

***The Influence of  
Site Based Decision Making Councils  
on the Work of Principals  
in Jefferson County Public Schools***



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Final Report                      April 23, 2009

## *Acknowledgements*

### **JAMIN L. BERCAW**

I would like to acknowledge those individuals who have been a part of this momentous journey with me. I am forever indebted to the faculty at Vanderbilt University who have supported me for the past three years. I am especially grateful to Claire Smrekar, Ellen Goldring, and Joe Murphy for their guidance and encouragement from the beginning of this project. I also wish to acknowledge Dr. Robert Rodosky and Dr. Marco Munoz of Jefferson County Public Schools for their continued cooperation as we conducted this study. Words cannot express the gratitude I owe to Gary Hughes and Nancy Strawbridge, my two fellow Capstone partners. I feel honored to have had the opportunity to work so closely with two of the most fun, professional people I know. Most importantly, I dedicate my work to my wonderful wife Lawren. For these three years, you have stood by me and supported me in everything that I accomplished, even as I sacrificed time with you in favor of late nights at the computer and long, silent “working” car trips. I love you, and I know that nothing I achieve would be possible without you.

### **GARY D. HUGHES**

I would like to acknowledge those persons who have helped me achieve this milestone in my career as an educator and as a student. I am very grateful to all of my professors at Vanderbilt University who have imparted so much knowledge and wisdom. I am especially grateful to Dan Reschly, Claire Smrekar, and Ellen Goldring, all of whom have served as mentors and role models to me. I also wish to thank William Moody and Tracy Bruno, the principal and assistant principal of Two Rivers Middle School, for their complete and unwavering support of all my endeavors during the past three years. I am grateful to Dr. Marco Munoz and Dr. Robert Rodosky of the Jefferson County, Kentucky, school system for their assistance and cooperation with this investigation. Furthermore, I feel so very blessed to have had Jamin Bercaw and Nancy Strawbridge as my Capstone partners. What could have been a stressful yearlong project was, in reality, a wonderful experience because of the teamwork and hard work that transpired. I am thankful for my family for their support and for their willingness to sacrifice family time so that I could reach my goals. Finally, I dedicate the past three years of struggles and hard work to Dr. Jon Draud, my best friend of 13 years.

### **NANCY SHARPE STRAWBRIDGE**

I would like to acknowledge those who have supported me in achieving this longstanding educational goal. I am indebted to the Peabody faculty for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout this program. I am especially grateful to Joe Murphy, Claire Smrekar, Ellen Goldring, and Catherine Gavin Loss, all who have been valuable resources throughout this program and the Capstone Project. The cooperation of the Jefferson County Public Schools, Robert Rodosky, Marco Munoz, and Kim Wilson, is surely appreciated, and I am thankful to have had wonderful Capstone partners in Jamin Bercaw and Gary Hughes. Certainly, the Capstone Project will bind us professionally and personally for years to come. I wish to thank Gary Hobbs, Superintendent of Walton County Public Schools, Leland Fast, Assistant Principal, Beryl Dixon, Counselor, and the entire Bay Creek Elementary School family for their continuing support over the past three years. Completing this program while serving as a school principal would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication shown every day by the students and staff of Bay Creek Elementary School.

To my friends and colleagues who have encouraged me along the way and to my sons, Dodson, John, and William, thank you for your patience and support during my many absences over the past three years. Lastly, I am forever grateful to Dan, my husband of 25 years. His support and encouragement have never wavered, and I could not have done it without him.

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## *Executive Summary*

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) is the public school district serving Louisville, Kentucky. With an enrollment of approximately 99,000 students, JCPS is Kentucky's largest public school system. Each school in JCPS has a Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) Council.

This exploratory project was designed to understand how SBDM Councils in the Jefferson County Public Schools affect school level policy and the work of principals. Researchers addressed two project questions.

First, researchers asked, "How do JCPS principals perceive the impact of SBDM Councils in the mandated areas of curriculum, instructional practices, personnel, scheduling and student assignment to classes, use of school space, student discipline and school safety, procedural concerns, extracurricular participation, alignment with state standards, and program appraisals on their work as school leaders?"

Second, researchers queried, "How do JCPS principals perceive the impact of the SBDM Councils on their day-to-day responsibilities as school leaders?"

Goals of SBDM Councils include decentralizing school control and involving members of the school community in making decisions for their school. While some evidence, primarily qualitative, exists to bolster claims of increased stakeholder engagement from participation in SBDM Councils, there is virtually no research on

the types of policy decisions influenced by SBDM Councils.

Researchers sought to understand how legal mandates governing SBDM Councils affect principals' workloads. Second, researchers examined principals' perceptions SBDM Council influence on policy decisions at the local school level. Data were collected along two strands: a comprehensive survey and six school qualitative interview sites.

A survey was created and distributed to all 132 JCPS principals. In addition to demographic data that included experience, length of time as principal, and tenure at the school, survey questions focused on task requirements of the SBDM Councils and perception queries concerning the intersection of council work and the duties of the principal.

Structured qualitative interviews were conducted at six school sites, selected in conjunction with JCPS Accountability, Research, and Planning Department staff.

The data collected through principal surveys underwent descriptive analysis to capture a view of principal perceptions on how SBDM Councils shape policy formation and influence decision-making. Trends in the data were explored. The data collected from qualitative interviews were analyzed to ascertain contextual factors that may affect SBDM Councils according to members from all levels.

As noted, 132 principals from the elementary, middle, and high schools in



Jefferson County were asked to complete the principal's survey. There were 111 principals who chose to take part in the survey. Of this group, 20 principals answered only the first survey question that requested their consent to participate in the survey; after giving consent, they answered no further survey questions. Four other principals answered questions in the first four sections of the survey but declined to answer any of the demographics related questions in section five of the survey. Of the 87 principals who completed the survey, 40 of them completed the survey online and the remaining 47 completed the survey during their respective principal's meetings in December 2008. In all, 54 elementary school principals, 15 middle school principals, 16 high school principals, and 2 special school principals completed the survey.

It is clear from survey and qualitative interview data that the principal is the primary source of influence in every area requiring decision-making by the SBDM Council (as mandated by KERA). According to qualitative interview responses, most decisions delegated to the SBDM Councils have been made before ever reaching that body.

In many schools, there is an overlap in responsibilities between the school leadership teams, which may include virtually all teachers in some schools, and SBDM Councils. Thus, the work of the SBDM Council is often only symbolic in nature. In many cases, the most educationally substantive issues have been addressed long before reaching the SBDM Council.

Parental involvement in schools can help promote student achievement; however, parental participation on SBDM Councils is limited and effectively weak relative to principal influence.

Researchers found that principals believe that they are the driving force behind most decisions made in the school. In every area studied, the principal ranked first in influence. SBDM Councils do influence decisions made in the school, but overall, they rank second to the principal in amount of influence exerted over decision-making processes in schools.

The findings suggest that the work of SBDM Councils, though largely symbolic, is valued in JCPS. Nevertheless, more than half of all principals surveyed indicated that they would eliminate SBDM Councils in their schools if possible. Negative aspects associated with SBDM Council mandates include writing redundant policies, participation in the hiring process, and parental involvement in decisions best handled by the professional staff.

Researchers offer several recommendations to JCPS officials for strengthening and streamlining the work of principals and SBDM Councils.

The common thread throughout these findings and recommendations reflects what has already been hypothesized in published research—leadership matters, regardless of other groups and stakeholders.

## Introduction

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) is the public school district serving Louisville, Kentucky. With an enrollment of approximately 99,000 students, JCPS is Kentucky's largest public school system. The district's Accountability, Planning, and Research Department is committed to providing "an atmosphere that is inviting, receptive, and responsible to the data needs of their customers" (<http://www.jefferson.k12.ky.us>).

Therefore, studies such as the one outlined here are valued as the department continuously seeks better methods to inform the system's stakeholders of the impact of Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) Councils on policy and decision-making at the local school level.

### JCPS: District Setting

According to the most current information available from the Kentucky Department of Education, the 2007-2008 School District Report Card, the Jefferson County Public School District is the 28<sup>th</sup> largest district in the United States with more than 99,000 students educated in 155 schools. The District Report Card indicates that JCPS enjoys parental satisfaction,<sup>1</sup> volunteer commitment from members of the community, and business support.<sup>2</sup> More

<sup>1</sup> Parental satisfaction was based on a set of survey questions about school climate, support for students, challenging academics, and beliefs about preparation for the future (JCPS 2008).

<sup>2</sup> The Kentucky Department of Education (2008) wrote, "In the annual JCPS Survey, parents rated their satisfaction with their child's [sic] school on a four-point scale.... JCPS recruited 9600 community volunteers for the Every 1 Reads initiative, and the business sector met its fundraising goal of \$8 million for the initiative. With the remainder of the \$25 million grant from the GE Foundation, elementary teachers selected Math Investigations 2

than eighty percent (80.02%) of school-age children in Jefferson County are enrolled in JCPS (JCPS, 2008). Student demographics for the district can be found in Table 1.

Race	Composition
White	53.9%
African-American	36.1%
Hispanic	4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%
Other Races and cultures	4%

**Table 1: Student Demographics**

More than half of the district's students are eligible for Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), a Federal Food Program that began in 1946 to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children.

For the 2006-2007 school year, the 2007-2008 District Report Card reported the following information:

- Attendance rate—93.7%
- Retention rate—5.2%
- Dropout rate—4.5%
- Graduation rate—72.6%.<sup>3</sup>

Even though JCPS lags behind state averages in the above categories, per pupil spending for the district exceeds the state average by approximately \$3000 per student; however, this number does not take cost disparities between Louisville and other areas of Kentucky into account.

as the common core mathematics curriculum for elementary schools."

<sup>3</sup> Scores for JCPS in each category are worse than state averages for the same time period.

In 2008, nearly 64% of JCPs graduates enrolled in college. Graduates also pursued other postsecondary options, including military service (2%), work (19%), and vocational or technical training programs (5%). Less than three percent (2.2%) of graduates reported that they were not working and not in school. In 2007-2008, Jefferson County schools saw 55 National Merit and National Achievement semifinalists and finalists, and many students were named Governor's Scholars (KDOE, 2008).

Additionally, JCPs students excelled in other areas, including the All-State Band, Chorus, and Orchestra; Siemens Competition in Math, Science, and Technology; Kentucky Student Technology Leadership Program; and the Governor's Cup State Finals (KDOE, 2008). JCPs students were also successful in athletic endeavors, claiming state championships in football, baseball, girls' basketball, swimming and diving, and tennis (JCPs, 2008).

Parental involvement is strong in the district, as evidenced by parent participation in student conferences. According to the District Report Card, about 70% of the districts' 99,000 students had a parent or guardian attend at least one teacher conference during the year.<sup>4</sup> Parents logged more than 360,000 volunteer hours during the 2007-2008 school year. More than 14,000 parents

voted in Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) Council elections, and 635 parents served on SBDM Councils and school committees (KDOE, 2008).<sup>5</sup> Community organizations like the Louisville Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) "enable the district to reach disenfranchised communities" (JCPs, 2008).

The Kentucky Department of Education's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Report indicates that JCPs met 19 out of 25 of its target goals in 2008. The district did not meet 100% of target goals in reading and mathematics were not met. District target goals that the district did not meet included the Annual Measurable Objectives in reading and mathematics for African American students and for students with disabilities. In addition, reading goals were not met for students receiving Free and Reduced Meals, and it did not meet the graduation rate goal (KDOE, 2008; JCPs 2008-2009).

According to the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan for 2008-2009, 76% of the district's No Child Left Behind goals targeted for improving proficiency in reading and mathematics for all groups were met in 2007-2008. Additionally, 92% of schools attained scores that earned the rank of "progressing" or "met goal" on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). Gains were made by 83% of

*"The district's mission is for all students to graduate prepared to succeed in college, career, and life choices, and to become productive, contributing citizens."*  
—JCPs Core Beliefs Statement

<sup>4</sup> 67,929 parents attended at least one teacher conference.

<sup>5</sup> Despite an increased student population, these numbers all represent decreases from the previous year.

schools between 2007 and 2008; however, ten schools were classified as “in assistance” for not meeting their goals (JCPS, 2008-2009).

Each school in JCPS has a Site Based Decision Making Council. Verification of the district’s commitment to the SBDM Councils

is evident through the training and personnel dedicated to their success. Nonetheless, a cursory overview of the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan and Strategic Action Plan indicates that only two of 197 action steps are devoted to the work of SBDM Councils.

## ***Project Focus***

### **Project Questions**

This exploratory project was designed to understand how SBDM Councils in the Jefferson County Public Schools affect school level policy and the work of principals. Researchers addressed two project questions.

First, researchers asked, “How do JCPS principals perceive the impact of SBDM Councils in the mandated areas of curriculum, instructional practices, personnel, scheduling and student assignment to classes, use of school space, student discipline and school safety, procedural concerns, extracurricular participation, alignment with state standards, and program appraisals on their work as school leaders?”

Second, researchers queried, “How do JCPS principals perceive the impact of the SBDM Councils on their day-to-day responsibilities as school leaders?”

### **Project Background**

The purpose of this project is to investigate the work of SBDM Councils and how they shape policy, including the work of school principals, in the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS).

Given that SBDM Councils are mandated by law to govern decision-making in virtually every aspect of school operations, it is certainly plausible to assert that the laws mandating SBDM Councils and their operations impact policy decisions within the school district. Of particular interest to this project is the influence of the SBDM Councils on policy decisions that directly affect the work of principals in the mandated areas of curriculum, instructional practices, personnel, scheduling and student assignment to classes, use of school space, student discipline and school safety, procedural concerns, extracurricular participation, alignment with state standards, and program appraisals.

### ***Project Questions***

How do JCPS principals perceive the impact of SBDM Councils in the mandated areas of curriculum, instructional practices, personnel, scheduling and student assignment to classes, use of school space, student discipline and school safety, procedural concerns, extracurricular participation, alignment with state standards, and program appraisals on their work as school leaders?

How do JCPS principals perceive the impact of the SBDM Councils on their day-to-day responsibilities as school leaders?

While some evidence, primarily qualitative, exists to bolster claims of increased stakeholder engagement from participation in SBDM Councils, there is virtually no research on the types of policy decisions influenced by SBDM Councils. Research on charter schools in Arizona, New York, and Illinois indicates that parents believe charter schools provide some degree of self-governance (Finn, Manno, & Vanourek, 2000; Teske, Schneider, Buckley, & Clark, 2000). Similarly, parents in JCS believe that SBDM Councils give validation to parental roles in the school, make a difference in their child's school, and involve the teachers who want to be leaders within their buildings (Wilson, 2008).

The work of principals is indisputably linked to student achievement, and therefore a vital part of any discussion on the subject. Working within a context-dependent set of behaviors and processes, the principal's day is filled with activities that are both intricate and important (Hallinger, Bickman, & David, 1990). Given the significance of the school principal's work to affect student achievement (Murphy & Hallinger, 1985; Leithwood, Lewis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom, 2004) and to create an effective school culture (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1994), it is important to explore the day-to-day roles and functions of SBDM Councils.

## What We Know about SBDM Councils

Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) councils, mechanisms for shared and decentralized governance in school reform efforts, have emerged in many shapes throughout the United States since the

1980's (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranza, 1990; Murphy & Beck, 1995). Despite a lack of evidence linking their work to improved student achievement, shared governance structures in the form of school-based decision-making councils have become more prevalent in recent years (Apocada-Tucker & Slate, 2002; Peterson, Marks, & Warren, 1996). State and local entities, including the Chicago Public Schools, the State Legislature of Georgia, the Texas Education Agency, and the Kentucky Department of Education, have utilized this governance structure as one strategy for reforming schools (Site-Based Decision Making Councils and Effective Leadership, 2008).

Implementation of site-based decision-making varies from place to place, and it is important to remember that "it comes in many varieties and is often ambiguous in both its implementation and effects" (Sykes, 1999). Regardless of the form its implementation takes, the essential idea is the same—to *decentralize school control and to involve members of the school community in making decisions for their school*. Such governance structures have "much face validity in the sense that major stakeholders (parents, teachers, administrators) offer multiple perspectives on the goals for students, and site-based decision-making allows for multiple viewpoints to be considered when decisions are made concerning a school" (Site-Based Decision Making Councils and Effective Leadership, 2008).

The work of SBDM Councils can be understood through both symbolic and political frames (Bolman & Deal, 2003). In the symbolic frame, one could hypothesize that SBDM Councils are sometimes used to

shape the school climate and culture by allowing teachers and parents to participate, even though such participation may lack any substantial influence over the actual decisions made in schools. Through the lens of the political frame, internal and external school politics, and the power and conflict that often exist within such political actions, can be better understood, and strategic decisions can be made to counter such conflict.

As previously mentioned, some evidence, primarily qualitative, exists to bolster claims of increased stakeholder engagement from participation in SBDM Councils; however, there is virtually no research on the types of policy decisions influenced by SBDM Councils and comparably little evidence of SBDM Councils affecting student learning. Leithwood and Duke (1999) found that school councils did not add value to the empowerment of parents, the technical work of schools, or the learning of students. Further, they found that the influence of school councils on school and classroom practices was mildly positive at best.

In Kentucky, test scores analyzed following the implementation of SBDM Councils in many systems “evidenced no clear difference between schools that had been deeply involved in reform efforts and others that had made no changes” (Harp, 1993). In qualitative interviews of three Kentucky schools, Talley and Keedy (2006) noted that the

mere creation and implementation of school councils did not equate to school success. Site-based school management efforts have not demonstrated “strong effects on school effectiveness or student achievement” (Sykes, 1999). Efforts to reform schools through site-based management may satisfy for the public that improvements are being made, but Dufour (2007) notes that leaving each school to improve on its own does not necessarily result in schools that are more effective.

Perhaps no other role is shaped as much by site-based decision-making as that of the school principal. The principal is required to make decisions ensuring success for all students and school programs, yet increasingly other actors are expected to share in the decision-making process (Jenni, 1991). Anderson (1999) notes, “To further complicate the collective work associated with the site-based decision-making councils, principals consider it senseless to turn their authority over to councils when they were being held individually accountable for their school effectiveness results.” Smylie and Crowson (1993) concur, writing that site-based decision-making councils create contradictory circumstances for principals who are often held solely responsible for the outcomes of decisions made by the councils.

The relatively brief tenure of many of Kentucky’s SBDM Council members also affects the work of principals. A study by

*“Principals consider it senseless to turn their authority over to site-based decision-making councils when they are being held individually accountable for their school achievement.”*  
—Anderson, 1999

Klecker, Austin, and Burns (2000) found that the average length of service on SBDM Councils was one to two years for both teachers and parents. They surmised that this relative inexperience impeded the work of the council in dealing with curricular concerns because it would likely take longer for non-educators to be comfortable dealing with matters of curriculum and instruction. They also state that the lack of council member experience likely creates more work for the principal, especially when it comes to keeping council members informed and to sharing background and introductory information with them.

Appeals ruling, *Young v. Hammond*, established that the school council does not have to select a principal from the slate of persons recommended by the superintendent and can request all applications on file, thus giving SBDM Councils ultimate authority in selecting the school principal. (Site-Based Decision Making Councils and Effective Leadership, 2008)

As noted in *Education World* (1999), "Accountability often stays with the superintendent and principals involved in site-based management, when it should devolve to the entire decision-making group."

Equally contradictory is the mandate in Kentucky that SBDM Councils, not school superintendents, hire school principals. Dounay (2005) wrote the following:

*It is possible for an SBDM Council to hire a principal who could be later terminated by the superintendent only to be rehired again by the SBDM Council.*

—Wilson, 2008

According to a recent report from the Education Commission of the States, 34 states have some statute related to site-based decision-making. Of those 34, seventeen states mandate site-based decision-making. Of those seventeen states, Kentucky has given the "greatest power" to their SBDM Councils by giving their councils the power to hire principals.

Recent court rulings appear to indicate that the power of SBDM Councils in hiring principals is increasing at the same time the role of the superintendent is decreasing. In an internal memo, JCS researchers illustrated the issue:

Even though the Kentucky statute notes the superintendent is part of the principal selection process, a 2004 State Court of

This topic of principal hiring is currently at the center of a heated debate in Kentucky. At issue is the feasibility of principal hiring as a function of SBDM Councils without

mandated participation by the district superintendent. The role of SBDM Councils in principal hiring is disconcerting at best. Presently, laws governing SBDM Councils mandate their involvement in the hiring process for principals and exclude meaningful participation of the superintendent of the school district. On the other hand, superintendents are responsible for evaluating principals and may terminate their employment. The current situation is fraught with possibilities that would not necessarily benefit schools or students. For example, it would be possible under the existing law for an SBDM Council to hire a principal and that principal later be terminated by the superintendent only to be re-hired later by the SBDM



Council (Wilson, 2008). A situation such as this has much potential to disrupt the learning environment within a school.

