵

Promoting the economic success of parents is also important to the educational success of students; therefore, an important school governance issue for state leaders involves reaching beyond the boundaries of education policy and engaging in broader discussions of support for parents. For example, North Carolina has enacted multiple policies to assist low-income parents, including a state minimum wage equal to the federal minimum wage, progressive unemployment insurance policies, and a subsidized guardianship program to assist legal guardians to care for abused or neglected children who have been removed from their home.

Business community. At a system-wide level, the business community served as a strong force for reform in both North Carolina and Texas. The following conclusion was drawn in case study research:

In both states the business community played a critical role in developing the strategic plan for reform, forging compromises whenever possible with the education interests, and passing the necessary legislation. The influence was primarily at the strategic and legislative level rather than the tactical and local level. The strategic plans in both states were generally opposed by the coalition of education interests. These included the various state associations representing school boards, principals, and teachers. In both states key organizations were formed and funded by the business community that included a combination of the business, education and policymaking community to provide a mechanism for discussing the issues, forging compromises and, whenever possible, developing consensus and support for legislative passage. Developing these systems in both states was a long and arduous process, and the business community in both states was the single most stable, persistent and long-term influence for the reform agenda implemented.¹⁶⁶

The motives of the business community include social interest, economic development, and a highly-trained competitive workforce. From a governance perspective, organizations such as the Business Roundtable have focused efforts on bringing together business leaders in each state to form coalitions for improving schools.¹⁶⁷

Based on the success demonstrated by North Carolina and other states, the following chapter discusses how these practices may be considered in South Carolina's discussion of school governance.

Part 3

An Application of Successful Governance Practices to South Carolina

This chapter discusses how successful practices may be incorporated into the school governance reform efforts of South Carolina. As context for that discussion, this chapter begins with a brief overview of recent legislation.

In 1984 South Carolina enacted the *Education Improvement Act*, which established an extensive testing system and defined rewards and sanctions for students, teachers and schools. Five years later the state enacted the *Target 2000 School Reform for the Next Decade Act*, which included expansions of early childhood education, flexibility for school districts, and support for principals and teachers. In 1998, the state enacted the *Education Accountability Act*, which established state responsibility for developing and maintaining a comprehensive system of standards and assessments. Although other important legislation was passed during this time, these three laws are most relevant to the examination of how practices identified as successful in other governance reform efforts may be considered for South Carolina.

Creating New State-Level Governance Responsibilities

In terms of enhancing student performance, many of the new state-level governance responsibilities that proved successful in North Carolina are now required of all state governments due to the *No Child Left Behind Act*. These include developing state-level standards, assessment and accountability measures; and NCLB also mandated that states assume governance responsibility for teacher quality standards and for data tracking and reporting systems. As a result of NCLB, South Carolina no longer needs to focus on whether these responsibilities should be shifted to the state; it must now focus on whether the state is fulfilling its role effectively. That question lies outside the scope of this analysis, but there remain several governance-specific components of these issues that merit discussion here.

Standards, assessment, and accountability. The Education Accountability Act assigned the state responsibility for developing and maintaining a comprehensive system of standards and assessments. As a potential frame of reference for those who consider whether the state is fulfilling its new role in this area, the state Education Oversight Committee of South Carolina cited the Education Week *Quality Counts* report card for states in its 2004 annual report. The *Quality Counts* assessment gave South Carolina's standards and accountability system a "B" grade in 2003 and an "A" grade in 2004.¹⁶⁸ There was no change in this rating for 2005.¹⁶⁹

Teacher quality. There appear to be conflicting external reviews of South Carolina's success in fulfilling its state governance role over teacher quality. The *Quality Counts* assessment of states considers the rigor of content-knowledge requirements for new teachers, the actual content-knowledge ratings of current teachers, standards for subject-matter teacher tests, professional development requirements, policies to curb out-of-field teaching, and public availability of these standards. Based on these criteria, South Carolina was given an "A-" in 2005 – the second highest rating in the country.¹⁷⁰ This evaluation focused heavily on standards that apply to new teachers.

A separate study of quality standards for current teachers gave an opposite review. Under NCLB, states define standards for ensuring the quality of the existing teacher workforce through "High Objective Uniform State Standards of Evaluation" (HOUSSE) plans. These standards are

essential because they provide a fresh evaluation of current teachers who may have qualified under pre-NCLB standards, and now must be reevaluated. States have discretion to define the standards for evaluation, and whereas some states have imposed rigorous and objective measures of quality standards, others have proposed weak standards. The National Council on Teaching Quality (NCTQ) has assessed the HOUSSE plans for all 50 states, and gave South Carolina's new standards a grade of "F" because the standards fail to employ an objective and rigorous measure of current teachers' knowledge of the subject matter they teach.¹⁷¹ Research shows that subject matter knowledge is a critical determinant of a quality teacher. The primary flaws cited by NCTQ include the following:

- the state does not require teachers to earn a college minor in the subject taught or pass a subject-matter test, and allows teachers to count minimal coursework requirements retroactively;
- the standards do not compel teachers to employ any objective measures of subject matter competency, such as student achievement, graded coursework, targeted and rigorous professional development, and subject matter tests; and
- the state gives credit toward subject-matter competency for coursework outside of subject area(s).¹⁷²

South Carolina was among three states in the nation with a standards system deemed the least rigorous. The specific statement of NCTQ highlighted the following point:

[South Carolina's HOUSSE plan] recycles the state's teacher evaluation instrument to serve double duty as [the] measure of highly qualified status. These instruments relegate subject-matter knowledge to only one of five criteria used by the principal to evaluate a teacher during a classroom observation. It's highly unlikely that the principal can isolate content knowledge and make an accurate assessment of a teacher's subject-matter knowledge during one classroom observation.¹⁷³

Based on this assessment, questions remain as to whether the new state responsibility regarding teacher quality is being executed effectively. The state's HOUSSE standards should be reevaluated accordingly.

Technical assistance. South Carolina provides technical assistance through the Teacher Specialist on Site Program, which targets assistance to the lowest performing schools. The NCLB included provisions for all states to assume the role of providing "scientifically based" technical assistance. In 2004 the Education Commission of the States evaluated South Carolina's technical assistance program and concluded that it "appears on track," which is the highest designation in their rating system.¹⁷⁴

Data infrastructure. South Carolina has developed a data system that will track students throughout their K-12 academic career, using proceeds from the state's lottery. The data management system is scheduled to be launched in seven school districts in the summer of 2005.¹⁷⁵

Funding equity. As discussed, funding equity may be important to student performance as it relates to the discretion of teachers and to class sizes in minority communities at the early grades. The 2005 Quality Counts review assessed financing equity through a highly-

quantitative analysis, and then arrayed states according to the degree of financing disparities found. South Carolina was rated at the “B-“ level, behind 19 other states. A favorable conclusion was drawn from a separate analysis of funding equity using a different methodology. In this analysis, South Carolina was found to be among the most equitable in funding among districts. This conclusion applied to comparisons of districts based on variations of both income and race. Even more favorably, South Carolina showed significant improvement in funding high-poverty districts between 1997 and 2002.¹⁷⁶ Although NCLB encourages this type of progress among states, it includes no requirements to do so.¹⁷⁷

Early childhood education and care. Given the importance of early childhood education to student performance, particularly among low-income and minority children, South Carolina should consider expanding its state governance role and attention to expanding resources in this area. In 2004, South Carolina allocated \$1,303 in state funding per child enrolled in pre-kindergarten – less than half of the amount allocated in Texas, and approximately one-fourth of the amounts allocated by North Carolina and Connecticut.

All states seeking to expand pre-Kindergarten face a difficult tradeoff between expanding access to all children vs. targeting services to low-income and special needs children. In considering this tradeoff, the National Institute for Early Education Research has drawn the following lessons from research:¹⁷⁸

- Targeted programs have lower costs, but do not realize other presumed advantages of higher quality and greater public support.
- Universal programs are likely to be more effective at identifying and reaching all targeted children.
- School readiness is not just a problem of the poor. Young middle-income children lag behind their wealthy peers in social and cognitive skills.
- High-quality preschool has been found to benefit middle-income children, and added benefits could far exceed costs.
- Universal programs may have larger effects than targeted programs for the most disadvantaged children.
- Universal programs are likely to receive greater public support so that they are both of higher quality and reach more children than targeted programs.

Based on these lessons, the Institutes favors universal pre-K as the most productive policy for states. Specifically, the following policy guidance is provided¹⁷⁹:

- The effectiveness and efficiency of investments in preschool could be increased with a shift from targeted to voluntary universal preschool programs.
- High quality standards for all children are required for effective universal preschool programs.
- Children with special needs due to poverty or disabilities may require more intensive services within universal programs.
- Expansion toward universal takes time, and patience is required to build capacity while maintaining or improving quality.
- Preschool programs could move toward universal access by gradually raising thresholds for eligibility.
- Federal matching funds could be used to encourage states to fund high-quality preschool for all.

In terms of health care, which also is critical to student performance, only two states set a lower child eligibility threshold for public health insurance than South Carolina, which currently sets its threshold at 150 percent of poverty. Texas and North Carolina are tied for 14th in the nation, and Connecticut is ranked second.¹⁸⁰

Based on this examination, it is clear that South Carolina has already taken important steps in adopting some successful new practices at the state level, and requires greater attention in other areas. It also appears that relatively less progress has been made in terms of enhancing state-level leadership structures.

Enhancing State Leadership Structures

North Carolina's dramatic improvement in education was accompanied by significant realignment of authority, roles, and legislation at the state level. South Carolina may benefit from a discussion of similar changes in state-level governance and legislative streamlining.

State-level governance structure. Based on successful practices identified in other states, several aspects of the South Carolina school governance structure require examination; specifically, the structure of the state board of education and the structure and capacity of local school boards.