Kentucky's SBDM Councils were created with the expressed purpose of empowering school communities and dismantling long-standing nepotism that existed in many small communities. The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990, known as HB 940, brought sweeping changes to public schools throughout Kentucky, mandating, with few minor exceptions, that all schools in the state employ an SBDM governance model by July 1, 1996 (Murphy & Beck, 1995). Such changes are evidenced in the governing authority granted by law to SBDM Councils in almost all of the state's public schools.

Wohlstetter, Malloy, Chau, and Polhemus (2003) identified key elements of successful site-based decision-making councils:

- A vision focused on teaching and learning that is coordinated with student performance standards;
- Decision-making authority conducive to influencing the teaching and learning;
- Power distributed throughout the school;
- Development of teacher knowledge and skills oriented toward school change, professional learning, and shared knowledge;
- Mechanisms for collecting and communicating information related to school priorities;
- Monetary and non-monetary rewards to acknowledge progress toward school goals;

- Shared school leadership among administrators and teachers; and
- Resources outside of the school.

Johnson and Pajares (1996) found that site-based management processes in schools are enhanced by the following factors:

- Confidence stakeholders had in themselves and others in the school community,
- Availability of necessary resources,
- Creation and adherence to democratic rules and procedures,
- Early and concrete accomplishments, and
- Support of the school principal.

Virtually no research is available to document the level of support, if any, for these processes that are afforded to Kentucky's SBDM Councils. Equally lacking in the research is information about SBDM Councils and "factors that constrained the Councils' processes, such as additional resources, resistance to democratic reform, a lack of experience with group decision making, and the teachers' perception of lack of district support" (Johnson & Pajares, 1996). Clearly, the creation of councils with mandated power to make decisions at the school level is not enough. Councils need the training, development, and experience to make good decisions on behalf of students (Mohrman & Wohlstetter, 1994).

## **The Work and Organization of SBDM Councils**

According to Kentucky law, each SBDM Council must consist of at least three

teachers, two parents, and the school principal. The council in any given school may be larger, but the number of teachers to parents must increase proportionately. If the make-up of the council is to vary in number or position from the parameters set forth in the law, the change must be approved by the state. A majority of the teachers in the school must elect teachers who serve on the councils. The Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTO) oversee parent representative elections, and any parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the school may vote. In addition, SBDM Councils in schools having eight percent (8%) or more minority students enrolled on the preceding October 1, shall have at least one minority member.

A primary goal of SBDM Councils, as stated by the Kentucky Department of Education, is to promote shared leadership among those closest to the students. Ideally, the creation of SBDM Councils moved decision-making power from the central offices of school districts to the building level (Tanner & Stone, 1998), and there is evidence to support a shift in the scope of work of district personnel from management to service when working with SBDM Councils (Murphy & Beck, 1995).

In creating the councils, KERA produced what many considered a drastic shift in the work of schools by placing decision-making power with the SBDM Councils in nearly every area of school operations. The SBDM Councils are directed by law to adopt policies to be implemented by the school principal in the following areas:

- 1) Determination of curriculum, including needs assessment and curriculum development;

- 2) Assignment of all instructional and non-instructional staff time;
- 3) Assignment of students to classes and programs within the school;
- 4) Determination of the schedule of the school day and week, subject to the beginning and ending times of the school day and school calendar year as established by the local board;
- 5) Determination of use of school space during the school day;
- 6) Planning and resolution of issues regarding instructional practices;
- 7) Selection and implementation of discipline and classroom management techniques as a part of a comprehensive school safety plan, including responsibilities of the student, parent, teacher, counselor, and principal;
- 8) Selection of extracurricular programs and determination of policies relating to student participation based on academic qualifications and attendance requirements, program evaluation, and supervision;
- 9) Procedures, consistent with local school board policy, for determining alignment with state standards, technology utilization, and program appraisal; and
- 10) Procedures to assist the council with consultation in the selection of personnel by the principal, including, but not limited to, meetings, timelines, interviews, review of written applications, and review of references (KERA, 1990).

Each SBDM Council in Kentucky operates somewhat as a school-based board of education, responsible for adhering to the state's open meetings law and conducting all meetings in a way that is both inclusive and lawful. A proficient school council, according to training materials developed by the Jefferson County Public Schools, operates in the decision-making processes for planning for school improvement, use of technology, and school safety. The SBDM Council is involved in instructional policies and practices including curriculum, analysis of test data, student discipline, professional learning, and hiring, including hiring principals (Site-Based Decision Making Councils and Effective Leadership, 2008).

As with any reform effort, the scope of the work of SBDM Councils varies, though clearly, the law has given SBDM Councils in Kentucky tremendous decision-making power. The law, though specifically naming principals as instructional leaders, also deems them responsible for the administrative work of the councils. In effect, principals, in addition to their duties as school leaders, serve as superintendent, chairperson of the board, and administrative coordinator to the SBDM Council in their school. The requirement just to communicate with all stakeholders is at best cumbersome in the amount of time required (Beck & Murphy, 1996). Plausibly, the administrative role presented by the councils could represent a tremendous asset, a great burden, or both to a school principal.

***The administrative role presented by SBDM Councils could represent a tremendous asset, a great burden, or both to a school principal.***

School leaders and policy makers face an overabundance of challenges, pressures, and issues in order to create successful schools and school districts (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Though not the focus of this study, the work of principals is indisputably linked to student achievement, and therefore a vital part of any discussion on the subject. The important work of the principal also necessitates an intricate, context-dependent set of behaviors and processes (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1990).

Site-based management, in JCPS and elsewhere, is primarily linked to three broad categories—budget, personnel, and instructional programs (Sykes, 1999), and conceivably, there is a great deal of variance in how these areas are delegated to a council in terms of “real” decision-making power. While the approval of budgets or involvement in hiring personnel may be fairly simple to envision, Sykes notes that the “connection among these governance and structural reforms and improvement of instruction” and student achievement is less clear. What is clear in the work of SBDM Councils is that they have created opportunities for teacher, parent, and community empowerment. Also clear is that site-based management, whether in the form of SBDM Councils, Instructional Leadership Teams, Professional Learning Communities, or some other kind of decision-making body, is likely here to stay.

## *Research Strategies*

This study investigated the effect of SBDM Councils on policy decisions at the school level in the areas mandated by the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 (previously described) and the influence of SBDM Councils on the day-to-day work of principals.

The project used mixed methods and had two goals. First, researchers looked for data about how principals' workloads are affected by the legal mandates governing SBDM Councils. Second, researchers examined principals' perceptions concerning SBDM Council influence on policy decisions at the local school level. Data were collected along two strands.

First, a survey was created and distributed to all 132 JCPS principals. In addition to demographic data that included experience, length of time in the principalship, and tenure at the school, survey questions focused on task requirements of the SBDM Councils and perception queries concerning the intersection of council work and the duties of the principal. The survey probed the nature of SBDM Council influence on school-level decision-making, policy formation, and implementation, and how, or if, the work of the principal is affected (Yanitski, 1998).

The survey was developed using the areas mandated for implementation by SBDM Councils by KERA (see Appendix A for the JCPS Principal SBDM Survey). The survey design was inspired in part by a previously conducted study that explored changes in the principal's management role following the implementation of SBDM Councils

(Tanner & Stone, 1998). The areas mandated by KERA for SBDM Council involvement include instructional policies and practices, curriculum, analysis of test data, student discipline, professional learning, budget, and hiring, including hiring principals. Researchers used a web-based program, SurveyMonkey.com, to distribute surveys. In December 2008, paper surveys were distributed during JCPS principal meetings to increase survey response rate.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted at each qualitative interview school site selected in conjunction with JCPS Accountability, Research, and Planning Department staff. Using a qualitative interview process, researchers hoped to provide further explanation of findings generated from the survey. According to Patton (2002), "Qualitative findings in evaluation illuminate the people behind the numbers and put faces on the statistics...to deepen understanding." Peshkin (1993) defines a few subcategories for analysis, such as providing insights, clarifying, understanding complexity, explaining, and creating generalizations, relationships, and practices. Taken together, these subcategories represent worthy outcomes of qualitative research. Seeking to understand better some of the thoughts and actions of SBDM Council members regarding their individual roles and the role of the council as a whole was certainly a quest that could benefit from meaningful conversations not possible with quantitative research alone.

The school site selection process was designed to explore differences that might

exist in the functions of SBDM Councils across different school contexts. On-site interviews, observations, and artifact collections were conducted in October 2008. In all, six principals, eleven teachers, and five parents from SBDM Councils in six schools were interviewed, and informal school-wide observations were conducted. Documents about each school, such as training materials and meeting notes relating to the work of SBDM Councils at the schools, were collected and reviewed. The selection of a limited number of school sites, principals, teachers, and parents to interview was a result of the size of the SBDM Councils, researchers' efforts to seek balance among the needs of the client, time and resource constraints, and project manageability.

Principals were interviewed individually, and teachers and parents who served on the SBDM Councils in the selected elementary schools were interviewed in friendship pairs due to school scheduling issues. Teachers and parents in the middle and high schools were interviewed individually. One SBDM Council teacher member was absent from school on the day of the scheduled interviews, and seven parent members who had been invited to participate in the interviews did not attend at the scheduled time. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Each school designated a quiet, comfortable location for the interviews to allow for confidentiality, and each interview lasted approximately one hour. During the interviews, probing questions were used to gain further insight into the workings and perceptions of the SBDM Councils from the perspectives of all involved actors (see Appendix D for the Qualitative Interview Protocol).

## **Project Methodology**

The data collected through principal surveys was analyzed to capture principal perceptions on how SBDM Councils shape policy formation and influence decision-making. Trends in the data were explored.

The data collected through qualitative interviews was analyzed to provide further clarification of SBDM Council work. According to Patton (2002), "Open-ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge." The interview protocols for this study were designed to yield such responses. Data collection for the school sites studied included structured interviews, school-wide observations, and analysis of artifacts. Structured interviews were conducted using a general interview protocol with specific questions for school principals, teachers who served on SBDM Councils, and parents who served on SBDM Councils. Researchers were provided full access to the activities of the school, and routine observations, including brief classroom walk-throughs, were conducted at each school. Artifacts analyzed included SBDM Council meeting minutes, student achievement data, school report cards, school and district websites, and items posted in classrooms and throughout the schools. These items provided additional insight into the work of local SBDM Councils.

A practical tool for organizing interview data for analysis is a concept-clustered matrix, which allows responses from the interviews both to be linked to essential literature and to be organized according to

the primary concepts from the interview protocol, themes, and topics targeted in the interview process. Researchers created three matrices for the analysis of our data, one for each type of SBDM Council member. The concepts and themes included in the matrices were drawn from the project questions and included principal perceptions of the effect SBDM Councils have on their day-to-day work, factors that influence SBDM Council roles in school-level policymaking, and parent and teacher perceptions of SBDM Council operations.

As mentioned previously, audio recordings, notes, and transcripts from the interviews were collected, and after developing the matrix, notes were categorized and organized according to the concepts and themes of the study. Summaries of interview responses based on the concepts, as well as key quotes, were included in the matrix for analysis. Once data was organized into the matrix, analysis for data trends was conducted.

## *Overview of the Samples*

### Overview of the Survey Sample and Background Information

As noted previously, 132 principals from the elementary, middle, and high schools in Jefferson County were asked to complete the principal's survey, and 111 principals chose to take part. Of this group, 20

	Male Totals	Female Totals
<b>Elementary</b>	30.3% (10)	81.5% (44)
<b>Middle</b>	30.3% (10)	9.3% (5)
<b>High</b>	36.4% (12)	7.4% (4)
<b>Special</b>	3 % (1)	1.9% (1)
<b>Caucasian</b>	81.8% (27)	74.1% (40)
<b>African American</b>	12.1% (4)	24.1% (13)
<b>Other Ethnicity</b>	6.1% (2)	1.9% (1)
<b>Principal in a Title I School</b>	39.4% (13)	75.9% (41)
<b>Master's degree</b>	24.2% (8)	22.2% (12)
<b>Educational Specialist degree or one year beyond Master's degree</b>	69.7% (23)	74.1% (40)
<b>Doctorate degree</b>	6.1% (2)	3.7% (2)
<b>Master's or higher in Educational Administration</b>	100% (33)	92.6% (50)

\*percentage of the 87 principal respondents by gender totals (male n=33, female n=54)

**Table 2: Demographic Data by Gender**

principals answered only the first survey question that requested their consent to participate in the survey; after giving consent, they answered no further survey questions. Four other principals answered questions in the first four sections of the survey but declined to answer any of the demographics related questions in section five of the survey. The responses of these principals have been included in the analysis, but responses cannot be described in terms of demographic information. Of the 87 principals who completed the survey, 40 of them completed the survey online and the remaining 47 completed the survey during their respective principal's meetings in December 2008. The overall response rate was 65%.

In all, 54 elementary school principals (62.1% of sampled principals) completed the survey (see Table 2). By comparison, 66.9% of all schools in JCPS are elementary schools. Another 15 middle school principals (17.2% of sampled principals) completed the survey. In contrast, 17.2% of all schools in JCPS are middle schools. In addition, 16 high school principals (18.4% of sampled principals) completed the survey. By comparison, 14.3% of all schools in JCPS are high schools. Finally, two special school principals completed the survey (2.3% of sampled principals). In contrast, 1.5% of all schools in JCPS are combined schools, but one should remember that N for the sample is the same as N for the JCPS population. While the sample contained a larger percentage of high school principals than are found in the district (and as a consequence, a smaller percentage of elementary school principals), researchers

still believe that the sample provides adequate representation and can be generalized to the entire JCPS principal population. Further conclusions can be drawn from comparing the findings outlined in Table 2 and the first tables in Appendix C.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents identified themselves as Caucasian, 19.5% as African American, and 3.4% identified their ethnicity as “other.” In comparison to the entire population of JCPS principals, 75.2% are identified as Caucasian, while 24.8% are identified as African American.

Furthermore, 62.1% of survey respondents were female, and 37.9% were male. In comparison to the entire population of JCPS principals, 66.2% of principals are female, while 33.8% of principals are male.

All 87 surveyed principals had attained at least one degree beyond a Bachelor’s degree, with 23% of respondents reporting that they hold a Master’s degree. A large percentage of respondents, 72.4%, had attained education of at least one year beyond a Master’s degree, and 4.6% had earned a Doctorate or professional degree. Of these 87 principals, 95.4% reported that their advanced degree is in Educational Administration. Also, 43.7% indicated that they had management experience that occurred outside the field of education.

	In Any School (N)	In Current School (N)
<b>0-5 years</b>	45.9% (40)	64.4% (56)
<b>6-10 years</b>	36.8% (32)	25.3% (22)
<b>11-15 years</b>	13.8% (12)	9.2% (6)
<b>Over 15 years</b>	3.4% (3)	3.4% (3)

**Table 3: Principal Experience**

The respondents completing this survey averaged 6.5 years as principals; however, 46% of respondents had been principals for five years or less (see Table 3). In addition, respondents averaged 5.1 years as principals in their current schools, though, a few outliers skewed the average (ex. three principals reported holding their current position for 20 years or more). Sixty-four percent of respondents had been in their schools for five years or less, and of that number, 70% (N=39) had been in their schools for three years or less.

In comparing the sample to the demographic information provided to researchers by JCPS, the average experience of all principals is 6.1 years (N=133), only slightly lower than the sample average. In addition, 56% of all principals in JCPS have five years experience or less in their administrative role. See Table 4 for further comparisons between the sample and the entire population.

	Sample	All Principals
<b>0-5 years</b>	45.9% (40)	55.6% (74)
<b>6-10 years</b>	36.8% (32)	30.1% (40)
<b>11-15 years</b>	13.8% (12)	10.5% (14)
<b>Over 15 years</b>	3.4% (3)	3.8% (5)

**Table 4: Experience Comparison**

On average, principals had spent 12.4 years as teachers, and teaching experience ranged from four years to 29 years. While all principals had participated in at least some professional development activities related to their role as administrators in the last 12 months, only 88% reported participating in a district or school training or development program for aspiring principals.



School size ranged from 200 to 1900 students; the mean reported school size was 745, and the median was 600. Ethnic minority enrollment in schools ranged from 12% to 75%. The mean minority composition of schools was 39.5%. The reported percentage of students eligible for the free and reduced lunch program ranged from 5% to 96%, leading to a mean of 59.2%. When queried on the Title I status of their current school placements, 62.1% of the 87 principals who completed the survey reported that their schools qualified for Title I funding.

According to respondents, 54.5% of schools (N=48 of 88) made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2007-2008. Of the schools that did not make adequately yearly progress, 62% (N=25 of 39) were identified for improvement because they failed to make AYP for two consecutive years or more in the same content area.

The median SBDM Council size was the state-recommended six members, and 13 other SBDM Councils contained 12 members. In all, 79.3% of SBDM Councils appear to follow the guidelines for membership. However, this finding indicates that the remaining 21.7% of councils do not include members in the number or proportion outlined in the SBDM Council legislation.<sup>6</sup> The variation in size of SBDM Councils was not explored in this project.

According to survey results, 88.5% of principals reported that they have attended training sessions related to site based decision-making. These sessions covered

various topics: budgeting, parent and community involvement, moving to success/academic achievement, legal and procedural responsibilities, leadership (Principals for Tomorrow), instructional strategies, policy development, and planning for school improvement.

Training takes place every year. By law, new SBDM Council members, including principals, must participate in six hours of introductory training, and returning members must receive three hours of "refresher" training. Many sessions appear to be conducted through the JCPS central office. In addition, some principals reported attending other statewide and professional development training sessions.

Although the survey did not directly pose a question regarding how meaningful these trainings are, two principals did offer similar opinions:

The required three-hour training annually is ridiculous.

[The training] is a waste of valuable time.

## Overview of the Qualitative Interview Sample

As previously noted, school sites for qualitative interviews were selected in conjunction with JCPS Accountability, Research, and Planning Department staff. The selection process was purposeful (Merriam, 1998) in that it was determined by the JCPS staff in order to provide a setting from which much could be learned. Ideally, the site selection process offered the maximum information regarding SBDM Councils (Lancy, 1993).

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<sup>6</sup> KERA allows schools to create SBDM Councils with different numbers, provided that approval has been obtained from the Department of Education.

SBDM Council Member Role	Race	Gender	Years on SBDM (Ave.)	Level of Education
<b>Principals (6)</b>	Caucasian (4) African-American (2)	Male (3) Female (3)	4	Master's degree in Ed. Administration (4) Doctorate degree (2)
<b>Teachers (11)</b>	Caucasian (9) African-American (2)	Male (7) Female (4)	2.2	Master's degree (10) Master's plus 30 (1)
<b>Parents (5)</b>	Caucasian (4) African-American (1)	Male (2) Female (3)	2.8	High School (2) College, no degree (2) Master's degree (1)

**Table 5: Interview Demographics**

Interviews were conducted at six schools: two in elementary schools, two in middle schools, and two in high schools. At each level (elementary, middle, high), schools were selected with consideration given to the percentage of students enrolled who were living in poverty as defined by eligibility for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. Four of the six schools (two elementary, one middle and one high) were Title I schools. Only one of the schools studied, a high school, had met AYP target goals as defined by NCLB in the preceding year. The principals of each of the schools selected for the site-level interviews had between three and five years experience as a principal.

The principal and all teacher and parent members of each of the SBDM Councils were invited to interview with the researchers. Six principals, eleven teachers, and five parents were interviewed (see Table 5). On average, the principals had four years of experience in their current assignment. Three principals reported experiences with SBDM Councils in previous assignments as principals in other schools, and one reported serving as a teacher member of an SBDM Council earlier in his career. The teachers interviewed had an

average of 2.2 years of experience serving on the SBDM Council in their current schools, and the parents interviewed reported having served on the SBDM Council for an average of 2.8 years.