In both North Carolina and Connecticut, the state school board consists of 11 members appointed by the Governor, and in North Carolina the lieutenant governor and state treasurer also serve on this board. In contrast, South Carolina's board consists of 17 members, 16 of whom are appointed by legislative delegations from the 16 judicial circuits of the state, and only one of whom is appointed by the governor. In only one other state does the legislature appoint the members of the state board of education.¹⁸¹

A further complication of South Carolina's structure is that the legislative appointees must rotate among the counties within a judicial circuit.¹⁸²

Although there is no conclusive evidence that the selection process for boards impacts the quality of education, the case study of North Carolina and Texas concludes that consistency of leadership over time is essential to successful reform efforts.¹⁸³ This conclusion suggests that, at a minimum, the rotation of appointed members among counties – which necessarily limits board members to single terms – should be discussed.

As part of this discussion, state leaders in South Carolina may consider adopting a structure similar to that of North Carolina and Connecticut, where the state board of education is appointed by the governor. In this discussion it is important to note that centralizing lines of authority in the governor's office appears to have a positive impact only if the governor chooses to exercise strong leadership and invest major efforts in school improvement. The case study of North Carolina and Texas concluded that gubernatorial leadership played an important role because governors in both states consistently made improving the public school system their top priority.¹⁸⁴

On a separate but related issue the Governor of South Carolina currently advocates converting the state superintendent post from an elected position to a gubernatorially appointed one.¹⁸⁵ Legislation has been introduced in the General Assembly to accomplish this change.¹⁸⁶ A study commissioned by the Education Oversight Committee in 1999 recommended a similar shift in lines of authority.¹⁸⁷ There is no conclusive research to substantiate the value of such a change, especially given that the state superintendent of North Carolina is also elected.

Legislative streamlining. In the process of shifting governance responsibilities between state and local entities, both North Carolina and Texas saw the need to streamline legislation that, over the course of many decades, had become convoluted, conflicting, and confusing. A 2000 report from the South Carolina Study Team on Local Leadership Quality and Engagement offered the following assessment of the legislative and regulatory framework in which schools must operate:

During the second half of the twentieth century, most education reform in South Carolina was initiated at the state level through legislation, along with the numerous rules and regulations adopted by the State Board of Education, to organize schools' instructional programs, establish minimal standards, and impose regulations considered necessary or desirable for modern education. Local school boards had little role in this process. Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, South Carolina school boards operate educational programs which are subject to extensive rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education and approved by the General Assembly. In other words, the model has become overburdened with compliance with minimal focus on results.¹⁸⁸

This assessment suggests that schools could benefit significantly from a comprehensive review of streamlining legislative and administrative requirements at the state level, with the goal of maintaining essential state governance requirements while reducing or eliminating other obligations imposed on schools and districts. Through these enhanced state-level governance structures, local districts would then be positioned to exercise discretion over finances and policy more productively.

Creating New Local Responsibilities

The hybrid approach to government reform implemented by North Carolina included establishing a new set of local responsibilities. Two key components of this decentralization include resource allocation and selected waivers of state laws. South Carolina leaders also remain concerned regarding the issue of efficient and effective governance in small rural school districts.

Resource allocation. Beginning with the 2003-04 school year, the State of South Carolina began allowing school districts to transfer up to 20 percent of funds between programs within the same funding source, and to carry forward unexpended funds from prior fiscal years. For school year 2004-05, the state expanded this flexibility by raising the transfer limit to 100 percent and allowing transfers between funding sources. These measures represent a major decentralization of authority to the district level.

It is unclear, however, to what extent teachers are given discretion in allocating resources. Research suggests that teachers' discretion over resources may impact student achievement, and therefore the state should focus more attention on this issue. More specifically, the RAND cross-state study of NAEP data indicates that the level at which teachers report that they have adequate resources is highly correlated with stronger student performance. This research does not prescribe what funding level or means of distribution are most appropriate, but extensive research on school-based management and school-based budgeting can provide additional guidance to state leaders in this area.¹⁸⁹

Waivers. Under current law, the State of South Carolina will grant waivers for various state requirements to schools under selected circumstances. For example, schools demonstrating consistently strong improvement in academic achievement according to specific criteria automatically achieve “flexibility status.” Other schools may apply for and receive this status based on a specific appeal, contingent upon consistent demonstrated improvement during the period in which the waiver applies.¹⁹⁰ This level of flexibility also appears generally comparable to the level provided in North Carolina. As with funding flexibility, this new innovation requires that states adopt a new governance role of monitoring schools utilizing waivers, identifying the value of this flexibility, and migrating successful practices to districts across the state.

Small district coordinating entities. South Carolina began a policy shift in the 1950s toward school district consolidation, culminating in a decrease in the number of school districts to only 85 today.¹⁹¹ State law allows for consolidation of school districts by either the General Assembly or the county boards of election. Consolidation by the General Assembly requires the written approval of the Senate and House Members representing the counties involved. For county boards of election to change the boundaries of school districts, either a written petition signed by four-fifths of voters within both counties is required or a written petition signed by one-third of voters and a victory in a county-wide election held by the county board of education.

A study conducted by Miley and Associates, Inc., concluded that economies of scale exist in school districts, and costs per-student decline as district size increases (the figures were based on non-teaching costs). However, the economies of scale were greater for districts with fewer than 2,500 students. The trend actually reverses when districts reach 25,000 or more students. Further, the researchers concluded that lower densities are also directly related to higher per student transportation costs. These costs suggest that as students spend more time in buses achievement declines.¹⁹²

In terms of regional education service cooperatives (ESAs), South Carolina has Regional Technology Centers. The centers provide professional development and support for educators within each district. Centers are located in Greenville, Spartanburg, Columbia, Beaufort, Charleston, Conway, Dorchester, and Florence. As South Carolina considers further consolidation of districts, the state should evaluate the effectiveness of these service cooperatives, and consider whether they may be expanded in order to provide the benefits of district consolidation without disrupting the communities that exist under the current district structure.

Given research on the capacity limitations of local school boards across the country, any state’s movement toward increased local flexibility must be accompanied by monitoring choices made, identifying promising models for utilizing flexibility, and migrating new successful practices to districts across the state. With regard to financial flexibility, South Carolina’s General Assembly has charged the Education Oversight Committee with this responsibility, and the first monitoring report has been produced. The implementation of policy waivers merit similar oversight.

Engaging Key Communities of Interest

South Carolina’s governance system reflects significant efforts to incorporate the perspectives and needs of key stakeholders in the education system.

Teachers. In 1977 South Carolina began requiring that every school operate a School Advisory Council. Since then the state renamed them School Improvement Councils (SIC) and changed their focus from providing general advice to developing school improvement plans and reporting

to larger school communities on educational progress. By law, two thirds of each council must be elected teachers, students, and parents.¹⁹³

In the context of school governance, this means of engaging teachers raises several questions:

- Is the perspective of teachers being incorporated into school-level decision-making, particularly in light of research findings that providing teachers with more discretionary resources is a particularly cost-effective strategy for improving student performance?
- Is this mode of engaging teachers improving the “relational trust” that researchers find to be important?

These questions appear essential for discussion as South Carolina continues its efforts to improve student performance.

Parents. As mentioned, School Improvement Councils must also include parents. The *No Child Left Behind Act* also specifies key notification requirements for parents at multiple levels of state governance. Historically South Carolina has made significant efforts to engage parents in questions of school policy, and for the purposes of democracy and local control over education, this effort is valuable. From the perspective of improving student achievement, however, research strongly shows that parental involvement makes a large impact when focused on positive interaction with the child and classroom teacher. Therefore, in the context of school governance discussions, South Carolina’s leaders should be cognizant of this research, and should consider focusing their efforts on promoting parental engagement with their children around positive learning activities, while still including parents appropriately in other levels of discussion.

Because the economic success of parents is also important to the educational success of students, South Carolina should expand the scope of education governance to include consideration for state policies that support parents economically. For example, South Carolina has no state minimum wage to help working parents better provide for their children’s basic needs.¹⁹⁴ This state also has no subsidized guardianship program, which could assist legal guardians to care for abused or neglected children who have been removed from their home.¹⁹⁵ As a final example, South Carolina has not enacted progressive unemployment insurance policies such as providing benefits for unemployed workers seeking part-time work – many of whom are single mothers.¹⁹⁶ These policies, while not directly related to education, can have a significant, indirect impact on student performance, and therefore merit attention as part of a state’s role in school governance.

Business community. The business community has played an important role in the education improvements in South Carolina. For example, the Education Oversight Committee includes strong business representation.¹⁹⁷ The business community also appears to actively contribute to local education through programs such as Communities in Schools.¹⁹⁸ Given research on the influence of the business community in successful reform efforts, it appears important that this community continue to advocate for sound, research-based reform in the State of South Carolina.

South Carolina’s governance system reflects significant efforts to incorporate the perspectives and needs of key stakeholders in the education system. The key question remaining is whether the type and degree of involvement facilitates decision-making that can truly impact student achievement. On these and other issues, the following section presents general concluding observations for school governance reform in South Carolina.

Recommendations

South Carolina has made major progress in adopting successful governance reform practices, in part through forward-looking reforms, and in part through implementation of new roles now required under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. As the state continues striving to improve its governance, the challenge lies in forcefully pursuing those education investments that research shows will provide the greatest return.