## Processing Qualitative Interviews

The concepts and themes outlined in the interview matrices included: principal perceptions of the effect of SBDM Councils in the areas mandated by KERA, principal perceptions of the influence of SBDM Councils on their day-to-day work, factors that affect the role of SBDM Councils in school-level policymaking, and parent and teacher perceptions about how SBDM Councils function in and shape schools (see Appendix D). Data was analyzed from audio recordings, and the following summaries have been composed with care to ensure the anonymity of both the interviewees and the school sites.

For this project, it was determined in conjunction with the JCPS Accountability, Research, and Planning Department staff that information from school sites would be reported anonymously and that interviewee identities would remain confidential.

## ***Leadership Matters: Findings***

The results of this study further confirm what is known about the administration of schools: leadership matters. According to survey and qualitative interview data, JCPS principals wield a significant amount of influence over their SBDM Councils in every area mandated by KERA, despite the goal of KERA to decentralize decision making in Kentucky schools. Remarkable as it may seem, JCPS principals face little or no opposition to their influence over SBDM Councils and the day-to-day operations of their schools. Furthermore, teachers and parents serving on SBDM Councils in JCPS, interviewed as part of the qualitative data collection process of this investigation, indicated that they have confidence in their respective principals as the leaders of their school communities.

### **Overview**

The first series of survey questions examined the influence of SBDM Councils on decision making in the school setting. Respondents were asked, “How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions” in the following areas:

- 1) Establishment of curriculum;
- 2) Content of in-service professional development programs;
- 3) Evaluating teachers;
- 4) Hiring new, full-time teachers;
- 5) Setting discipline policy;
- 6) School budget allocations;
- 7) Assignments of students to classes and programs within the school;
- 8) Use of school space during the school day;
- 9) Schedule of the school day and week;
- 10) Alignment of school curriculum to Kentucky state standards;
- 11) Assignment of faculty instructional time;
- 12) Assignment of faculty non-instructional time;
- 13) Academic qualifications for students participating in extracurricular programs;
- 14) Extracurricular offerings; and
- 15) Use of technology.

Rankings were done on a Likert scale, with values for no influence (1), minor influence (2), moderate influence (3), major influence (4), and not applicable. For statistical purposes, “not applicable” was coded as a missing variable and excluded from results. Groups and persons responsible for making decisions included: state department of education or other state-level bodies; local school board; school district staff; principal (respondent); parents serving on the SBDM Council; parents not serving on the SBDM Council; teachers serving on the SBDM Council; teachers not serving on the SBDM Council; curriculum specialists; parent association; and the SBDM Council as a whole (principals, teachers, parents).

In each of the 15 areas of analysis, researchers compared means for the 11 groups or persons (actors). The results from each area are described below, and the means for each actor by area are displayed. Tables, including the number of valid responses and standard deviations for each item, can be found in Appendix C.

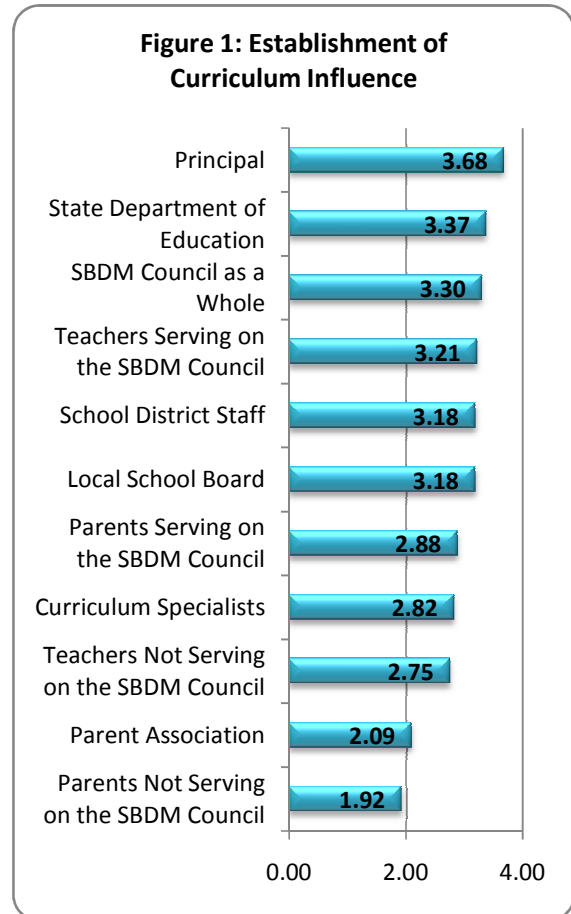
## Findings by Project Focus Area

The findings in this section are arranged categorically for reporting purposes according to the first project question asked by researchers: How do JCPS principals perceive the impact of SBDM Councils in the mandated areas of curriculum, instructional practices, personnel, scheduling and student assignment to classes, use of school space, student discipline and school safety, procedural concerns, extracurricular participation, alignment with state standards, and program appraisals on their work as school leaders?

### Curriculum: Establishment of Curriculum

Principals view the establishment of curriculum as a key component of their job. The mean of survey responses was 3.68, indicating that principals exert major influence over the curriculum. All principals claim to assert influence in establishing curriculum, with 93% reporting moderate or major influence in these decisions. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.594, the lowest of any group or person in this area.

Other actors playing secondary roles include the state department of education, SBDM Council as a whole, teachers serving on the SBDM Council, school district staff, and the local school board (see Figure 1 for a ranking of means). For example, 85% of principals reported that the state department of education or other state-level bodies wield moderate or major influence over curriculum establishment. In this area, high influence by the state department of education may be indicative



of accountability in the era of No Child Left Behind and the state's role in setting curriculum standards. According to this survey, between 76% and 81% of principals believed the other secondary actors in this area held moderate or major influence.

Parents serving on the SBDM Council, curriculum specialists, and teachers not serving on the SBDM Council offer tertiary influence. The findings for curriculum specialists and teachers not serving on the SBDM Council are somewhat surprising. While one might expect to see these two actors involved in establishing curriculum, 35% of principals indicated that curriculum specialists have minor influence or no influence in the process, and 40% of principals indicated the same of teachers not on the council. If teachers are

ultimately responsible for implementing the curriculum, they should play a larger role in establishing it.

Parent associations and parents not serving on the SBDM Council were minor actors, and with the second and third smallest standard deviations, principals appear to agree on their lack of influence.

### Instructional Practices: Assignment of Faculty Instructional Time

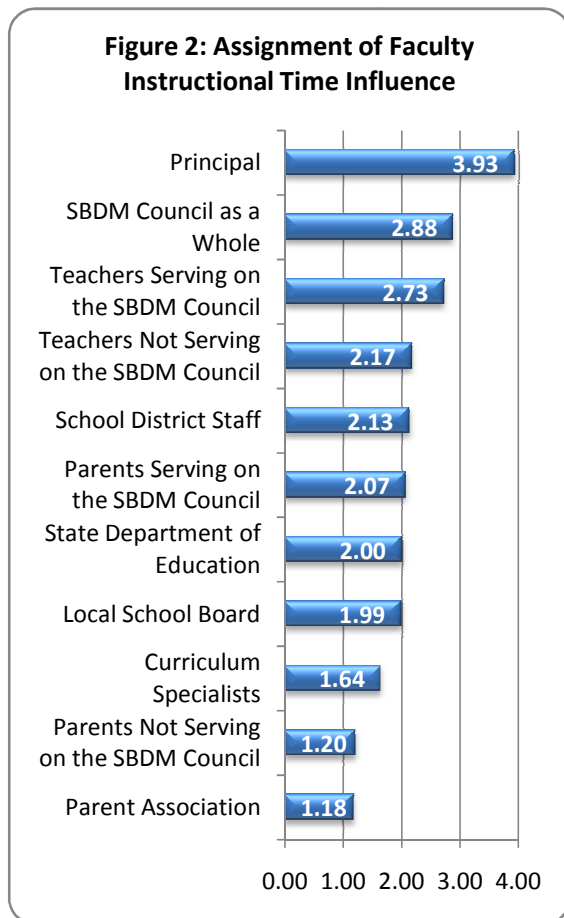
Principals exercise major influence in how faculty instructional time is assigned. The mean of survey responses was 3.93, with 85 of 91 respondents reporting major influence, and the remaining 6 respondents reporting moderate influence. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.250,

the lowest of any group or person in this area and one of the lowest in this section of the survey.

Second to the principal in influence is the SBDM Council as a whole; 70% of principals reported that the council moderately or majorly influences assignment of faculty instructional time (see Figure 2 for a ranking of means). However, it is important to note that the mean of survey responses for this group was 2.88, more than one point lower than the mean for principal influence. This result appears to indicate that principals drive decisions concerning faculty instructional time, possibly independently from other school actors.

Teachers on the SBDM Council rank just behind the SBDM Council as a whole, but from that point, the influence of all other actors drops off precipitously, with only 15% to 37% of principals reporting that any middle group has moderate or major influence. It is important to note that teachers not serving on the SBDM Council have more influence in this area, relative to other groups or persons, than in almost any other area. This finding appears to indicate that principals are keen to involve teachers in making basic school-level decisions that affect teacher happiness. Based on these results, evidence of shared decision-making should also be present in other areas that most affect teachers and their work, such as non-instructional time, scheduling, student assignment, school space, extracurricular activities, and technology use.

Parents not serving on the SBDM Council and parent associations were tertiary actors, and with the second and third smallest standard deviations, principals appear to agree on their lack of influence.



### Instructional Practices: Assignment of Faculty Non-Instructional Time

Similar to assignment of faculty instructional time, principals utilize their decision-making skills to affect faculty non-instructional time as well. In this area, the mean of survey responses on principal influence was 3.82, with 78 of 91 respondents reporting major influence, and another 11 respondents reporting moderate influence (for a combined total of 98%). The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.485, the lowest of any group or person in this area.

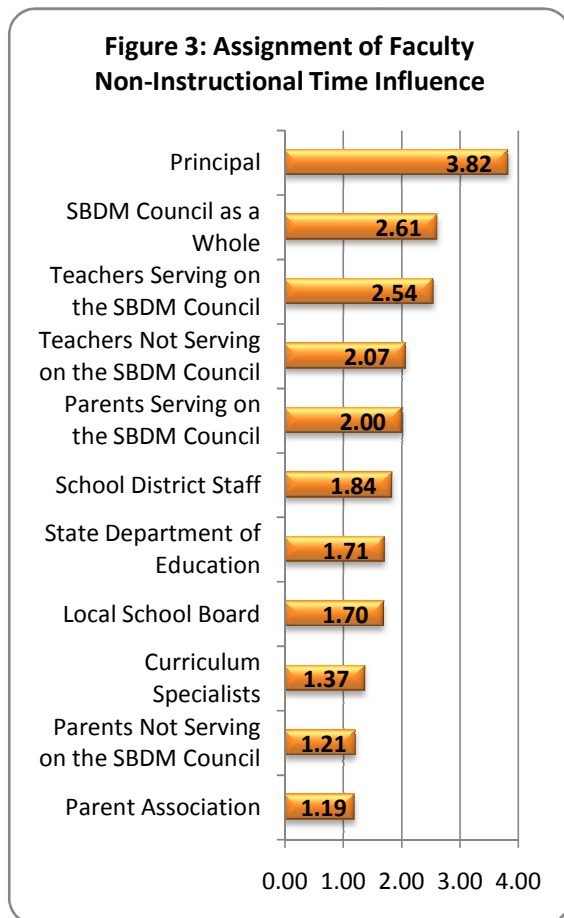
As was also the case in faculty instructional time assignment, second to the principal in influence is the SBDM Council as a whole. Unlike the previous area, only 58% of

principals reported that the council moderately or majorly influences assignment of faculty non-instructional time (see Figure 3 for a ranking of means). It is important to note that the mean of survey responses for this group was 2.61, more than one point lower than the mean for principal influence. This result appears to indicate that principals drive decisions concerning faculty non-instructional time in the same manner that they do with faculty instructional time.

Teachers on the SBDM Council rank just behind the SBDM Council as a whole, but as was the case previously, the influence of all other actors drops off precipitously, with only 17% to 32% of principals reporting that any middle group has moderate or major influence. Once again, teachers not serving on the SBDM Council have more influence in this area, relative to other groups or persons, than in almost any other area.

In fact, the only difference between the rank order of actors in faculty instructional and non-instructional time is found with school district staff and parents serving on the SBDM Council. School district staff may have more influence over faculty instructional time due to their role in hiring teachers and screening teacher certifications. On the other hand, parents serving on the SBDM Council can influence faculty non-instructional time assignment through their roles in setting building level policies and in hiring coaches and sponsors for extracurricular activities.

Parent associations and parents not serving on the SBDM Council were minor actors, and with the second and third smallest standard deviations, principals appear to agree on their lack of influence.



### Personnel: Evaluating Teachers

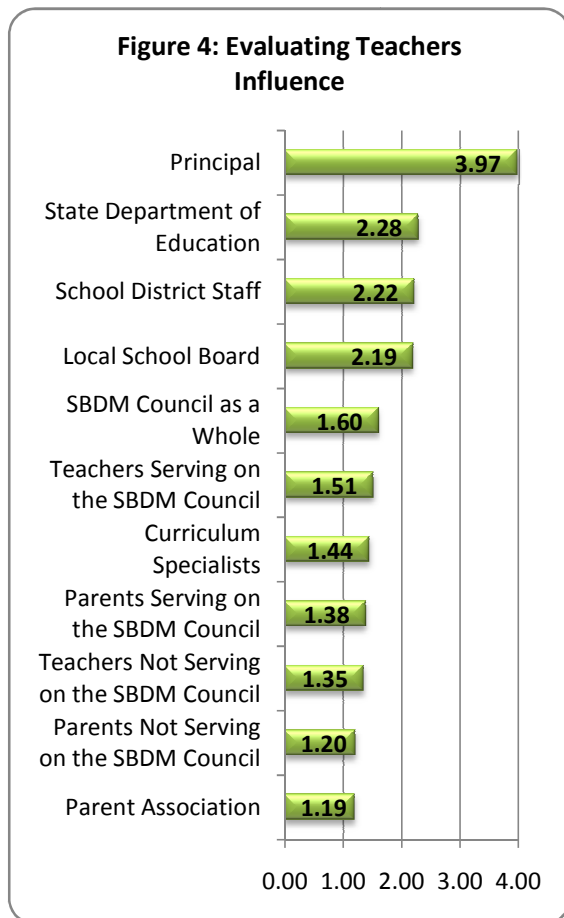
The greatest difference in means between the principal and the second-most influential actor across all areas can be found in the responses for evaluating teachers. In all, 88 of the 90 principals who ranked this item said they have a major influence over evaluating teachers, resulting in a mean of 3.97. The number is also the largest mean of any group or person in the decision making section of the survey. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.235, the lowest of any group or person in this area and the lowest standard deviation of the decision making section of the survey. Without a doubt, principals view teacher evaluation as a major part of their jobs, an area in which they can exercise wide latitude.

The state department of education, school district staff, and local school board are the next closest influential actors, with 37% to 47% of principals reporting moderate or major influence (see Figure 4 for a ranking of means). According to survey results, no more than 15% of principals reported that other groups or persons held moderate or major influence in the teacher evaluation process.

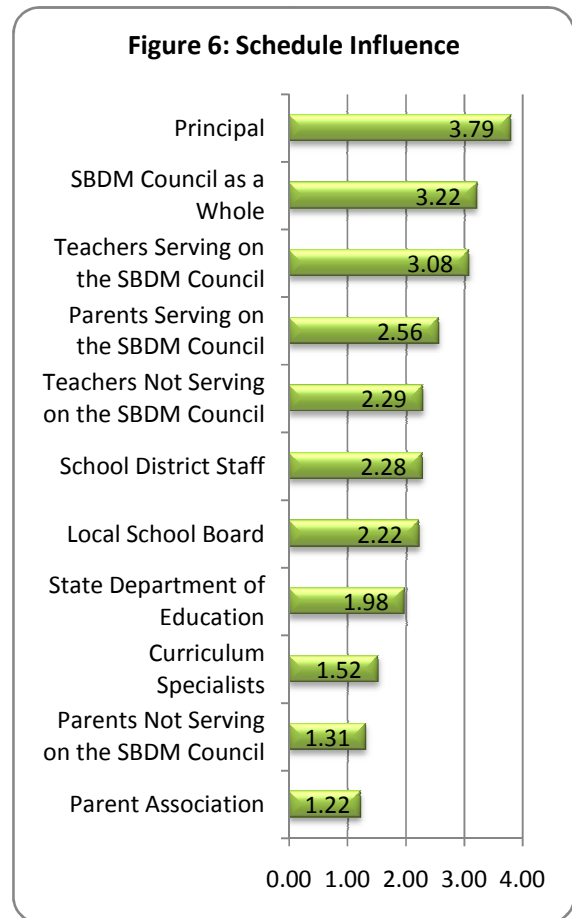
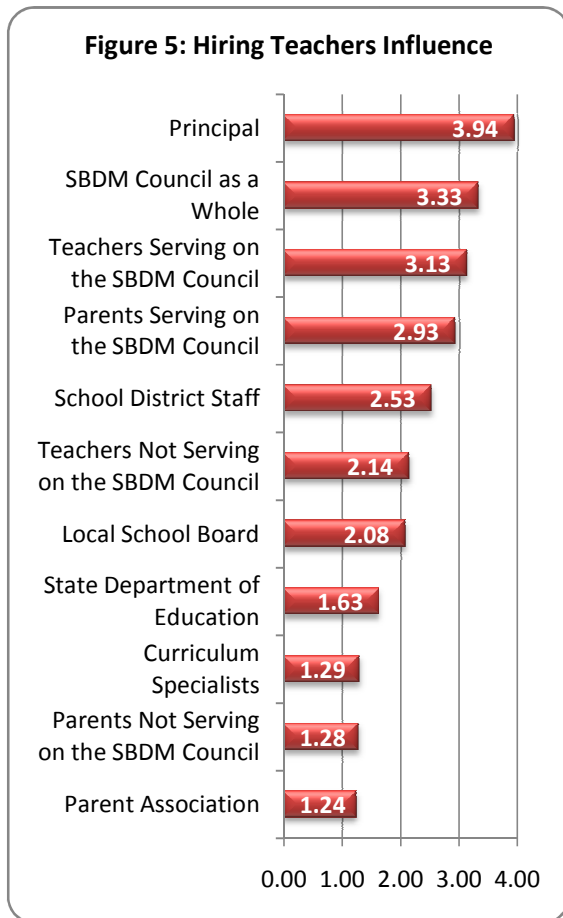
### Personnel: Hiring New, Full-Time Teachers

Principals view hiring new, full-time teachers as a key component of their job. In all, 85 of the 89 principals (96%) who ranked this item said they have a major influence over hiring teachers, leading to a mean of 3.94. All principals exerted influence in this area, with 99% reporting moderate or major influence in the hiring process. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.276, the lowest of any group or person in this area and one of the lowest in this section of the survey. Despite laws that mandate SBDM Council involvement in the hiring process, principals still feel they have a great degree of influence in hiring the teachers who will work in their buildings.

Other actors playing secondary roles include the SBDM Council as a whole, teachers serving on the SBDM Council, and parents serving on the SBDM Council (see Figure 5 for a ranking of means). For example, 84% of principals reported that the SBDM Council as a whole wielded moderate or major influence over hiring teachers. These results are not at all unexpected, given the mandated role that SBDM Councils play in hiring teachers.







In addition, it appears that school district staff bridges secondary and tertiary players in hiring teachers, falling squarely between groups. Researchers interpret this finding as verification that all prospective teachers apply through the district central office rather than to each individual school.

Tertiary actors in hiring teachers include teachers not serving on the SBDM Council, local school board, and state department of education. Curriculum specialists, parents not serving on the SBDM Council, and parent associations have almost no influence on the hiring process, and with the smallest standard deviation after principal influence, surveyed principals appear to agree on their lack of involvement in the hiring process.

### Schedule of the School Day and Week

Principals understand that they play an important role in determining how the school day and week are scheduled. The mean of survey responses was 3.79, indicating that principals remain in control of the school schedule. In fact, 96% of principals said they have moderate or major influence on the schedule (89% reported major influence). The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.624, but unlike other areas, the parent association and parents not serving on the SBDM Council had lower standard deviations. This latter finding is a result of the near universal belief among principals that these two bottom groups have little or no influence on



the school schedule (see Figure 6 for a ranking of means).

Other actors with secondary roles in determining the school schedule are the SBDM Council as a whole and teachers serving on the SBDM Council. From there, influence tapers sharply, with influence from the remaining groups mirroring results found in other areas. The core middle groups included parents serving on the SBDM Council, teachers not serving on the council, school district staff and the local school board. As expected and previously mentioned, teachers not serving on the SBDM Council ranked slightly higher than in other areas. The state department of education and curriculum specialists rank just above the bottom groups.

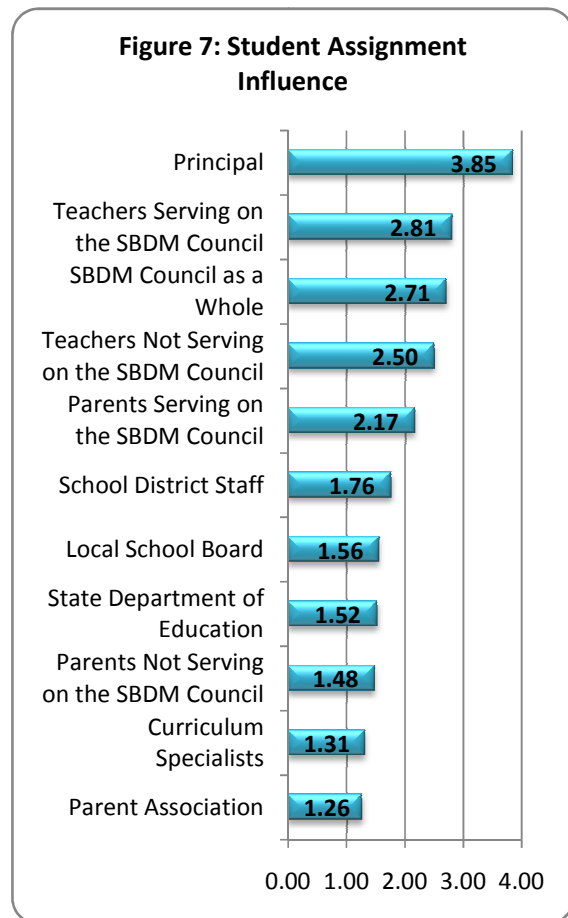
### Assignments of Students to Classes and Programs within the School

Principals also view the assignment of students to classes and programs within the school as a key component of their job. The mean of survey responses was 3.85, indicating that principals exert major influence over the student assignment. In fact, 99% of principals said that they have moderate or major influence over the assignment of students to classes and programs. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.392, the lowest of any group or person in this area.

Second to the principal in influence are teachers on the SBDM Council; 69% of principals reported that these teachers either moderately or majorly influence student assignment (see Figure 7 for a ranking of means). However, it is important to note that the mean of survey responses for this group was 2.81, more than one

point lower than the mean for principal influence. This result appears to indicate that principals drive decisions concerning student assignment, possibly independently from other important school actors.

Other groups playing secondary roles in school assignment include the SBDM Council as a whole and teachers not serving on the SBDM Council (expected because student assignment affects teacher work). All remaining groups have little, if any, influence in student assignment decisions. As with other areas, parents not serving on the SBDM Council, curriculum specialists, and parent associations rank lowest and have the smallest standard deviations of all groups or persons, with the exception of principals.



### Use of School Space during the School Day

Principals wield major influence in how school space is used during the school day. The mean of survey responses was 3.92, with 83 of 90 respondents reporting major influence, and the remaining 7 respondents reporting moderate influence. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.269, the lowest of any group or person in this area and one of the lowest in this section of the survey.

The SBDM Council as a whole and teachers serving on the SBDM Council rank second and third respectively, with means near three (see Figure 8 for a ranking of means). The SBDM Council as a whole is seen as a moderate or major actor by 73% of

principals, while 69% of principals say teachers on the council exert moderate or major influence.

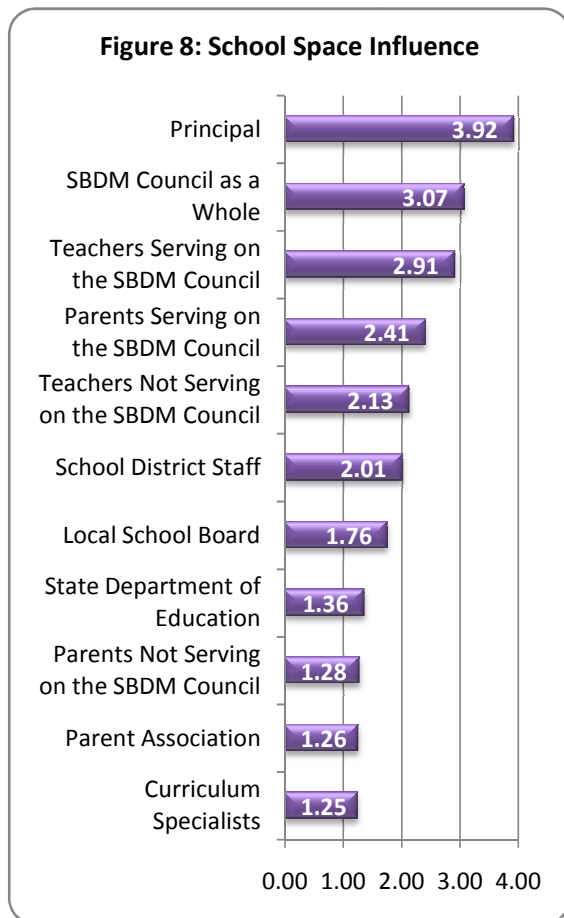
Parents serving on the SBDM Council, teachers not serving on the SBDM Council, and school district staff follow as moderate to minor actors. While responses for the local school board show a higher mean than the bottom four actors, only 19% of principals said it played a moderate or major role. The bottom four actors show little influence on the use of school space, and the small standard deviations indicate that principals tend to agree on this point.

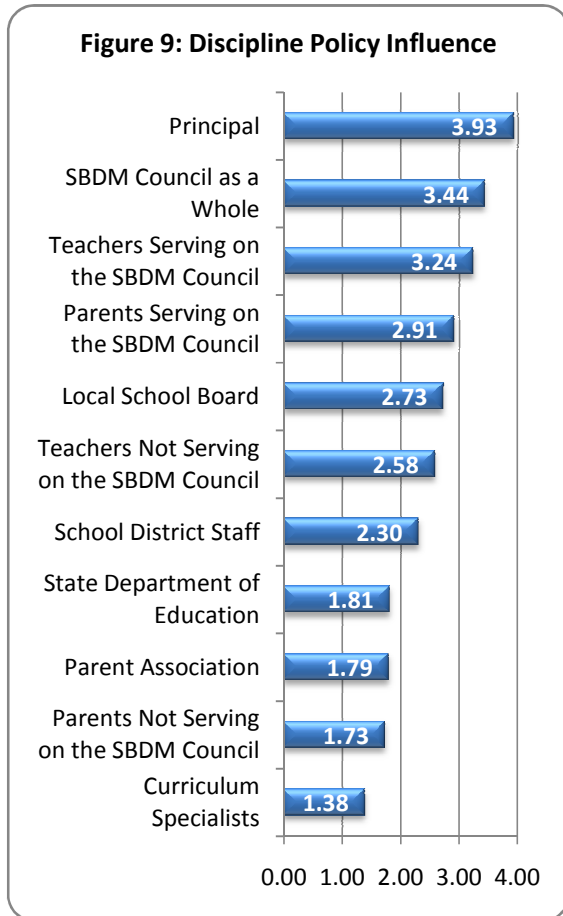
### Student Discipline and School Safety: Setting Discipline Policy

Principals hold much authority when it comes to setting the school discipline policy. In all 86 of the 90 principals (96%) who ranked this item said they have major influence over setting discipline policy in their building, making the mean 3.93. Only one principal claimed to exert no influence in this area. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.361, the lowest of any group or person in this area.

Survey results show that the SBDM Council as a whole and teachers serving on the SBDM Council also exert major influence in discipline policy decisions (see Figure 9 for a ranking of means). These findings were also mirrored in the qualitative interviews. Ninety percent of surveyed principals reported that the SBDM Council has moderate or major influence on setting the school discipline policy, and 84% reported the same of teachers on the SBDM Council.

Other actors playing secondary roles include parents serving on the SBDM

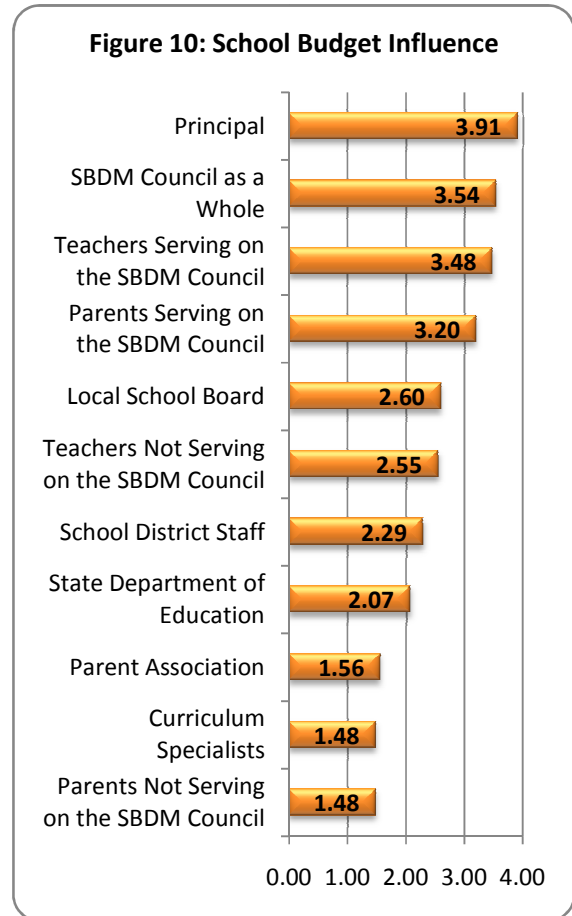




Council, local school board, teachers not serving on the SBDM Council, and school district staff. Between 43% and 66% of principals reported that these groups exert moderate or major influence in setting discipline policy. The state department of education, parent associations, parents not serving on the SBDM Council, and curriculum specialists all offer little influence in this area.

**Procedural Concerns: School Budget Allocations**

Overall, principals also exert considerable control over determining how school budgets will be spent, likely a function of decentralized, site-based decision-making. In all, 86 of 91 principals (95%) who ranked this item said they have major influence



over their school’s budget, resulting in a mean of 3.91. The standard deviation was 0.412, the lowest of any group or person in this area.

According to 93% of principals, the SBDM Council as a whole moderately or majorly influences decisions about the school budget (see Figure 10 for a ranking of means). Teachers on the SBDM Council also seem to play a key role in budgetary decisions, with 90% of principals reporting they had moderate or major influence. Researchers found that 76% of principals also believed parents on the SBDM Council exerted moderate or major influence. While this number is markedly lower when compared to the groups or persons above, it is also more than 20 percentage points higher than all other groups or persons

examined. Such results clearly indicate that principals perceive SBDM Councils and their members as important actors in keeping schools financially sound.

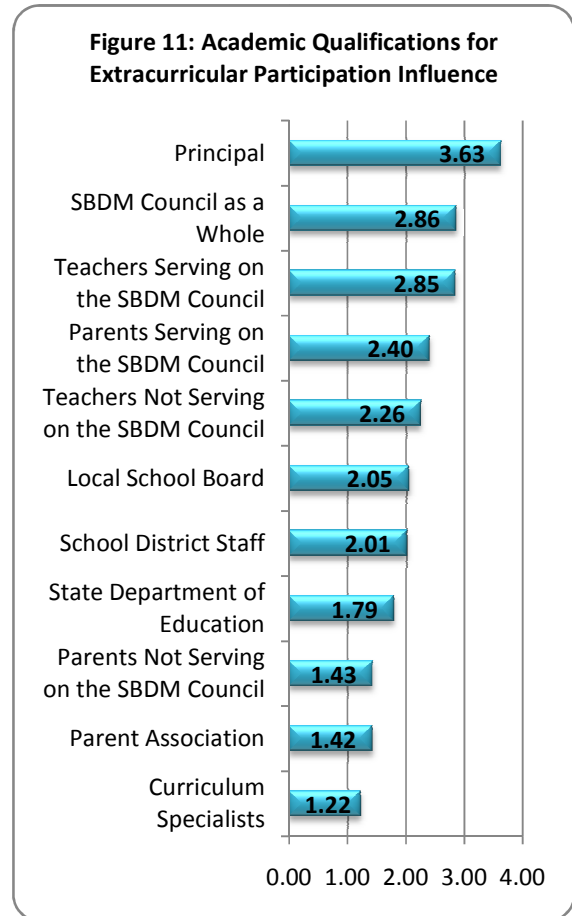
Other actors with minor to moderate roles include the local school board, teachers not serving on the SBDM Council, school district staff, and state department of education. As in most other areas, parent associations, curriculum specialists, and parents not serving on the SBDM Council all offer little influence in school budgeting.

**Extracurricular Participation:  
Academic Qualifications for Students**

In determining the academic qualifications for extracurricular participation, 83 of 88 respondents (94%) reported moderate or major influence. The mean of survey responses was 3.63. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.666, the second-lowest of any group or person in this area. Only curriculum specialists, the group with the smallest mean, had a lower standard deviation.

Actors playing secondary roles include the SBDM Council as a whole, followed closely by teachers serving on the SBDM Council (see Figure 11 for a ranking of means). In fact, only 0.01 separates the means of these two groups, with about 65% of principals asserting that these groups have moderate or major influence.

Parents serving on the SBDM Council, teachers not serving on the SBDM Council, local school board, school district staff, and the state department of education all exhibit moderate to minor influence over setting academic qualifications for extracurricular participation. Based on the



rankings of the top four actors, findings appear to indicate that academic qualifications are set by the SBDM Council; however, given the gap in means between teachers and parents serving on the SBDM Council, policies in this area may likely be solidified by school employees (teachers and administrators) long before parents on the councils see them.

Not surprisingly, curriculum specialists, parent associations, and parents not serving on the SBDM Council, sit at the bottom in terms of influence.

**Extracurricular Participation:  
Offerings**

In comparison to the previous area, more principals reported major or moderate

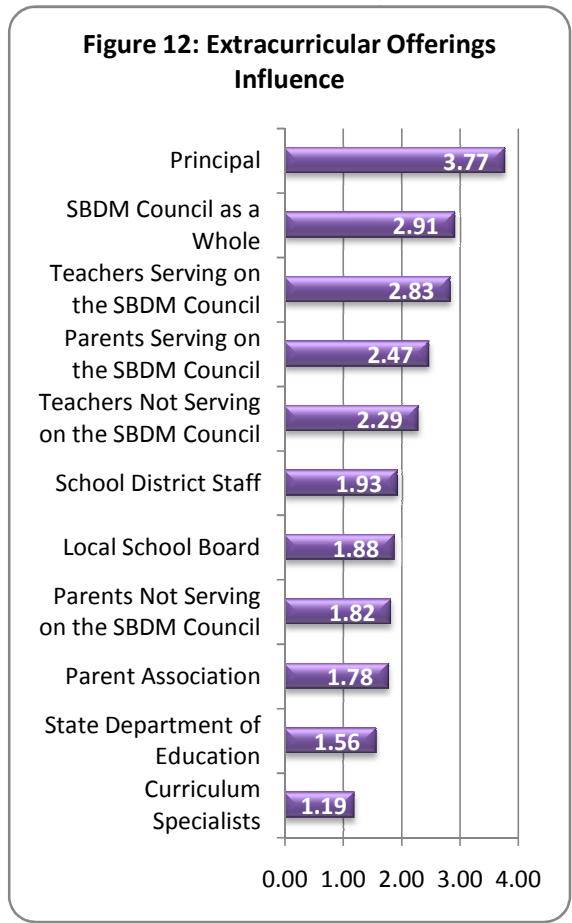
influence over which extracurricular programs were offered in their buildings. Of 90 respondents, 89 reported major or moderate influence on offerings, resulting in a mean of 3.77. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.451, the lowest of any group or person in this area.

Once again, other actors playing moderate roles include the SBDM Council as a whole, followed closely by teachers serving on the SBDM Council (see Figure 12 for a ranking of means). While the means of these two groups differed by 0.07, about 68% of respondents said they exert moderate or major influence over decision-making.

Parents serving on the SBDM Council, teachers not serving on the SBDM Council, school district staff, local school board, and

parents not on the council, and parent associations all exhibit moderate to minor influence over extracurricular offerings. This ranking marks the highest influence for parents not serving on the SBDM Council, relative to other actors.<sup>7</sup> Once again, based on the rankings of the top four actors, findings appear to indicate that extracurricular offerings are determined by the SBDM Council. Given the gap in means between teachers and parents serving on the SBDM Council, selection of extracurricular offerings may likely be completed by school employees (teachers and administrators) long before parents on the councils approve them.

Curriculum specialists and the state department of education exert little or no influence on extracurricular offerings.



### Alignment of School Curriculum to Kentucky State Standards

As with the school schedule, principals view curriculum alignment to state standards as an important aspect of their occupation. The mean of survey responses was 3.68, showing that principals are a driving force behind standards-based instruction, and 92% of principals said they have moderate or major influence on this area. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.681, but unlike many other areas in this section, that resulting number was not as low as the standard deviations for other groups or persons. As was the case for scheduling, parents not serving on the SBDM Council and the parent association had lower standard deviations. This finding is a result of the near universal belief

<sup>7</sup> The mean for parents not serving on the SBDM council in this area was 1.82 (rank 9). In establishment of the curriculum, the mean was 1.92, but ranked 11<sup>th</sup>, lower than any other group.

among principals that these two groups have minor or no influence on curriculum alignment (see Figure 13 for a ranking of means).

Although the SBDM Council as a whole still influences the process of curriculum alignment second only to the principal, other actors have switched positions. According to the survey, 78% of principals declared that school district staff and curriculum specialists had moderate or major influence over curriculum alignment. This finding is not surprising, however, given that the central office is heavily involved in coordinating curriculum across schools, and curriculum specialists serve the same function on a school level. In addition, the state department of education also has a mean score of 2.96, ranking its relative

influence in this area higher than at any point since its number two spot in establishing curriculum.

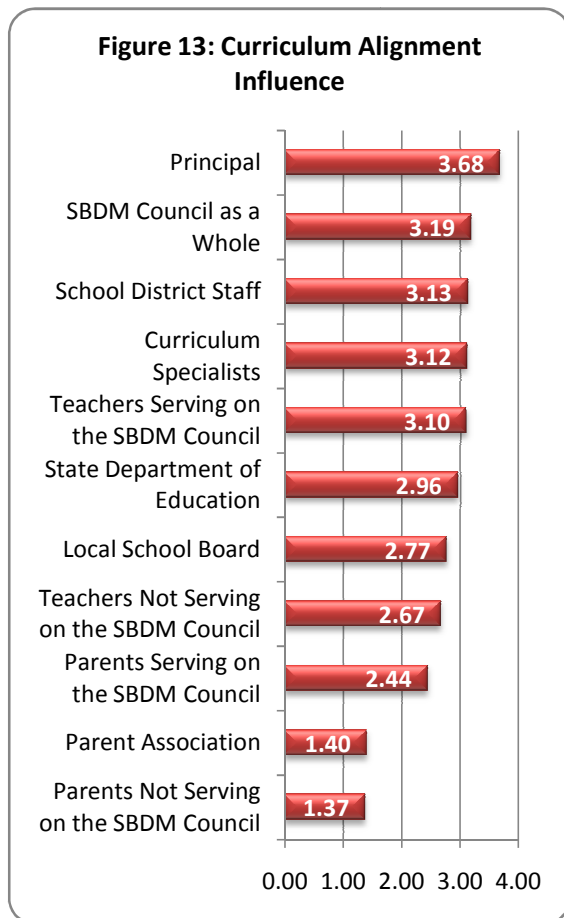
One should also point out that the influence of parents serving on the SBDM Council, while above other parent groups, ties its lowest rank on the survey (parents on the council also ranked ninth in influence over professional development program content, discussed below). As expected, parent associations and parents not serving on the SBDM Council have almost no influence in curriculum alignment.