Recognizing that governance pertains not only to formal structures, but also to the policies, standards, and resource allocation made within those structures, many opportunities can be identified for education improvement in this area. This analysis presents two types of recommendations. The first set focuses on formal school governance structures and practices, recognizing that incremental improvements may be possible, but that in general, these efforts do not apply directly to the true drivers of education reform. These recommendations include the following:

1. **Streamline education legislation and regulations.** Many concerns have been raised regarding the state's need to eliminate convoluted, duplicative, and overly burdensome laws and regulations that govern the operations of districts and schools. State leaders should conduct a major review and reduction of these requirements to facilitate reforms currently underway.
2. **Consider eliminating single-term limits on state school board members.** Although there is no conclusive evidence that the selection process for boards impacts the quality of education, the case study of North Carolina and Texas indicates that consistency of leadership over time is essential to successful reform efforts. This conclusion suggests that, at a minimum, the rotation of appointed members among counties – which necessarily limits board members to single terms – should be revised.
3. **Evaluate the use of education service cooperatives as an alternative to district consolidation.** As South Carolina considers further consolidation of districts, the state should further evaluate the effectiveness of these service cooperatives, and consider whether they may be expanded in order to provide the benefits of district consolidation without disrupting the communities that exist under the current district structure.
4. **Enhance the state's role in providing oversight and technical assistance in order to facilitate the successful devolution of budget and policy control.** As South Carolina provides local schools greater control, the state can shift its attention to the dual roles of providing technical assistance so that local discretion may be exercised effectively, and monitoring the use of this discretion to identify new and promising practices. Knowledge gained from these state roles can be shared with other localities and incorporated into more broad policy.
5. **Avoid school choice initiatives that lack a clear research foundation.** As South Carolina's leaders continue their debate over the Governor's proposed school choice initiative, this analysis offers several considerations. The Governor has proposed a broad set of tax credits to offset the costs of education expenses outside of traditional public schools that, in essence, create a voucher system for private schools. Due to the limited implementation of school choice nationwide, and to the mixed results from

research, there is no evidence that this type of reform can have a significant impact on student performance on a state-wide basis.

6. **Recognize that debates over the election of the state superintendent are a distraction from real governance improvements.** There is no evidence that states with elected state superintendents achieve better results than those with appointed superintendents. Of special note is the fact that North Carolina, which is widely recognized as a national leader in education reform, also maintains an elected state superintendent.

The second set of recommendations still pertain to education governance, but focus less on governance structures, and more on the type of leadership required from policy makers in South Carolina. These recommendations provide the greatest promise for affecting student performance.

7. **Enhance state leadership for ensuring teacher quality.** South Carolina has been sharply criticized by the National Council for Teaching Quality (NCTQ) for setting very poor standards to ensure the qualifications of current teachers. In a recent report, the NCTQ gave the state's standards an "F" grade because the standards fail to employ an objective and rigorous measure of current teachers' knowledge of the subject matter they teach. Research shows that subject matter knowledge is a critical determinant of a quality teacher. This issue raises major questions of whether the state is performing its governance role appropriately, and merits immediate attention from state leaders.
8. **Increase the state governance focus on expanding early childhood education and health care.** Given the importance of early childhood education to student performance, particularly among low-income and minority children, South Carolina should expand its state governance role and attention to promoting universal pre-K. South Carolina's investment in pre-kindergarten per child enrolled is less than half of the amount allocated in Texas, and approximately one-fourth of the amount allocated by North Carolina and Connecticut. In terms of health care, which also is critical to student performance, South Carolina ranks behind 47 other states in providing children of low-wage families access to health care.
9. **Ensure that teachers are adequately resourced.** Research indicates that providing teachers with greater discretion over resources, even in small amounts, may impact student achievement. Although South Carolina provides local schools with greater flexibility over funding, it is unclear whether teachers are given a significant voice in how that flexibility is used. Research suggests that resource adequacy for teachers has a positive impact on student achievement, and that this investment is far more productive and cost-effective than investments in teacher salaries or teachers' aides.
10. **Emphasize the need for direct parental involvement with students over parental involvement in policy discussions.** Historically, South Carolina has made significant efforts to engage parents in questions of school policy, and for the purposes of democracy and local control over education, this effort is valuable. From the perspective of improving student achievement, however, research strongly shows that parental involvement makes a large impact when focused on positive interaction with the child and classroom teacher, not at the school or district policy level. Therefore, in the context of school governance discussions, South Carolina's leaders should be cognizant of this research, and should focus their efforts on promoting parental engagement with their

children around positive learning activities, while still including parents appropriately in other levels of discussion.

11. **Focus attention of state leadership on how family economic status disrupts student achievement.** Because the economic stability of parents is critical to the educational success of students, school leaders must advocate for state policies that help families manage economic crises that could disrupt their children's education.

Drawing on these lessons from research, South Carolina can enhance school governance to improve student achievement with fiscal efficiency while maintaining communities of interest.