### Program Appraisals: Content of In-service Professional Development Programs

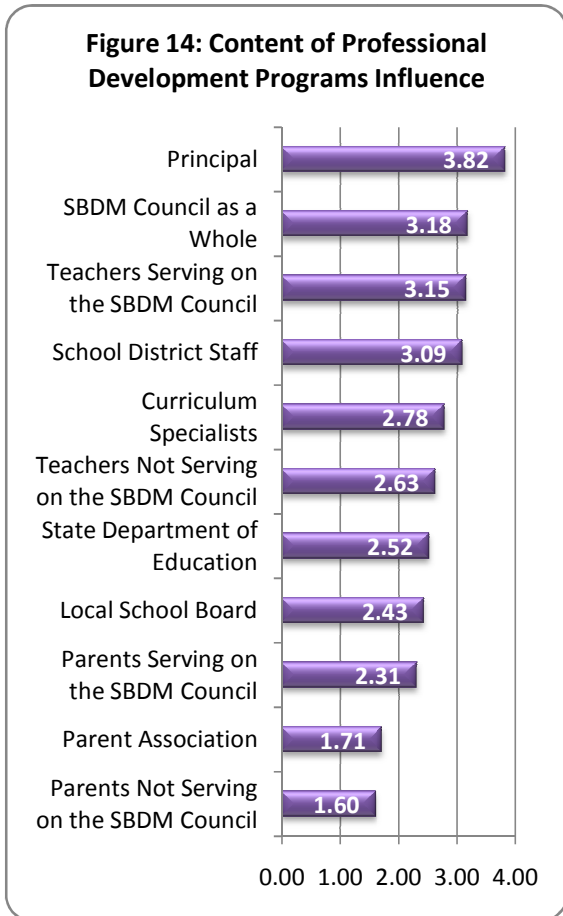
Principals also see the need to influence the content of professional development programs. The mean of survey responses was 3.82, indicating that principals play a large role in professional training for their faculties. In fact, only 2% of respondents indicated that they had minor or no influence in professional development content. The standard deviation for principal responses was 0.485, the lowest of any group or person in this area.

Other actors playing moderate roles include the SBDM Council as a whole, teachers serving on the SBDM Council, and school district staff (see Figure 14 for a ranking of means). Between 77% and 82% of respondents indicated that these groups had moderate or major influence over decisions in this area.

Groups and persons that offer additional influence include curriculum specialists, teachers not serving on the SBDM, state department of education, local school



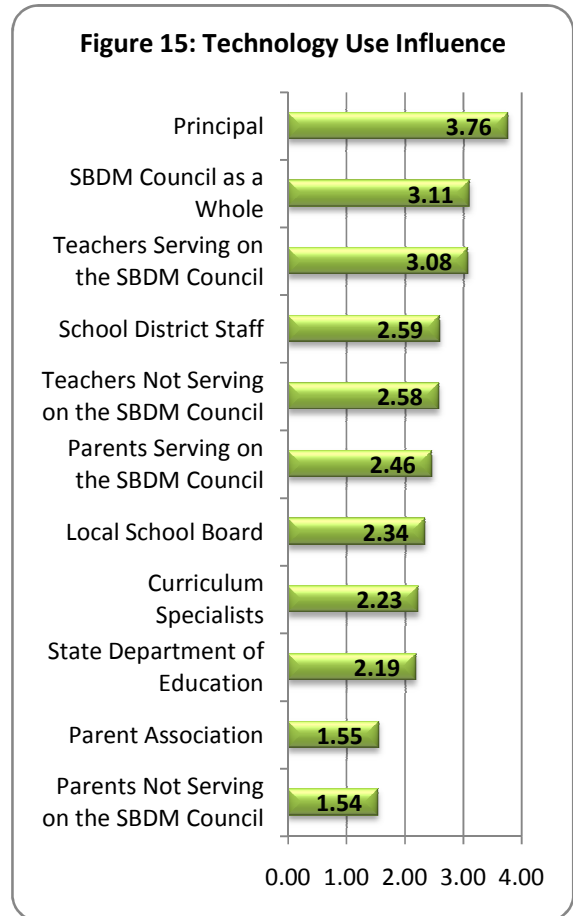




board, and parents serving on the SBDM Council. Parent associations and parents not serving on the SBDM Council were minor actors, and with the second and third smallest standard deviations, principals appear to agree on their lack of influence.

### Program Appraisals: Use of Technology

As with the other areas discussed in this section, principals were able to influence decisions concerning the use of technology in the building. The mean of survey responses was 3.76, with 96% of principals claiming they exert moderate or major influence in this area. A standard deviation of 0.524 was the lowest of any group or person in this area.



Other actors playing moderate roles include the SBDM Council as a whole and teachers serving on the SBDM Council (see Figure 15 for a ranking of means). School district staff and teachers not serving on the SBDM Council rank slightly higher than parents on the council do, likely because of their direct roles in purchasing, installing, and using technology equipment.

The local school board, curriculum specialists, and the state department of education are minor actors. Parent associations and parents not serving on the SBDM Council were minor actors, and with the second and third smallest standard deviations, principals appear to agree on their lack of influence.

## *Leadership Matters: Discussion*

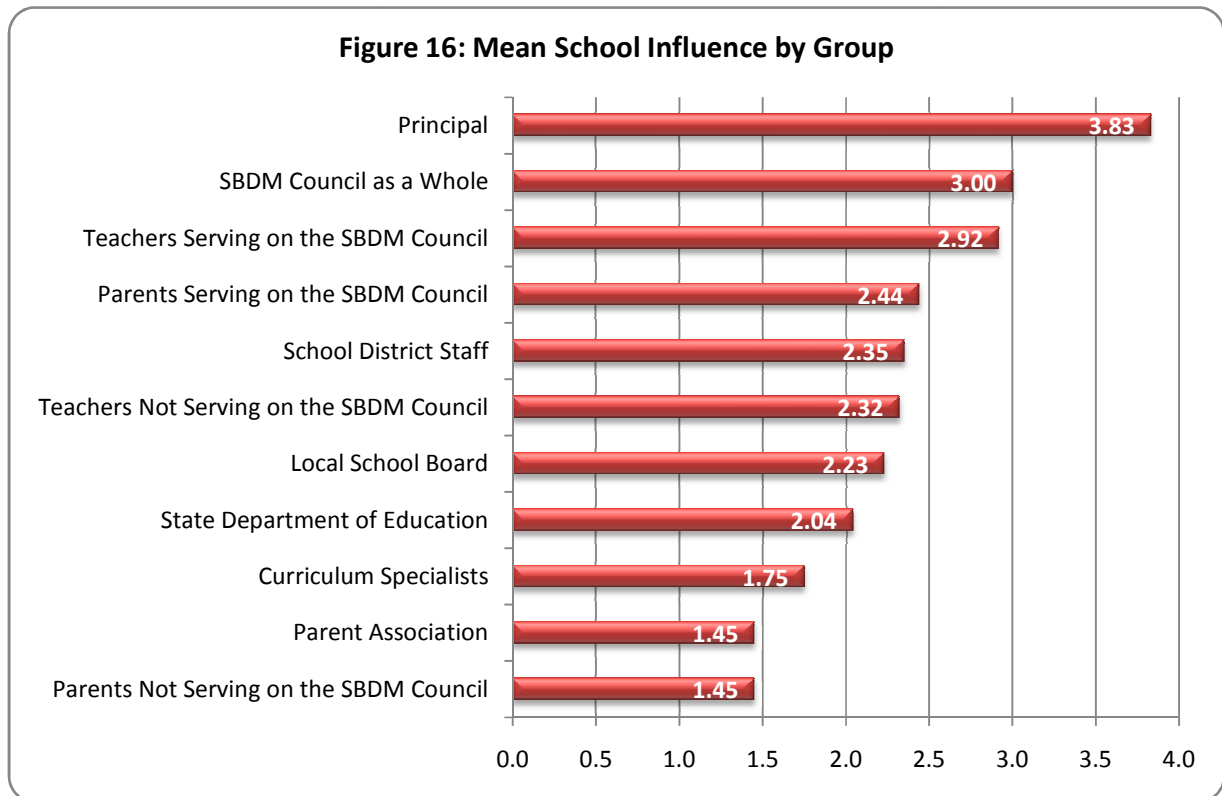
### **Influence of Mid-Level and Lower-Level Actors**

Responses for like groups or persons under every area were scaled together to create a comprehensive, overall measure of influence (see Figure 16 and Table 6). Based on the developed scales, researchers found that parents not serving on the SBDM Council (overall rank: 11) and parent associations (overall rank: 10) exerted the least influence on decisions made in schools. In fact, these two groups ranked 10 and 11 in terms of influence on 9 of the 15 areas examined. In five of the other six areas, these groups, along with curriculum specialists, comprised the bottom three rankings. The highest ranking for parents not serving on the SBDM Council (8 of 11) was found in their influence over which

extracurricular programs were offered at the school.

While curriculum specialists (overall rank: 9) exerted varying degrees of influence depending on the area, they appear to be minor actors in school decision-making, oftentimes ranking above only parent associations and parents not on the SBDM Council. They do appear to have moderate influence in the area of curriculum alignment (rank 4), an expected finding given the nature of that position. Survey results show that curriculum specialists also play a larger role, in relation to other actors, in developing content of professional development programs.

The state department of education ranked 8 of 11 overall in terms of groups that





influenced school decision-making. A few areas stood out as outliers from the overall placement. Although state actors ranked six in curriculum alignment, it is important to note that the mean of responses was 2.96. The area of curriculum alignment is filled with actors who exhibit moderate to major control, and the state department of education is an important player in the process. Based on survey results, the state department of education ranks number two (behind only the principal) in terms of influence on curriculum establishment and teacher evaluation.

The local school board (overall rank: 7), teachers not serving on the SBDM Council (overall rank: 6), and school district staff (overall rank: 5) are all mid-level actors in terms of influencing school decisions. The local school board exerts moderate influence in establishing curriculum, but as noted above, many actors wield similar influence in that area. It is also not unexpected that the local school board affects decisions regarding the evaluation of teachers, discipline policy, and school budget.

Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council offer a unique mix of influence. For example, one might expect that all teachers would be positioned to make decisions on curriculum alignment; however, researchers

in this study found that only parents and parent associations ranked lower than these teachers did on curriculum alignment. State department of education officials and the local school board were both ranked above teachers in this area. Perhaps the roots of this disconnect can be explained by another finding: teachers ranked comparatively lower than other groups, including parents on the SBDM Council, in terms of establishing curriculum in the school. If teachers could have more say in the process of establishing the curriculum, they may be more inclined to work on aligning it to Kentucky state standards.

According to principals, teachers not serving on the SBDM Council also tend to have little voice in the teacher evaluation process. While this study did not attempt to understand the intricacies of teacher evaluation, researchers would be remiss if they did not remind principals that positive feelings about processes like teacher evaluation are rooted in the creation and development of the process itself.

Teachers may begin to distrust a system that gives outside actors, such as state departments, school boards, and district staff, the opportunity to influence a process that directly affects their continued employment without their input.

- 15 Areas of Influence***
1. Establishment of Curriculum
  2. Assignment of Faculty Instructional Time
  3. Assignment of Faculty Non-Instructional Time
  4. Evaluating Teachers
  5. Hiring New, Full-Time Teachers
  6. Schedule of the School Day and Week
  7. Assignments of Students to Classes and Programs within the School
  8. Use of School Space during the School Day
  9. Setting Discipline Policy
  10. School Budget Allocations
  11. Academic Qualifications for Students Participating in Extracurricular Programs
  12. Extracurricular Offerings
  13. Alignment of School Curriculum to Kentucky State Standards
  14. Content of In-Service Professional Development Programs
  15. Use of Technology

	Establishment of Curriculum	Assignment of Faculty Instruction Time	Assignment of Faculty Non-Instruction Time	Evaluating Teachers	Hiring Teachers	Schedule	Student Assignment	School Space	Discipline Policy	School Budget	Academic Qualifications for Extracurricular Participation	Extracurricular Offerings	Curriculum Alignment	Content of Professional Development Programs	Technology Use	Overall Influence
Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SBDM Council as a Whole	3	2	2	5	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	4	3	3	6	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	5	3	3	3
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	7	6	5	8	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	9	9	6	4
School District Staff	5	5	6	3	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	6	3	4	4	5
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM Council	9	4	4	9	6	5	4	5	6	6	5	5	8	6	5	6
Local School Board	6	8	8	4	7	7	7	7	5	5	6	7	7	8	7	7
State Department of Education	2	7	7	2	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	10	6	7	9	8
Curriculum Specialists	8	9	9	7	9	9	10	11	11	10	11	11	4	5	8	9
Parent Association	10	11	11	11	11	11	11	10	9	9	10	9	10	10	10	10
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	11	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	10	11	9	8	11	11	11	11

**Table 6: Influence on the School**

This is not to say that teachers not serving on the SBDM have little influence over important matters. Following the principal, SBDM council as a whole, and teachers

serving on the SBDM Council, teachers not on the council rank fourth in student assignment and assignment of teacher instructional and non-instructional time.

They also rank above parents serving on the SBDM Council (five versus six) in decisions regarding the use of technology. Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council rank fifth, behind the principal, SBDM Council as a whole, and teachers and parents serving on the SBDM Council and ahead of school district staff in academic qualifications for extracurricular participation, determining use of school space, schedule of the school day, and extracurricular offerings. As noted in the findings section, these areas directly affect the day-to-day work of teachers, both in school and after school, so involving all teachers in the decision-making process is expected and essential.

School district staff members play a flexible role in decision-making, one that varies depending on the area of focus. Their overall rank was matched in only three of the 15 areas examined (establishment of curriculum, hiring teachers, and assignment of faculty instructional time). School district staff rank behind only the principal and SBDM Council as a whole in aligning curriculum, and they rank behind only the principal and state department of education in evaluating teachers. In student assignment, school space, school schedule, assignment of faculty instructional time, and extracurricular offerings, they rank behind principals, SBDM Council as a whole, all teachers, and parents serving on the SBDM Council. The influence of district staff is felt even less in school discipline policy and school budget decisions.

When taken in context, the seemingly erratic role for district staff in local school operations seems to be indicative of the role school districts *should* play under site-based decision-making structures. While local districts provide curriculum support

and set policies on evaluating teachers, their influence is largely absent in the day-to-day operations of schools, leaving principals with the autonomy to govern their own schools.

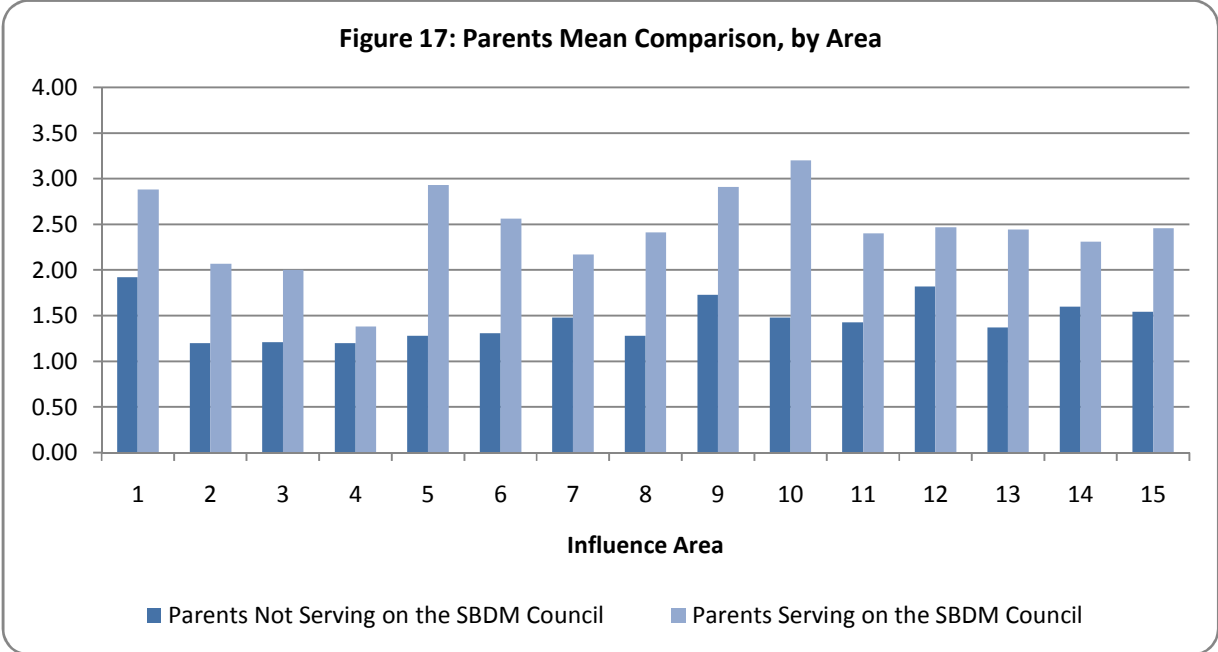
## **Influence of Higher-Level Actors**

The four most important groups or persons influencing decision-making in schools are the principal (overall rank 1), SBDM Council as a whole (overall rank: 2), teachers serving on the SBDM Council (overall rank: 3), and parents serving on the SBDM Council (overall rank: 4). Together, the principal, SBDM Council as a whole, and teachers serving on the SBDM Council constitute the core influence groups in schools. The following sections detail the findings for each group or person.

### **Parents Serving on the SBDM Council**

Parents on the SBDM Council wield influence that often outranks that of most other actors in school decision-making. This group of parents rank behind only the other core influence groups in their weight over decisions regarding hiring teachers, discipline policy, school budget, use of school space, school schedule, academic requirements for extracurricular participation, and extracurricular offerings.

In the areas of student assignment and assignment of faculty non-instructional time, core influence groups plus teachers not serving on the SBDM Council outrank parents on the council. The core influence groups, teachers not serving on the SBDM Council, and school district staff all outrank these parents in assignment of faculty instructional time technology use decisions. Council parents play lesser roles in decisions



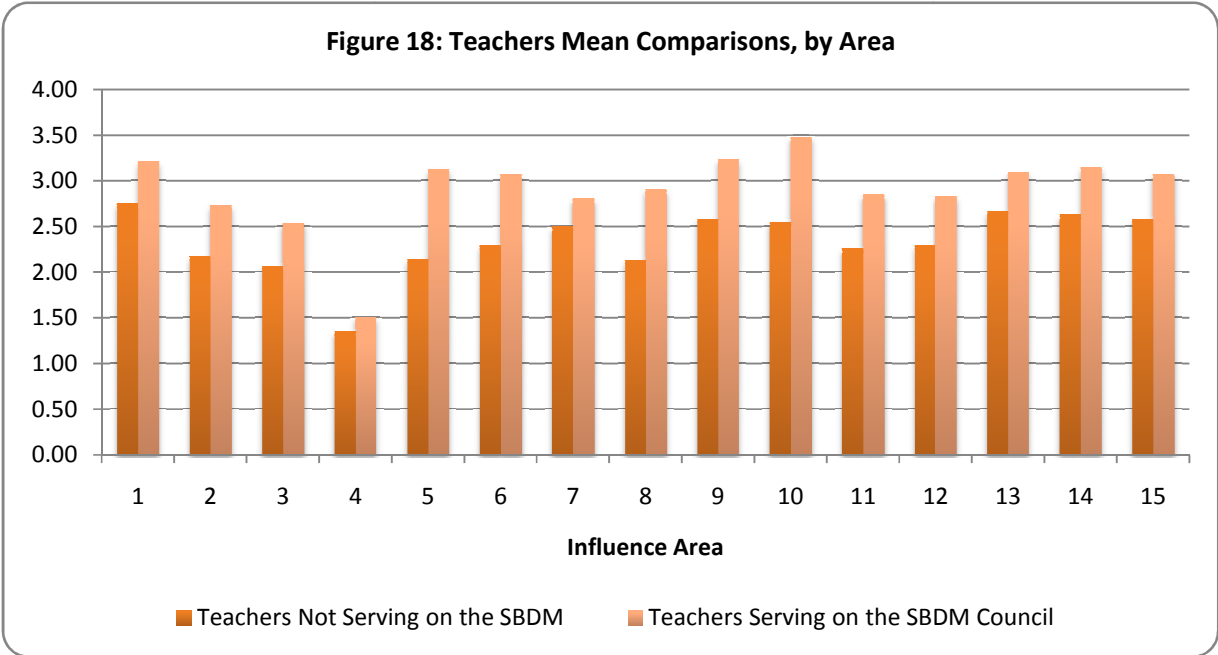
regarding establishment of curriculum, evaluating teachers, content of professional development programs, and curriculum alignment.

comparison demonstrates that serving on the SBDM Council leads to more decision-making influence at the school in every area examined.

Figure 17 compares the mean scores of parents serving on the SBDM Council to parents not serving on the SBDM Council, by area (area list found on page 32). The

**Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council**

In 11 of the 15 areas of influence, teachers serving on the SBDM Council rank third in



influence, behind only the principal and SBDM Council as a whole. These 11 areas can be found in Table 6. In the area of student assignment, teachers ranked above SBDM Council as a whole. The state department of education strongly influenced the establishment of curriculum, so teachers serving on the SBDM Council ranked fourth. As previously discussed, the process of teacher evaluation is influenced by outside actors, so it is not surprising that teachers on the SBDM Council play a smaller role in this area. Additionally, school district staff and curriculum specialists are important in the curriculum alignment process.

Figure 18 compares the mean scores of teachers serving on the SBDM Council to teachers not serving on the SBDM Council, by area (area list found on page 32). While differences between the two groups do not appear as glaring as those differences between parents, it still demonstrates that serving on the SBDM Council leads to more decision-making influence at the school in every area. Simply stated, parents and teachers who serve on SBDM Councils have opportunities to affect the decision-making processes in schools that are not afforded to non-members of the SBDM Councils.

### SBDM Council as a Whole

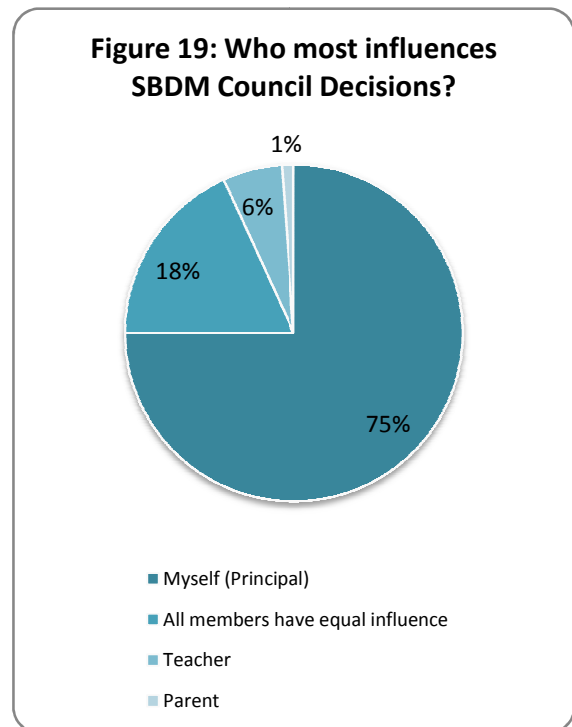
In 12 of the 15 areas of influence, the SBDM Council ranked behind only the principal in its decision-making influence. These 12 areas can be found in Table 6. SBDM Council influence ranked third in establishment of curriculum (principal was first, state department of education was second) and in student assignment (principal was first, teachers serving on the SBDM Council were second). The only

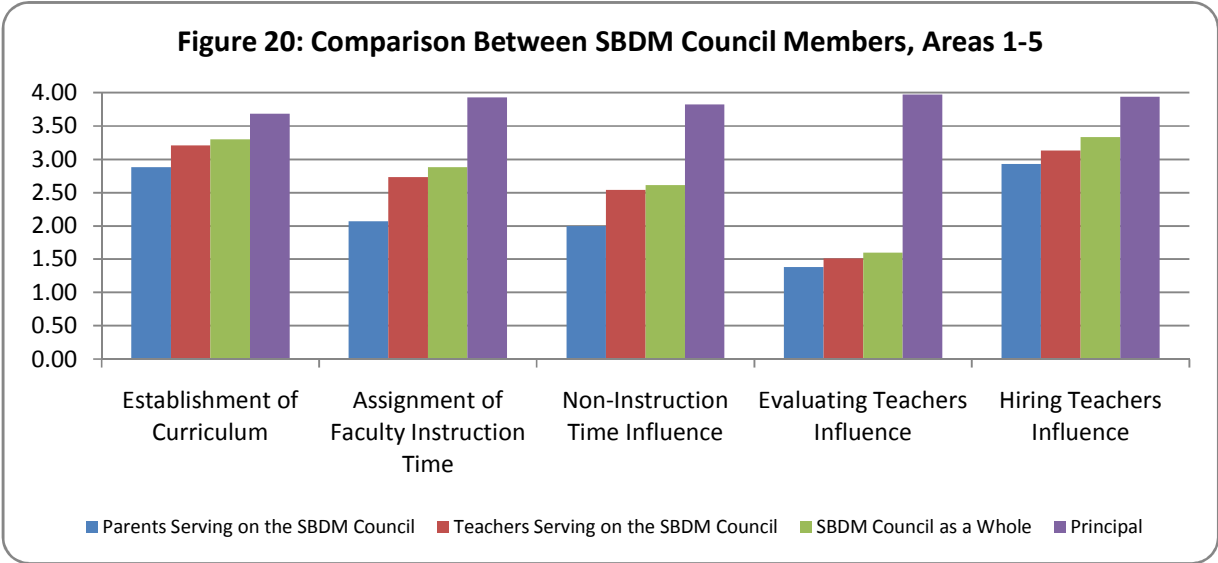
outlier for this group was in evaluating teachers, where they ranked fifth.

In relation to its individual members, the SBDM Council as a whole is more influential in every area except student assignment, where teachers serving on the SBDM Council outrank the council as a whole. This finding may be indicative of a few points. First, it may show that teachers and parents who work with school administrators can make substantive decisions about school governance. Conversely, this finding may also suggest that the root the SBDM Council influence is principal-driven leadership.

### Principal Influence Matters

When asked directly, 75% of principals reported that they have the most influence over SBDM Council decisions (see Figure 19). Another 18% said all members have equal influence, and 6% said a teacher had the most influence. Only a single principal



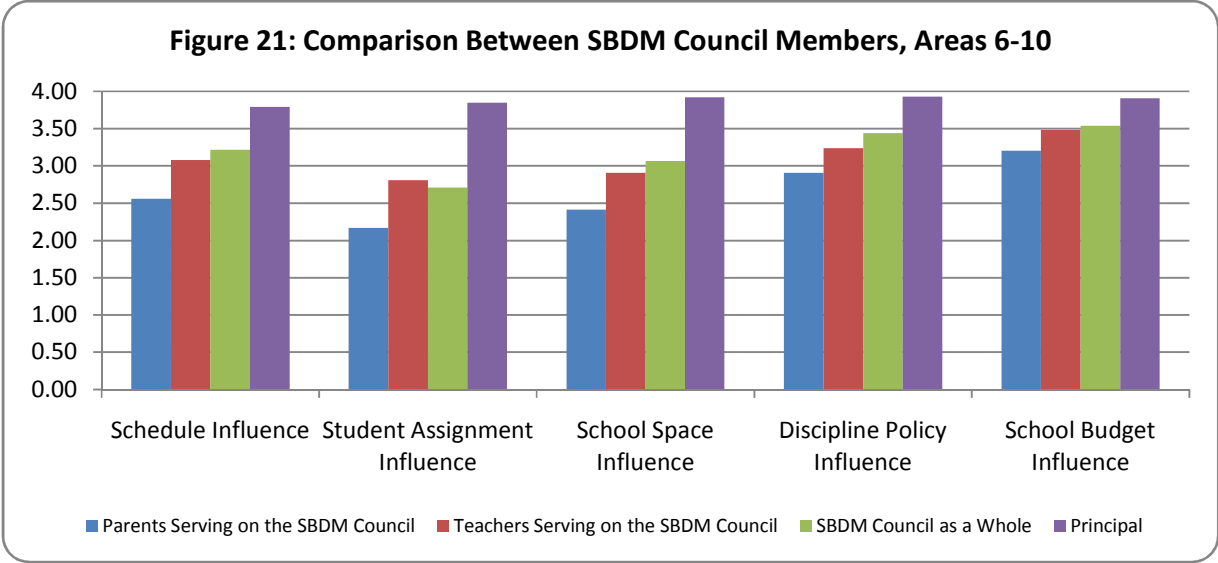


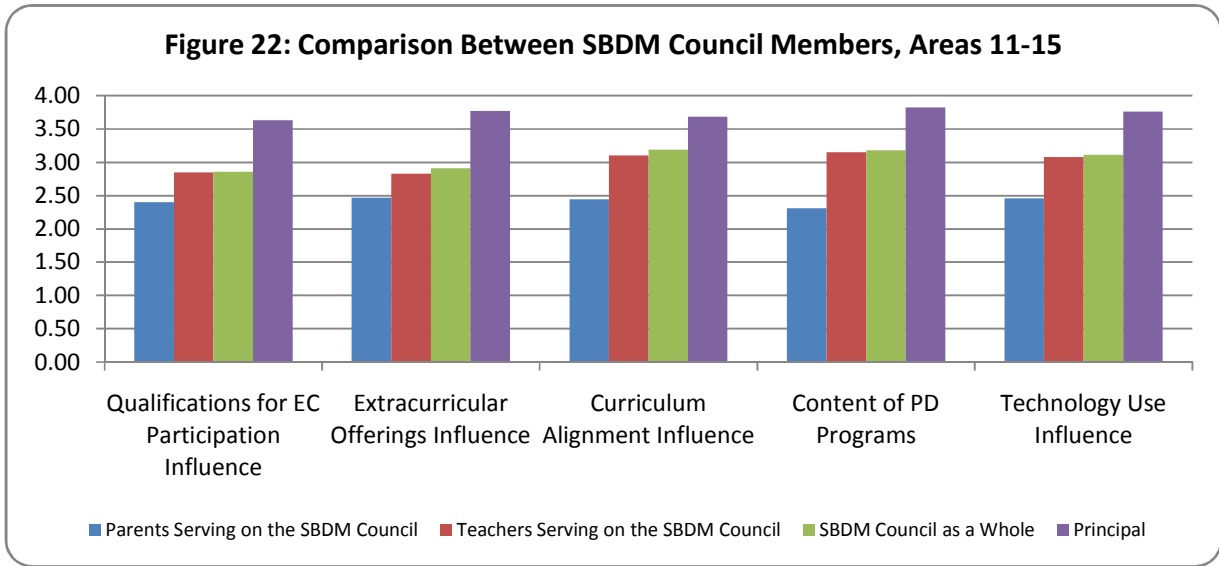
responded that a parent has the most influence.

One principal explained influence this way:

Most principals indicate that the council executes only its most essential legal responsibilities and that the administration makes almost all decisions apart from the council. Those schools with active councils often tend to be those that suffer from a lack of cohesiveness and morale. It is the opinion of many principals that school councils can often do more harm than good when developing proper school policies and procedures.

The principal quoted above touches on the many nuances of SBDM Council work; nonetheless, she also acknowledges that school administrations make decisions outside of SBDM Council directives. Her observations are supported by these survey findings. According to survey influence rankings, principals believe they are the driving force behind decisions made in the school. While rankings deviated for all other groups or persons, as evidenced in Table 6, the principal ranked first in influence in EVERY area studied. Often, mean responses indicated that principals rank their decision-





making influence far above the influence of the next highest actor.

The findings hold even when comparing principal influence to the influence of other SBDM Council members and the council as a whole. Mean principal influence was always higher than mean SBDM Council as a whole influence. Mean council as a whole influence was always higher than the influence of teachers serving on the SBDM Council (with the exception of student assignment influence, when SBDM Council as a whole influence ranked below teachers serving on the council). Mean teachers on the council influence was always higher than the influence of parents serving on the SBDM Council (see Figures 20-22).

From these results, it becomes quite clear that SBDM Councils do influence decisions made in the school, often coming in second only to the principal as the most influential actor. That *is* the story, however; principals *always* rank first in influence, and in most instances, the second-place actor, whether it is the SBDM Council or another group, does not come close to the principal’s influence.

The findings outlined in this section confirm that **leadership matters**, regardless of other groups and stakeholders. Despite the reforms to decentralize decision-making power and the “drastic shift in the work of schools” that SBDM Councils promised, principals still wield the most decision-making power 20 years after the passage of the KERA.

## ***Reality Contradicts Intent and the Effects on Achievement: Findings and Discussion***

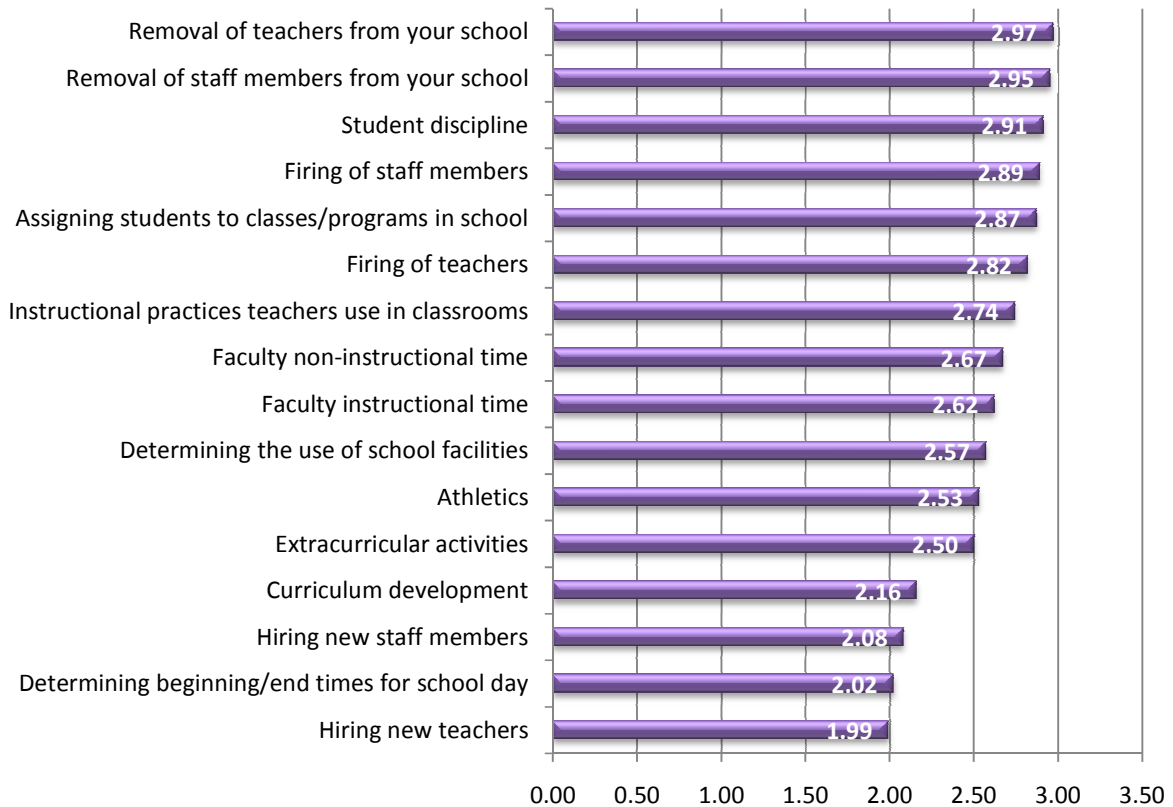
Despite the intentions of KERA, which mandates SBDM Council involvement in nearly all aspects of school operations, JCPs principals often exercise independent decision-making power without challenges by or impediments from SBDM Councils or individual council members. Although these actions directly contradict Kentucky law in fact and in spirit, surveyed principals indicated that they face little or no opposition to such independent actions. This finding also conflicts with information gathered in the qualitative interviews, when principals indicated that they do not act independently of their SBDM Councils in

any area. Furthermore, in the limited number of conflicts reported by principals in this survey concerning their independent decision-making activities, independent decisions were never overturned.

### **Principals Make Decisions Independently of their SBDM Councils**

A series of survey questions addressed the actions taken by principals independently of SBDM Council input. Despite laws mandating SBDM Council involvement in a

**Figure 23: Independent Decision-Making**





number of areas, **principals are still able to exercise independent decision-making power.** When principals were asked over which areas they exert decision-making influence *independently* of their SBDM Council, the highest mean answers were found in removal or firing of employees, student discipline, and assigning students to classes and programs within the school (see Figure 23). Mean responses for all 16 categories were between two and three, indicating that, generally speaking, principals make decisions independently of their SBDM Council at least some of the

time on all areas under which SBDM Councils have policy-making authority.

This finding sheds light on the earlier discussion of principal influence, which concluded that principals exercise considerable influence over decisions made by SBDM Councils. The entire story is not revealed until both findings are compared. Principals not only exercise influence over the decision-making process, they also appear to make important decisions without specific directives or even vague guidelines from SBDM Councils.

Previously, principals indicated that they strongly influence hiring decisions in their buildings. Therefore, it is not surprising that they also make decisions about continued employment independent from the SBDM Council and its members. Some principals sought to clarify their survey responses on firing employees. One made the statement:

There is no firing or removing of any staff members that the building principals have any say over.

Another declared the following:

I don't fire people. Only a superintendent can do that. But, the evaluation process is confidential and not a part of the SBDM. Only a principal can recommend those issues to a superintendent. SBDM is not involved in the removal of staff or teachers.

To provide further explanation in this area, researchers combined responses from principals who said they exerted decision-making authority independently over their SBDM Council most or all of the time. In all areas except for hiring, curriculum development, and determining the beginning and end times for the school day,

Area of Influence	Percent
Student discipline	71.9%
Removal of teachers from your school	68.2%
Removal of staff members from your school	68.2%
Assigning students to classes and programs within the school	67.4%
Firing of staff members	67%
Firing of teachers	65.9%
Instructional practices used by teachers in their classrooms	62.9%
Faculty instructional time	61.8%
Faculty non-instructional time	61.8%
Determining the use of school facilities	58.4%
Athletics	56.2%
Extracurricular activities	53.4%
Hiring new staff members	39.3%
Hiring new teachers	38.2%
Curriculum development	33%
Determining the beginning and end times for the school day	32.6%

**Table 7: Percentage of Principals Who Exert Decision-Making Authority Independently of their SBDM Council Most or All of the Time, by Area**

more than half of the principals said they exerted independent decision-making authority most or all of the time (see Table 7). As researchers learned through the qualitative interviews, beginning and end times for the school day are set by the JCPS central office. In the area of curriculum development, the state department of education plays a strong role, as was noted in the first finding of this study, along with school district staff and the local school board. These findings here suggest that hiring teachers and staff are the only areas in which principals consistently consult their SBDM Councils in order to make decisions.

Moreover, when principals do exert independent decision-making influence, they face little conflict with their SBDM Councils. In this survey, 92% of principals said that no conflict occurred when they acted independently (see Figure 24). One principal, responding that she had conflicts with more than one member of the SBDM Council after taking independent action, elaborated that she hired a teacher against the recommendation of her SBDM Council.<sup>8</sup>

One surveyed principal even pointed out a unique request that her school’s council made:

The SBDM Council has requested that they not be consulted on all of these issues in order to increase the efficiency of operations.

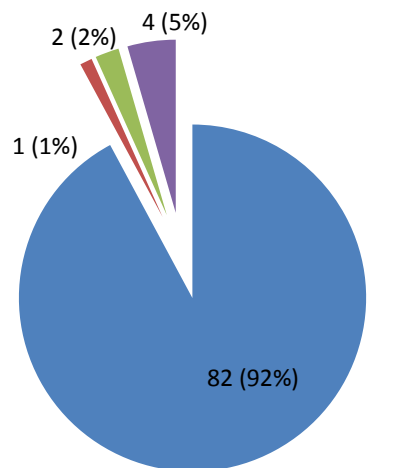
<sup>8</sup> One principal also pointed out a possible structural flaw in the question, noting that the SBDM Council establishes policies in the areas studied, so “no decision is independent.” The implication is that principals could conceivably make decisions independent of their SBDM Council if the council members had established protocols for doing so. While noted for future research, findings indicate that principals understood the researchers’ intent.

While the question of whether other SBDM Councils have made similar requests about efficiency is a point for future research, this statement indicates that at least one SBDM Council in JCPS is shirking its legal responsibility to the greater school community. In this instance, reality is far from intent.

Conversely, some SBDM Councils appear to operate at an opposite extreme. Another principal responded to a survey question in the following manner:

There are some items that are not under the responsibilities of SBDM, however some teachers feel that the SBDM must have say in 100% of every decision in the school.