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Endnotes

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- ¹ This focus is consistent with the focus of the National School Boards Foundation and National School Boards Association; see Land (2002).
 - ² The EOC goals specifically reference the National Assessment of Student Progress (NAEP), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate Programme (IBP) exams.
 - ³ Three broad literature reviews, accounting for divergent views, show agreement on this point: Whitehurst (2002): 46; Walsh (2001): 6; Darling-Hammond (2000): 3;
 - ⁴ Darling-Hammond (2000): 3-4; Walsh (2001): 7; Whitehurst (2002): 45.
 - ⁵ Walsh (2001): 7.
 - ⁶ Darling-Hammond (2000): 7; Walsh (2001): 5-6. Whitehurst (2002): 46 agrees, but does not mention the “leveling off” effect.
 - ⁷ Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children (1994); National Center for Children in Poverty (1997); Shore (1997).
 - ⁸ Campbell, et al. (2000); Cost Quality and Outcomes Study Team (1999).
 - ⁹ Barnett (1985):333-342; Barnett (1996).
 - ¹⁰ Cotton and Wikelund (2001): 3; Caplan, et al., (1997): 1
 - ¹¹ Caplan, et al., (1997): 1
 - ¹² Cotton and Wikelund (2001): 3; Caplan, et al., (1997): 1
 - ¹³ Caplan, et al., (1997): 2
 - ¹⁴ White (2000)
 - ¹⁵ Lumsden (1997): 1; Cotton (1989): 3
 - ¹⁶ Cotton (1989): 4
 - ¹⁷ US Department of Education (1998), McRobbie et al. (1998), as cited in Center for the Study of Social Policy (2003). Grissmer et al. (2000);: xxv.
 - ¹⁸ Pate-Bain, et al., (1992): 253-56; Illig (1996); Nye et al. (1999): 127-142 as cited by Center for the Study of Social Policy (2003): 35
 - ¹⁹ Education World, as cited by Center for the Study of Social Policy (2003): 35.
 - ²⁰ Grissmer et al. (2000): xxvii
 - ²¹ Education Commission of the States (1999): 1
 - ²² Grissmer (1998): 21; Southern Regional Education Board (2001): 36-39; Whitehurst (2002): 48 makes the same argument but does not include accountability.
 - ²³ Manpower (2002) as cited in Center for the Study of Social Policy (2003); Grissmer (1998): 21; Grissmer et al. (2000): xxiv; Whitehurst (2002): 48-50. It should be noted, however, that at least one very influential study, Darling-Hammond (2000): 21 offered a competing explanation.
 - ²⁴ Fuhrman (2003)
 - ²⁵ Grissmer et al. (2000): 31.
 - ²⁶ Grissmer et al. (2000): xxv.
 - ²⁷ Miley and Associates, Inc. (2003): 16
 - ²⁸ Miley and Associates, Inc. (2003): 45
 - ²⁹ Land (2002): 29-30
 - ³⁰ Grissmer et al. (2000): xxvii
 - ³¹ Grissmer et al. (2000): xxvii
 - ³² Grissmer et al. (2000): xxvii
 - ³³ Grissmer et al. (2000): xxvi; See also Lankford and Wyckoff (1997) as cited in Hadderman (1999) and Podgursky (2003)
 - ³⁴ Picus (1995) as cited in Hadderman (1999).

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- ³⁵ For literature reviews see Oswald (1995) and Hadderman (1999)
- ³⁶ Odden, Monk, Nakib, and Picus (1995): 5
- ³⁷ Miley and Associates, Inc. (2003): 16
- ³⁸ Miley and Associates, Inc. (2003): 53
- ³⁹ As quoted in Bryk and Schneider (2002): 19
- ⁴⁰ Bryk and Schneider (2002)
- ⁴¹ Bryk and Schneider (2002): 32
- ⁴² Bryk and Schneider (2002): 32
- ⁴³ Cotton and Wikelund (1989): 6; Caplan, et al., (1997): 3; Mapp and Henderson (2002)
- ⁴⁴ Cotton and Wikelund (1989): 7; see also Mapp and Henderson (2002)
- ⁴⁵ Desimone (2004)
- ⁴⁶ Loveless (2000)
- ⁴⁷ For example, see Lieberman (1997);
- ⁴⁸ Bryk and Schneider (2002): 29
- ⁴⁹ Bryk and Schneider (2002): 143
- ⁵⁰ ERIC (2002)
- ⁵¹ Southern Regional Education Board (2001): 35
- ⁵² Most notably, studies by Coleman and Jencks, as cited in Darling-Hammond (2000) p.2.
- ⁵³ Whitehurst (2002): 41
- ⁵⁴ Johnson and Strange (2005): v
- ⁵⁵ Arnold (2000): 1
- ⁵⁶ Arnold (2000): 5
- ⁵⁷ Johnson and Strange (2005): v
- ⁵⁸ Arnold (2000): 5
- ⁵⁹ Land (2002): 2-3; Education Commission of the States (1999): 7-8;
- ⁶⁰ Education Commission of the States (1999): 8-9.
- ⁶¹ Land (2002): 6
- ⁶² Land (2002): 6
- ⁶³ Education Commission of the States (1999): 8
- ⁶⁴ Education Commission of the States (1999): 13
- ⁶⁵ Study Team on Local Leadership Quality and Engagement (2000): 19
- ⁶⁶ Education Week (2005): 2
- ⁶⁷ Education Week (2005): 1
- ⁶⁸ Education Week (2005): 8
- ⁶⁹ NCES (1999) as cited in Duncombe and Yinger (2001): 2
- ⁷⁰ Local School Restructuring Team (2000): 2
- ⁷¹ Johnson (2000) as cited by Renchler (2000): 3
- ⁷² Education Commission of the States (1999); 13
- ⁷³ Land (2002): 7; Carver (2000) has become an especially well-known critic of school board micromanagement on one hand, and lack of attention to critical matters on the other.
- ⁷⁴ Land (2002): 6
- ⁷⁵ Land (2002): 7
- ⁷⁶ Land: (2002): 26
- ⁷⁷ Land (2002): 6
- ⁷⁸ Hess et al. (2005): 160-161;
- ⁷⁹ Conley (2003): 11, 92.
- ⁸⁰ Land (2002): 12
- ⁸¹ Odden and Archibald (2001) as cited in Land (2002): 30
- ⁸² Grissmer, et al. (2000): xxvii.
- ⁸³ Land (2002): 3