**Figure 24: If you have exerted decision-making influence independently of your SBDM Council, which of the following occurred? (N, %)**



- No conflict occurred
- Conflict with only one SBDM member
- Conflict with more than one SBDM member
- Does not act independently of SBDM

This statement indicates that at least one SBDM Council in JCPS is attempting to expand its influence beyond the legal parameters set forth in the KERA legislation. Here too, reality is far from intent.

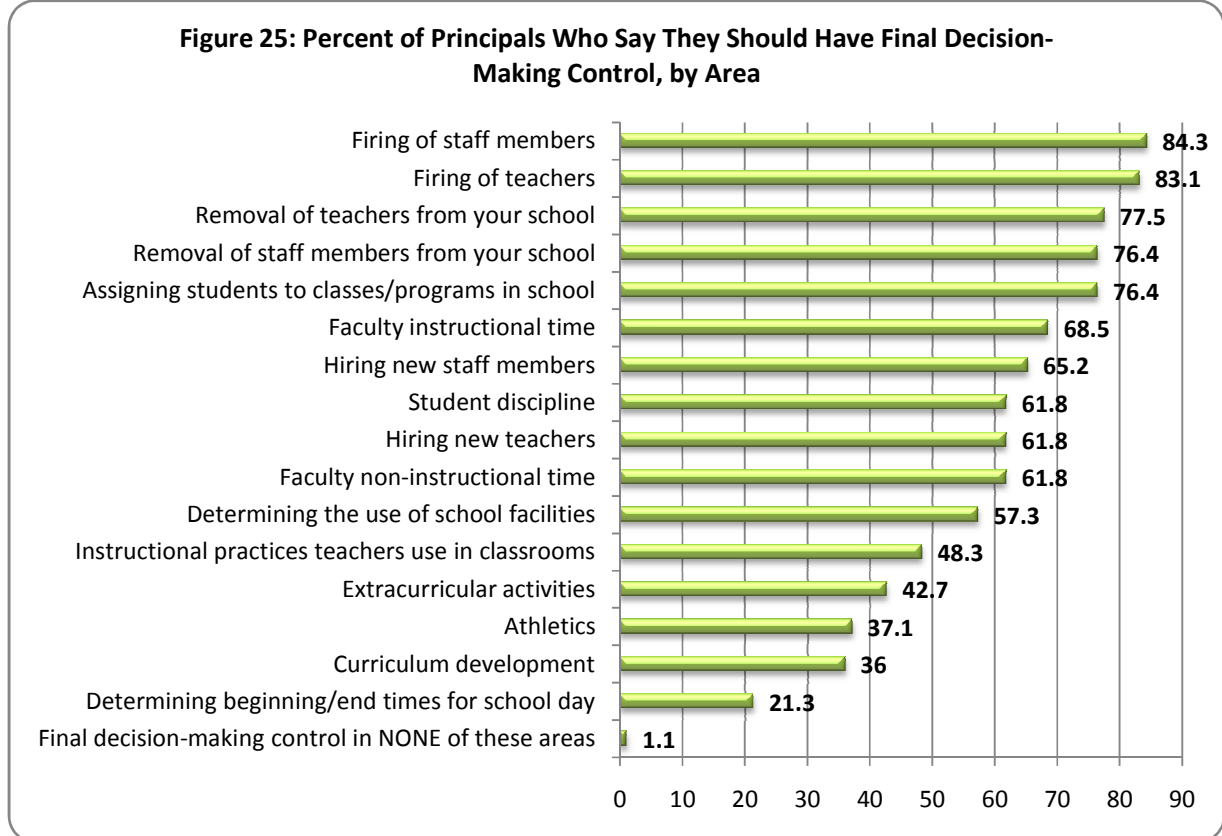
While the truth about the operations of most SBDM Councils may lie somewhere between these two responses, they serve as illustrative examples of how councils in practice deviate markedly from how lawmakers intended councils to govern,

Principals were also asked to indicate in which of the 16 areas they believe that final decision-making control should rest with the principal, regardless of the views of others serving on their SBDM Council. In 11 of the 16 areas, more than half of the principals responded that they should have final decision-making authority (see Figure 25). The highest percentages were found in

firing and removing employees, a message for the JCPS central office, which handles such issues.

Some other areas with high percentages warrant further discussion. As was previously outlined in the first findings section, principal influence is high in the area of student assignment when compared to other actors. The same can also be said for principal influence over faculty instructional and non-instructional time. Above, survey results indicate that principals already *exert* decision-making authority in these areas most or all of the time. For that reason, permitting principals to have final authority in these areas would not drastically alter current practice.

In the areas of hiring, student discipline, and determining use of school facilities, the SBDM Council and its members currently



have moderate to major influence. Based on information obtained from the surveys, principals desire that influence to diminish or disappear altogether.

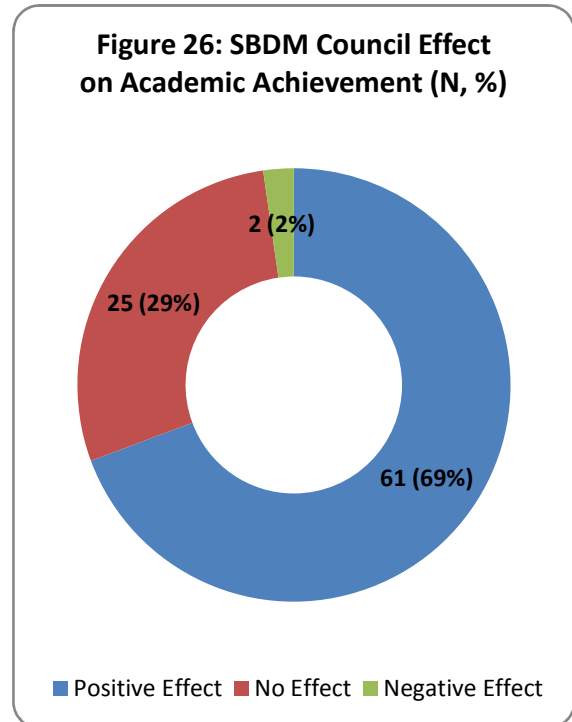
### SBDM Council Effects on Achievement

In the survey, principals were asked to rate the degree of effectiveness of their SBDM Council in terms of student academic achievement on a Likert scale. Responses could include minor, moderate, or major positive and negative effects. When data were combined to create one number for positive effect, researchers found that 84.1% of survey respondents said that their school’s SBDM Council had a positive effect on student academic achievement. When asked directly about the effect on school academic achievement, 69.3% of principals indicated that their SBDM Councils had a positive effect, while 28.4% said no effect. Only 2.3% claimed their SBDM Council had a negative effect (see Figure 26).

In all, 60% of the respondents who said SBDM Councils had no effect on student achievement had previously stated that they had a positive effect. Additionally, two respondents who reported that SBDM Councils had a positive effect on academic achievement previously stated that they had moderate negative effects. It is hypothesized that principal ambivalence toward SBDM Council work may be one reason for these differences.

#### Positive Effect Discussion

Some principals identified many areas where SBDM Councils have had positive effects. Councils disaggregate data, determine curriculum and programs,



develop vision and common goals, monitor achievement, allocate resources through the budgetary process, and approve the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. SBDM Councils write policies and procedures, and a few principals observed that teachers on the council are respected for their leadership roles in policy formation.

Many principals, without citing any evidence, equate the hard work of councils with a positive effect on achievement. One said, “SBDM members always keep students first,” while another wrote, “Our council approves what works.” A small number of principals referred to the knowledge, expertise, and intelligence of SBDM Council members. Further discussion on council membership can be located in another section of this work.

#### Negative Effect Discussion

Those respondents who said the SBDM Council had a negative effect on

achievement noted that council members lacked knowledge about how to raise achievement. In one instance, a principal alleged that SBDM Council conflicts negatively affect achievement:

*“Parents do not understand budget details, school plan or policies. They trust school staff to make good decisions and feel it is their job to do so.”*  
—J CPS Principal

to academic achievement. Others pointed to the fact that the Instructional Leadership Team is more effective and deals with the same concerns.

[The SBDM Council is] constant[ly] questioning decisions made by principal. If the teachers in this building do not get their way, they file formal complaints and have even hired lawyers to avoid working with administration. Council members in this school have created an “Us Against Them” mentality that has been very difficult to overcome. [It] creates low morale, and that affects student achievement.

Echoing earlier comments, principals also noted that it is their responsibility to lead the school, not the prerogative of the SBDM Council. Instead of spending time on SBDM Council responsibilities, principals could be working with teachers in the classroom because that step “has the real effect on student achievement.” Another principal declared the following:

At different points in the survey, other principals also commented about SBDM Council effects on achievement. One principal flatly asserted the disservice her SBDM Council does for the school:

Students achievement is ultimately impacted by the most competent teachers implementing the most effective and practical strategies in a consistent manner. SBDM Councils have little, if any, impact on what teachers do daily in the classroom.

The council interferes with my ability to raise student achievement in my building!

Once again, principals cited the negligible effect of parents on the councils, pointing out that they “rarely have instructional insights or recommendations for improvement.” One other principal opined in the following manner:

Another principal discussed achievement in terms of member qualifications:

If our goal is to raise student achievement, it makes no sense to have persons who can't raise the achievement in their own classrooms or parents who have no understanding of the learning process make decisions about academic achievement that affects the rest of the school.

Parents do not understand budget details, school plan or policies. They trust school staff to make good decisions and feel it is their job to do so. Again, they do like being asked, and they do like knowing what is going on at school. They also stop by school and talk to me if there is a problem or they have a suggestion. We are very open to new ideas. Before SBDM, I had PM Participatory Management. It was more efficient. Parents were involved without the stress of the legal issues. Parents read about school councils being involved in deciding whether gay and lesbians can meet at school clubs,

**No Effect Discussion**

Respondents who answered that the SBDM Council has no effect on achievement pointed to a variety of reasons. Some principals claimed councils are “rubber stamp committee[s]” that are “irrelevant”

and they get afraid. They don't want to be on TV or in the press or suffer the wrath of other parents.

From examining principal statements, the primary prerequisite for SBDM Councils to have any hope of functioning effectively to raise student achievement is an adequate mix of members who approach and examine educational issues through the eyes of all actors in the school setting. If this goal is met, SBDM Councils can provide principals with the necessary tools to make

important decisions for the school that can raise student achievement. Unfortunately, many SBDM Councils fail to meet these requirements.

In the end, principals are split on another important question: Would student academic achievement improve at your school if you did not have a SBDM Council? While 47.7% responded yes, 52.3% responded no (N=88).

## ***The Inefficiency and Redundancy of SBDM Council Work: Findings and Discussion***

SBDM Councils in JCPS often engage in work that is redundant in nature. Survey and interview data indicate that much of the SBDM Council work is done before reaching the official SBDM Councils in schools. In general, this is the result of school based leadership teams having already addressed issues mandated by KERA as part of school leadership team decision making in such areas as school discipline and technology integration. Policies, procedures, and decisions that were crafted based on the work of these school leadership teams are, in general, then taken to the SBDM Council for ratification. Since the same individuals

who participated in school leadership teams also serve on the SBDM Councils, council work is redundant and serves only to make official the decisions that school leadership teams had already made and to inform the parents serving on the SBDM Councils.

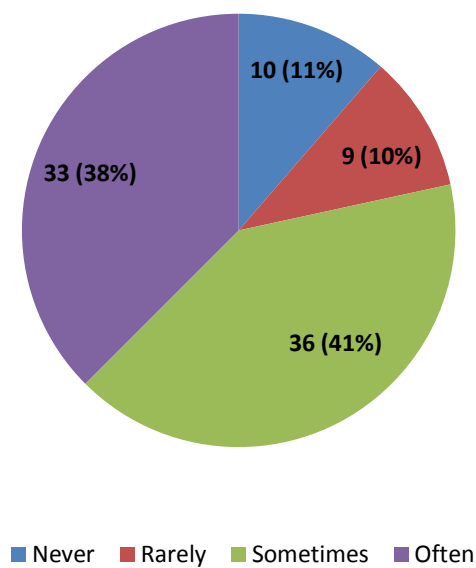
### **The Inefficiencies in SBDM Council Work**

On average, principals participating in this survey spend 4.7 hours per week on work pertaining to their SBDM Council responsibilities. On the upper end of the scale, two principals said they spend 20 hours per week, while another said she spends 25 hours per week. Two additional principals spend 40 hours per week, and two principals directly stated that all of their responsibilities directly relate to the SBDM Council. Seven principals responded with zero hours.

When researchers excluded extreme outliers at both ends of the response spectrum, the mean time spent on work pertaining to SBDM Council responsibilities falls to 3.6 hours. In both instances, the median time is three hours, and the mode is one hour.

Almost 80% of principals either sometimes or often believe that time spent on SBDM Council work could have been spent more effectively on other areas (see Figure 27). Comments from the 21% of principals who said they never or rarely feel their time could have been spent more effectively included the following:

**Figure 27: How often do you feel that the time you spend on work pertaining to your SBDM Council responsibilities could have been spent more effectively on other duties? (N, %)**



It is part of my job.

SBDM is important.

SBDM works well in my school

SBDM is focused on student achievement and is all I do during the day.

I value council work, but I think that it has become routine.

Principals who responded that they sometimes feel their time could be better spent also shared their thoughts. Some administrators mentioned that SBDM Council work often repeats Instructional Leadership Team and staff meeting work, or even discussions with the PTA Board. One principal's comment is telling because it illustrates the secondary role of SBDM Councils:

I feel I present information to all stakeholders. Then I have to repeat it again at SBDM.

Other principals who felt that their time could be better spent noted difficulty in dealing with teachers serving on the SBDM Council. Some also lamented that parental involvement is difficult to obtain. When parents are involved, a principal pointed out that they "do not generally feel comfortable asserting their ideas over those of educators."

The most common complaints were the mountain of paperwork and scheduling difficulties created by SBDM Council work. One principal said she must "document the life out of everything." That time, according to another principal, could be better used "observing and working with teachers on instructional issues."

While one principal said that the SBDM Council is a burden, another was more diplomatic:

**[SBDM Council effectiveness] depends on the quality of your Council members.** If they are members because they want what is best for the school then my time is not wasted a bit. If they have hidden agendas, and they do what is best for the adults, then I feel I am wasting my time on those issues. (emphasis added)

Principals who responded that they often feel their time could be better spent provided illuminating commentary. In addition to all of the topics previously mentioned, other common principal criticisms focused on the lack of influence and ineffectiveness of SBDM Councils. Three principals said they have little or no power or effect on the operation of schools. Many others said SBDM Councils were a waste of time, noting the following:

Ultimately, the principal is held responsible for happenings in the school not the council.

While not claiming that SBDM Councils were a waste of time, one surveyed principal wrote the following statement:

The council trusts my leadership, and I have to balance busy teachers and parents against the plethora of decisions that have to be made and the time they have to devote.

Another surveyed principal complimented his council, but his comments illustrate the subservient role that SBDM Councils play:

The team is dedicated to ensuring academic success for all students in our school. They trust me and rely on me to investigate and promote policies and procedures that will



*Those principals who feel that the SBDM Council structure prevents or constricts them from making important decisions may not fully understand how much independent decision-making authority they are capable of asserting.*

accomplish that goal. They also assist in broadening the understanding and carrying out of our vision and mission through their conversations with respective role groups

Another principal agreed, noting that the added political layer brought by SBDM Councils hardly constitutes shared leadership and decision-making:

Our meetings are basically a monthly review of school-wide activities and "rubber-stamping" approval forms.

If SBDM Councils were functioning as the authors of KERA intended, evidence of shared leadership would have flowed from the survey and qualitative interview data. Researchers believe that this lack of evidence is indicative of the secondary role that SBDM Councils play in local school governance. Instead, the evidence in this JCPS study suggests that after nearly 20 years, JCPS principals still exercise a considerable amount of influence over the decision-making process in their schools. Those principals who feel that the SBDM Council structure prevents or constricts them from making important decisions may not fully understand how much independent decision-making authority they are capable of asserting.

One principal did make the following comment:

We have an Instructional Leadership Team at the School. It meets the week before SBDM. That information is always shared

with SBDM and is truly the driving force. Parents, specialists, and other community people are brought in as needed. I feel very comfortable with that process. The SBDM Council serves as the official clearinghouse and paper process for our school. Thanks for [providing] this survey. We have all been waiting for years for someone to ask us how we really feel.

## **SBDM Councils and the Day-to-Day Work of Principals**

In the qualitative interviews, responses of the six principals were remarkably consistent with regard to SBDM Councils and their perceived effect on the day-to-day work of principals. All of the principals interviewed indicated that the SBDM Councils had very little or no effect on their daily job requirements. Principals reported spending an average of 2.9 hours each month on work relating to their school's SBDM Council.<sup>9</sup> Without exception, this time was spent getting ready for and following up after the SBDM Council's monthly meeting.

Four of the six interviewed principals indicated that they had almost daily, ongoing, and positive interaction with the parent members of their SBDM Council—partly because these parents were also active in other areas of the school. Two of the principals pointed out that parents serving on their SBDM Council were also

<sup>9</sup> Principals' responses ranged from 1.5 hours per month to 7 hours per month spent on work relating to their SBDM Council.

PTO officers for their school. Additionally, principals indicated that when elections were held for SBDM Council parent members, the number of parents seeking election usually did not exceed the number of available positions on the Council. Generally, principals were pleased and excited about the parent participation on their SBDM Councils; however, they also expressed the desire to have more parents involved in different areas of the school.

### **SBDM Councils and Redundancy in School-Level Policy-Making**

Regarding school level policy-making, interviewed principals once again responded with uniformity. In the areas mandated by KERA for SBDM Council involvement, all principals responded that school-level policy-making was a function of the school's administrative team, but SBDM Council members were consulted in the areas of discipline and personnel hiring.

Not surprisingly, when asked about the policy-making processes and workload required with the KERA mandated areas for

SBDM involvement, principals indicated that the administrative team, along with guidance counselors and teachers, did most of the work in these mandated areas. SBDM Council members were not mentioned.

One possible reason for this omission can be found in the survey statement from a principal:

It is the opinion of many principals that school councils can often do more harm than good when developing proper school policies and procedures

As noted earlier, one principal admitted that her SBDM Council wishes to not be consulted on all issues for the sake of efficiency, and another principal says her SBDM Council strives for more involvement in every area. This swing between extremes shows the latitude principals can take when deciding what issues SBDM Councils should confront. Here, the important aspect is that, regardless of where the nature of SBDM Council work falls along a continuum, solutions to problems or issues will likely be worked out before they arrive on an SBDM Council meeting agenda.

## ***Conflict, the Emergence of Principal-Driven Leadership, and the Perception of Decentralization: Findings and Discussion***

In some organizations, it is not uncommon for leaders to experience conflict with individuals or groups at some point. Researchers for this study expected to find some conflict between principals and other members of the SBDM Council, especially given the strong influence of principals on the decision-making process and principal ability to make decisions independently of their SBDM Councils. Surprisingly, 71% of survey respondents (N=62) claimed they never experienced conflict with other members of the SBDM Council. Another 28% (N=25) experienced conflict some of the time, and one principal experiences conflict all of the time.

### **Conflicts and Issues**

The principal who claimed to experience conflict all of the time is at odds with a teacher member of the SBDM Council. The principal wrote the following statement:

When a teacher (who is a council member) was assigned to teach a class that she did not want, she hired a lawyer, asked for an appeal of decisions, filed a complaint with OEA, and then asked for a district level appeal. ...She continues to attempt to use SBDM time and resources to complain about her teaching assignment.

Such disagreements seem to be the exception rather than the rule. Seventeen of the 25 principals who experienced conflict some of the time also shared their stories with researchers.

The current semester to trimester change in JCPS high schools prompted a few disagreements among SBDM Council members. The resolution in one council was particularly interesting. The principal said:

[I] reminded opposition of the inadequacy of the current system and how **change would occur with or without SBDM**. NCLB & state accountability hold councils responsible for school improvement. (emphasis added)

This comment is striking because JCPS officials have been pushing in recent months for a schedule change, but they have given SBDM Councils the right to vote on the issue. This particular principal is convinced that the vote is futile because change will take place anyway. Comments like these bolster claims that SBDM Councils wield little actual power in school scheduling.