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- ⁸⁴ Paige (2002)
⁸⁵ Wong and Shen (2003): 1.
⁸⁶ Kirst (2002): 1; Land (2002): 15
⁸⁷ Wong and Shen (2003): 26-28
⁸⁸ Land (2002): 15
⁸⁹ Wong and Shen (2003): 24
⁹⁰ Wong and Shen (2003): 3-4; Land (2002):14
⁹¹ Land (2002): 14
⁹² Land (2002): 6
⁹³ Land (2002): 7
⁹⁴ Land (2002): 14
⁹⁵ Land (2002): 15
⁹⁶ Land (2002): 11; Education Commission of the States (1999): 11
⁹⁷ Land (2002): 11
⁹⁸ Cotton (1992)
⁹⁹ Cotton (1992): 3-4
¹⁰⁰ Land (2002): 12; Education Commission of the States (1999): 11; Cotton (1992): 11
¹⁰¹ Cotton (1992): 10-11
¹⁰² Peterson (1991)
¹⁰³ Cookson (1994): 14-16
¹⁰⁴ Krueger and Ziebarth (2002): 1-8
¹⁰⁵ Krueger and Ziebarth (2002): 2
¹⁰⁶ Krueger and Ziebarth (2002): 2-3
¹⁰⁷ Krueger and Ziebarth (2002): 3; Education Week (accessed June 15, 2005)
¹⁰⁸ Education Week (2005)
¹⁰⁹ Education Week (2005)
¹¹⁰ US Charter Schools online resource (accessed May, 2005) at www.uscharterschools.org
¹¹¹ Land (2002): 13; Education Commission of the States (1999): 10
¹¹² Center for Education Reform (2004) website accessed at www.edreform.com.
¹¹³ US Department of Education (2004): 28-30
¹¹⁴ Center for Education Reform (2003): 12
¹¹⁵ Education Commission of the States (1999): vii
¹¹⁶ Information accessed online at www.ecs.org, June 4, 2005.
¹¹⁷ Education Commission of the States (1999): vii
¹¹⁸ Education Commission of the States (1999): x
¹¹⁹ Education Commission of the States (1999): 17
¹²⁰ Education Commission of the States (1999): 24
¹²¹ Land (2002): 6
¹²² Education Week (2005): 7
¹²³ Education Commission of the States (1999): 25
¹²⁴ White (2000)
¹²⁵ Carver (2000).
¹²⁶ Land (2002): 19
¹²⁷ Iowa Association of School Boards (2000), Goodman, et al. (1997), and Goodman and Zimmerman (2000), as cited by Land (2000): 19-20.
¹²⁸ Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy at MassINC (2005)
¹²⁹ Math data proved more useful than reading because reading tests were only given twice, and were given two years apart, which limited the utility of that data. (Grissmer, et al., 2000,: xxiv).

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- 130 Although in terms of statistical significance, those gains are not meaningfully larger than those of the other states in the same category. See Grissmer, et al. (2000): 61.
- 131 Grissmer et al. (2000): xxiv
- 132 Grissmer and Flanagan (1998) as cited in Grissmer et al. (2000): 59
- 133 National Center for Education Statistics (2004a): 4-5
- 134 Education Trust (2004): 5-6
- 135 National Center for Education Statistics (2004b): 4-5
- 136 National Association of State Boards of Education (2002)
- 137 Grissmer and Flanagan (1988): iii-iv
- 138 Darling-Hammond (2000): 19
- 139 Grissmer and Flanagan (1988): iv
- 140 Darling-Hammond (2000): 19-20
- 141 Darling-Hammond (2000): 19
- 142 Public Schools of North Carolina (2004): 7
- 143 Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy at MassINC (2005): 24
- 144 Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy at MassINC (2005): 24
- 145 Grissmer and Flanagan (1998): iv
- 146 Hoff (2005)
- 147 Hoff (2005)
- 148 Hoff (2005)
- 149 Grissmer and Flanagan (1998): v.
- 150 National Institute for Early Education Research (2004): 51
- 151 Kaiser Health Facts Online, "Income Eligibility Levels for Children Under SCHIP, as a Percent of Federal Poverty Level, 2004" at www.statehealthfacts.org
- 152 See North Carolina State Board of Education website at:
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/state_board/SBE_history/chapter4.html; Grissmer and Flanagan (1998); National Association of State Boards of Education (2002).
- 153 State of North Carolina internet site:
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/state_board/AboutSBE.html Downloaded June 11, 2005.
- 154 State of Connecticut internet site: <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/board/index.htm>. Downloaded June 11, 2005.
- 155 Grissmer and Flanagan (1998): ii-iii
- 156 Grissmer and Flanagan (1998): 24
- 157 Public Schools of North Carolina (2004): 14
- 158 Killeen and Sipple (2000)
- 159 See The Rural School and Community Trust at <http://www.ruraledu.org/> for more detailed information on ESAs
- 160 See <http://www.k12.wa.us/>
- 161 See
<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/602%20Report/2005BOCES602tenth/full602report05.pdf>
- 162 Public Schools of North Carolina (2004): 6
- 163 Public Schools of North Carolina (2004): 15-17
- 164 Public Schools of North Carolina (2004): 17
- 165 No Child Left Behind website. Downloaded on June 14, 2005 at
http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc#_Toc70481096
- 166 Grissmer and Flanagan (1998): 25
- 167 See Business Roundtable State Business Coalitions at
<http://www.businessroundtable.org/taskForces/taskforce/issue.aspx?qs=65B5BF159F849514481138A6DBE7A7A19BB6487BF6D39>

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- ¹⁶⁸ Education Oversight Committee (2004): 1
- ¹⁶⁹ Perhaps of some interest is the fact that Connecticut also received an “A,” North Carolina received a “B,” and both Connecticut and Texas received a “C+.” Education Week, Quality Counts online presentation, downloaded June 12, 2005 from:
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/2005/tables/17standacct-t1.html>.
- ¹⁷⁰ Connecticut also received an “A-,” North Carolina received a “B,” Texas received a “C-.” Education Week, Quality Counts online presentation, downloaded June 12, 2005 from:
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/2005/tables/17quality-t1.html>
- ¹⁷¹ Both Connecticut and North Carolina also received “F” grades, and Texas received a grade of “B.” Walsh (2004): 18-25
- ¹⁷² Walsh (2004): 30-36
- ¹⁷³ Walsh (2004): 24
- ¹⁷⁴ Education Commission of the States website, downloaded on June 12, 2005, at
<http://nclb2.ecs.org/NCLBSURVEY/nclb.aspx?Target=SM>
- ¹⁷⁵ Alan Richards, Education Week (May 5, 2005), “South Carolina,” *Technology Counts 2005*, Editorial Projects in Education: Bethesda, MD.
- ¹⁷⁶ Carey (2004): 5-9
- ¹⁷⁷ Carey (2004): 2
- ¹⁷⁸ Barnett, Brown, and Shore (2004): 1
- ¹⁷⁹ Barnett, Brown, and Shore (2004): 1
- ¹⁸⁰ Kaiser Health Facts Online, “Income Eligibility Levels for Children Under SCHIP, as a Percent of Federal Poverty Level, 2004” at www.statehealthfacts.org
- ¹⁸¹ Education Commission of the States (2004)
- ¹⁸² Study Team on Local Leadership Quality and Engagement (2000): 15
- ¹⁸³ Grissmer and Flanagan (1998): ii-iii.
- ¹⁸⁴ Grissmer and Flanagan (1998)
- ¹⁸⁵ Office of the Governor website, downloaded on June 12, 2005.
<http://www.scgovernor.com/interior.asp?SiteContentId=66&NavId=282&ParentId=0>
- ¹⁸⁶ South Carolina Legislature Online website, downloaded on June 12, 2005.
http://www.scstatehouse.net/cgi-bin/web_subject_2003.exe
- ¹⁸⁷ Study Team on Local Leadership Quality and Engagement (2000): 21
- ¹⁸⁸ Study Team on Local Leadership Quality and Engagement (2000): 17
- ¹⁸⁹ For example, see Goertz and Odden (1999).
- ¹⁹⁰ Section 59-18, Article 11.
- ¹⁹¹ Miley and Associates (2003)
- ¹⁹² Miley and Associates (2003)
- ¹⁹³ South Carolina School Improvement Council website at
<http://www.ed.sc.edu/sic/aboutsics.html>. Downloaded June 14, 2005.
- ¹⁹⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, *Minimum Wage Laws in the States – January 1, 2005*.
- ¹⁹⁵ Children’s Defense Fund, *State’s Subsidized Guardianship At A Glance* (October, 2004), pp 8-9
- ¹⁹⁶ U.S. Dept. of Labor *Comparison of State UI Laws* (Jan., 2005), pp. 5-22
- ¹⁹⁷ Education Oversight Committee website at <http://www.state.sc.us/eoc/>. Downloaded on June 14, 2005.
- ¹⁹⁸ Communities in Schools website at <http://www.cisnet.org/cissc/default.asp?.=23>. Downloaded on June 14, 2005