The lack of council conflict with the principal is mirrored in the interactions of other council members. There were few disagreements among council members. In one example, when one teacher on the council appeared to have disrespected another teacher on the council, the meeting became heated; however, the principal was able to advise members privately and set behavior guidelines before the next meeting. In another instance, a parent reported a principal to the district office because "she thought I wasn't listening to her non-agenda items enough."

Sometimes, discussion of the school budget can cause conflict. One principal said conflict occurred:

...when determining staff and who is needed in the areas of administration, teacher and/or certified. Teachers can have a such a different view. They tend to look at what is best for them and not a school as a whole. When they are given the big picture of the impact of their decision, they usually see it in terms of whole school and consensus is reached.

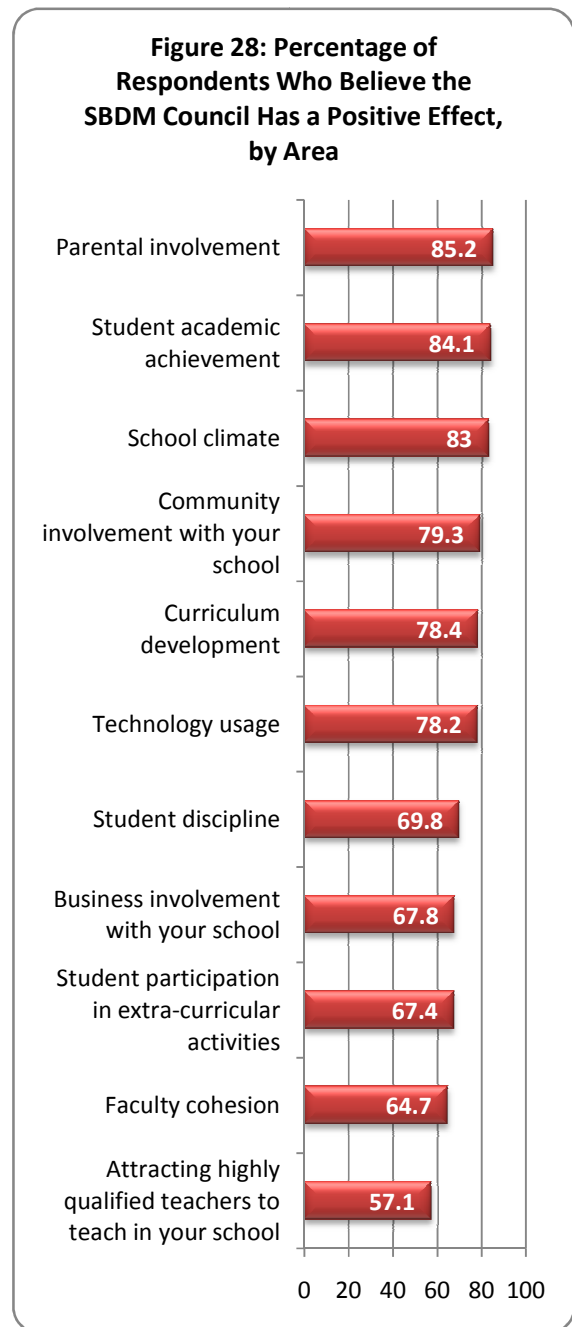
Other issues that caused conflict included itinerant services, dress code, hiring, data, sugary foods in schools, teacher e-mail use, and discipline. In all instances, the principal as SBDM Council chairperson was charged with enlightening other council members and guiding them to consensus on these and other important issues. Because of position, power, and skill, principal-driven leadership on SBDM Councils emerges.

Nevertheless, conflicts among SBDM Council members appear to be minor disagreements that do not occur regularly. In the same manner that principals strive to foster faculty cohesion, principals use their leadership qualities to maintain order between SBDM Council members.

### SBDM Council Effectiveness

Principals were asked what effect SBDM Councils had on the 11 individual areas mandated by KERA: student academic achievement, school climate, parental involvement, faculty cohesion, student discipline, technology usage, student participation in extracurricular activities, curriculum development, community involvement with your school, business involvement with your school, and attracting highly qualified teachers to teach in your school.

Answers ranged from major, moderate, or minor negative effect to minor, moderate, or major positive effect. Ranged answers were collapsed into three categories: negative effect, no effect, or positive effect. Full results are displayed in Figure 28 and discussed below.



In all 11 areas, more than 50% of principals report that the SBDM Council has had a positive effect. Interestingly, 85.2% of principals believe councils have had positive effects on parental involvement, the highest positive percentage of any category. Yet nearly 60% of principals stated that they want to see SBDM Councils eliminated (later findings).

Student academic achievement follows as a close second to parental involvement (84.1%; discussed in different contexts throughout this report), and school climate trails just behind (83%).

## Parents and Perceptions of SBDM Council Effectiveness

In the qualitative interviews, parents serving on the SBDM Councils were interviewed in an effort to gain greater understanding about their perceptions of the roles they play on SBDM Councils. While only five of the twelve parents invited to participate were actually interviewed, it is noted that their responses were extremely consistent.<sup>10</sup> Despite the reality that leadership is principal-driven, parents affirmed the worth of the SBDM Councils in their schools. At the same time, they voiced support for the principal as the leader of the school community. A parent serving on a secondary school SBDM Council made the following statement:

Administrators are the experts, but we all give different viewpoints.

<sup>10</sup> Parents from five of the six school study sites were interviewed.

Another parent, serving on an elementary school SBDM Council, stated that the principal at her school “listened to” parents and valued their opinions:

Our principal has respect for everyone. We may not have the education and be experts, but our principal knows that everyone brings a different outlook to the Council, and he respects that and wants to hear it.

One other member expressed the following:

We look to the principal to make good decisions. He is the one who knows about education. We work together. We want to support him.

Although SBDM Councils theoretically decentralize school governance, parents serving on the council generally voiced wide support for principals and the leadership they offer. In addition to supporting their school principals, parents also indicated that they understood completely and could articulate clearly what they saw as their own roles on SBDM Councils. While their understanding of that role may not be the same as was intended by KERA,<sup>11</sup> it was apparent from their responses that they take their role seriously:

Administrators are experts, but we are all there to give our opinions and thoughts as parents. We have a different viewpoint, but it is important, too.

<sup>11</sup> The intent of the law mandating formation of SBDM Councils was to end nepotism and decentralize to some degree the public schools in Kentucky.

*“Be sure councils stay. They are an important voice for parents.”*  
—JGPS Parent

Consistent in parent responses was the belief that SBDM Councils were important to them. As stated by an elementary school parent:

Be sure councils stay. They are an important voice for parents.

## Principal Perceptions of SBDM Council Involvement in Decentralized School Governance

In both the survey and qualitative interviews, principals both expressed barriers to parental involvement and also reaffirmed their own roles in schools.

One surveyed principal stated the following:

More of my parents would participate if it were not so formal. They like coming in small groups for town halls, or nights out with the principal. I am in the car rider line every day and get lots of input there.

Another principal elaborated further, noting more complexities in the school governance relationship:

The SBDM Council at my school creates more problems than it solves. Everyone wants to have a voice, even though most of the time, the opinions and ideas presented are not relevant, doable, or sensible.

During the qualitative interview process, researchers asked questions of principals that were

formulated from the 10 areas mandated for SBDM Council involvement by KERA. With the exception of student discipline and teacher hiring, the responses of the six principals were remarkably consistent in presenting a view of SBDM Councils that worked with the school and through the building principal. One principal expressed with candor her feelings about working with the SBDM Councils:

I'm the leader of this school. I'm the chair of this SBDM. It is my responsibility to lead, to form, and to lead them in the best direction for this school.

Another principal echoed the sentiment that SBDM Council leadership fell under the umbrella of leadership for everything in the school. He stated:

I am the leader for this school, and that is for everything, including SBDM. Leadership is something that I take very seriously.

### ***Mandated Areas for SBDM Council Involvement***

- 1) Curriculum
- 2) Instructional Practices
- 3) Personnel
- 4) Scheduling and student assignment to classes
- 5) Use of school space
- 6) Student discipline and school safety
- 7) Procedural concerns
- 8) Extracurricular participation
- 9) Alignment with state standards
- 10) Program appraisals of school leadership

None of the six principals interviewed expressed the view that their SBDM Council had *meaningful* participation in decision-making involving curriculum, instructional practices, scheduling and student assignment to classes, use of school space, procedural concerns, extracurricular participation, alignment with state standards, and program appraisals of school leadership. Each principal shared that the SBDM Council in their school enjoyed involvement in these areas; however, the involvement of which they

spoke was limited in every school to receiving briefings on curriculum, scheduling, standards initiatives, and school safety. While it was apparent in later discussions that parents felt their voices were heard and respected in SBDM Council matters, it was evident that even parent members of the SBDM Councils considered the principals to be *in charge*—a sentiment confirmed by the principals themselves.

Only two “decentralized” areas emerged from the interview data as involving meaningful participation by the SBDM Council: student discipline and teacher hiring. Three principals spoke of the importance of involving the SBDM Council in student discipline initiatives, such as dress code, cell phone use, and attendance. These principals also noted the value of their schools’ SBDM Councils in educating others on these issues:

Our council reviews and approves our discipline plan and then helps to communicate what we are trying to do to other parents and the community.

Another principal stated the following when talking about getting the word out to parents and the community about student discipline:

We try to over communicate—and the council is one way of helping with that.

Four principals indicated that the SBDM Council for their school was involved in

***“Our SBDM Council meetings are really places where the work of our leadership team and other committees are presented. ...We are basically laying it out for the parents.”***

**—JCS Principal**

teacher hiring. In each of their schools, SBDM Council members were included in the hiring process for new teachers. One principal indicated that the only time SBDM Council members might not be included was when hiring was done close to the start of school. Another principal noted that the SBDM Council was not required to participate in teacher hiring, but that participation of council members was important in a consultative role. One principal spoke of SBDM Council participation in teacher hiring in this way:

Our SBDM Council is a partner in the hiring process. This is a benefit to everyone.

The principals all voiced support for the SBDM Councils in their schools, but they also expressed a powerful belief that their councils served as vehicles to garner support for school initiatives. One principal stated the following:

I do everything with input and the approval of the Council. They put kids first, and that is important.

It was also apparent from the interviews that the SBDM Councils are not only considered vehicles of support for schools, but are also mechanisms to buffer unwanted involvement from the district office. One middle school principal expressed his sentiment:

We need the Council to help govern the school instead of the central office.



After probing for information on what they would change about the current structure of SBDM Councils in JCPS, principals expressed three major ideas. All

six principals indicated that they would like to see SBDM Council involvement in principal hiring continue, but with less power than the current law provides. The secondary principals interviewed would like to see students included in the make-up of the councils. Another principal, citing the duplication of work among school committees and the SBDM Councils, conveyed that he would like to see the SBDM Councils merge with the school's instructional leadership team:

Our SBDM Council meetings are really places where the work of our leadership team and other committees are presented. The teachers on the SBDM Council already know what is going on in the school, so we are basically laying it out for the parents. It would be great if the SBDM Council could become part of our other committees where the work is really done.

## **Teacher Perceptions of SBDM Council Involvement in Decentralized School Governance**

In the qualitative interviews, teachers serving on the SBDM Council were interviewed in an effort to gain greater understanding about the roles they play on SBDM Councils. Interviews with teachers

***“The SBDM rubber stamps what the principal wants. We call it management without controversy.”***

**—JCPS Teacher**

revealed remarkable constancy not only within teacher responses, but also when compared to the responses of principals and parents. Like the interviewed parents

and principals, teachers declared that principals functioned as leaders of the schools, but in departing from the positive tones of principal and parent responses, teachers expressed a somewhat different perception of principal leadership, as evidenced in the following examples:

The council helps guide and approve decisions, but when it comes down to it, the principal is in charge.

The SBDM rubber stamps what the principal wants. We call it management without controversy.

Some SBDMs are nothing and are ruled by a principal with an iron fist.

Interestingly, a parent member's comment countered the teacher who claimed SBDM Councils rubber stamp what the principal presented:

The tendency to rubber stamp is greatest with the teacher members.

While decentralization may have been an admirable or even a desirable goal, statements from principals, parents, and teachers indicate that parents and teachers are merely supporting actors in larger productions written, choreographed, and directed by school principals.



## ***Comparative Relationships—Membership Qualifications, Effectiveness, and Consistency: Findings and Discussion***

It is not surprising that the vast majority of JCPS principals surveyed indicated that not all members of their SBDM Councils are equally qualified to serve on them. Such beliefs seem to originate from the idea that laypersons (parents) cannot possibly understand the complicated and multifaceted workings and dynamic nature of public schools; however, those beliefs did not apply exclusively to parents serving on SBDM Councils. Some principals indicated that certain teachers serving on SBDM Councils also lack understanding of the work and functions of schools to make informed decisions.

### **Effectiveness and Membership Qualifications**

Surveyed principals were asked, “When considering your SBDM Council, do you feel that all members of your school’s SBDM Council ARE equally qualified to make decisions about the school?” In response, 71.6% of principals said members were not equally qualified. The next question asked if principals felt all members SHOULD BE equally qualified. In response, 67% of principals said members *should* be equally qualified (see Table 8).

Principals who said that all members were not equally qualified were asked what led them to that conclusion, and an impressively large number of respondents (40 of 63) offered insight. The majority of principals indicated that they believe

	Yes	No
<b>ARE all members equally qualified</b>	28.4% (25)	71.6% (63)
<b>SHOULD all members be equally qualified</b>	67% (59)	33% (29)

\*Total valid N for these questions is 88.

**Table 8: Qualifications of SBDM Council Members**

parents serving on SBDM Councils are not equally qualified when compared to teachers and principals. Principals’ attitudes concerning the inclusion of parents on SBDM Councils are rooted in several beliefs. One such belief expressed by several principals was that SBDM Council parents do not have the same school knowledge or understanding of school operations as principals and teachers do. For example, one principal stated the following:

Parents are not in the building on a daily basis and do not really understand what goes on in a school.

Another principal indicated that “the lack of knowledge of how schools work” significantly interferes with the role of parents on his SBDM Council. One principal summarized the thoughts of several others:

Parents have the least amount of first-hand information about what is happening at their school. The nature of their absence does affect their knowledge base.

Other principals seemed to accept the fact that parent involvement inherently means a

decreased knowledge base about how schools work. Some administrators understand that parents are not privy to the same day-to-day details of school operations that teachers and principals are. One principal shared this comment:

Parents cannot be as knowledgeable as the teachers on decisions made. It is too much to ask of them to know what we know, and it is very hard to explain in 90 minutes or less (the typical SBDM Council meeting time per month).

Another principal asserted the following about parent involvement:

Parents cannot be expected to know as much as staff about the day-to-day decisions made at school which impact achievement.

On the other hand, a few principals indicated that one strength of parental involvement on the SBDM Council is that it allows for a diversity in thought and opinion concerning school functioning and the overall educational processes in a school. One principal acknowledged the importance of diversity:

In any committee, it is important to have a variety of abilities and "thinkers." This way you get a variety of perspectives on issues that allow you to see things from a different point of view. Parents are great on the cultural pieces, and teachers are great on the curriculum issues. We need all these thinkers!

Another principal offered a caveat to parental SBDM Council involvement regarding qualifications to serve:

Not everyone has the same educational experience. It is important to have parent input and insight. I do not think SBDM should have to mandate this. Many parents are overwhelmed by the education-ease spoken at meetings and are uncomfortable giving input.

Other principals were more direct in describing the perceived inadequacies in knowledge and experience as they relate to parents serving on SBDM Councils. Consider the following principals' perspectives:

*"Parents cannot be as knowledgeable as the teachers on decisions made. It is too much to ask of them to know what we know, and it is very hard to explain in 90 minutes or less."*

—JPCS Principal

Parent members are typically non-educators and only serve for a year on the council. Most are not well versed in education issues and building management.

Parents do not understand the complexities of the teaching profession. We all see things from a different perspective yet essentially ask everybody to look at everything from an administrative perspective.

Although the above statements were critical, one principal directly asserted the following:

Several members have no education background or experience. They tend to get in the way of our school's progress. **I wish they were gone.** (emphasis added)

Another principal added that parents "are not trained educators. They are just opinion laden."

While these last few responses were strongly negative about the inclusion of parents, the typical respondent took the more reserved tone exemplified previously

***Principals acknowledged that parents make significant contributions in the day-to-day running of the schools and to the SBDM Councils because of the variety of experiences and ideas they bring to the table.***

when acknowledging the various qualifications of SBDM Council members. Interviewed principals indicated that they also recognize the parental deficits in understanding how schools work and what needs to be done to improve student achievement; however, there was also a respectfulness that accompanied such comments. These principals acknowledged the significant contributions that parents make in the day-to-day running of schools and to the SBDM Councils *because of* the variety of experiences and ideas that parents bring to the table.

It is important to note that a limited number of respondents indicated teachers were also not equally qualified, when compared to the principal, to serve on the SBDM Council. One principal asserted the following:

Teachers and parents are not always familiar with specifics about legal issues, district policy, state requirements, etc., that are needed to know to make informed decisions. I have to explain a lot during SBDM meetings sometimes.

Another principal added these comments:

People come to the council with varying degrees of experiences and points of view. Some are more informed than others because of their life experiences, past school involvements, and professional background. Many bring a personal bias to the council that cannot be overcome. Professional development for council members is inadequate to overcome the vast differences in stakeholder knowledge,

nor is it adequate to fully immerse council members in the complex legal and political realities of school decision making under current state law.

### Comparative Consistency of SBDM Council Work

According to survey results, 32% of principals believe that SBDM Councils are consistent in the *scope* of their duties, while 38% believe they are not. It is important to note here that researchers cannot draw many conclusions from this information, partly because 31% responded that they did not know how consistent all SBDM Councils are. Nearly identical responses were provided when researchers asked principals whether SBDM Councils were consistent in *carrying out* their duties (see Table 9).

Is the SBDM Council Consistent in...	Yes	No	Don't Know
<b>The scope of their duties?</b>	31.8% (28)	37.5% (33)	30.7% (27)
<b>Carrying out their duties?</b>	30.7% (27)	38.6% (34)	30.7% (27)

\*Total valid N for these questions is 88

**Table 9: SBDM Consistency**

Twenty-five principals elaborated on SBDM Council consistency, and the most common reason for inconsistent council work, cited by seven principals, was parental involvement. Principals note that some parents lack skills, knowledge, and confidence to participate effectively. One

principal summarized her thoughts in this manner:

In talking with other principals of inner city schools, we all face the same challenges: parents are trying to survive and do not have the time or interest in serving on the council. We literally beg people to participate, then they only show up some of the time. Many of them are intimidated by the responsibilities and the language in the documents, budget, policies, laws etc.

Conversations with teachers and colleagues at other schools, as well as experience in other schools, led principals to question how SBDM Councils carry out their duties. Although they all have the “same established goals set forth by legislation,” some principals point to leadership as a root of inconsistency. At the district level, one principal claimed lack of a clear model to follow, but others pointed out that the district has a rubric for evaluating SBDM Councils.

At the school level, principals noted that each council is managed differently, and some SBDM Councils have an antagonistic relationship with the principal. Nevertheless, the leadership ability of the principal accounts for some of the inconsistency in SBDM Council management. One principal summarized in the following way:

Conversations with principals and teachers indicate that there is a great variety in the degree of activity and involvement of school councils regarding decision-making. Most principals indicate that the council executes only its most essential legal

*Principals should be well positioned to chart the course for their SBDM Councils—and ultimately, for their schools’ success.*

My SBDM Council is...	Responses*
Worse than other SBDM Councils.	4.5% (4)
Equal to other SBDM Councils.	51.1% (45)
Better than other SBDM Councils.	25% (22)
I don’t know enough about other SBDM Councils to form an opinion.	19.3% (17)

\*N=88

**Table 10: How would you rate your SBDM Council in comparison to others in the district?**

responsibilities and that the administration makes almost all decisions apart from the council. Those schools with active councils often tend to be those that suffer from a lack of cohesiveness and morale.

Lack of time, personal agendas, and variations in policies were other reasons cited by principals for council inconsistency.

Despite their mixed feelings on the consistency of SBDM Council work, principals generally have a positive view of their own councils. In fact, 76% rated their councils as equal to or better than other SBDM Councils in the district (see Table 10). This finding is not unexpected; when polled, Americans often report satisfaction with their own public schools but decry the state of public education in the nation.

Similar results were found in qualitative interviews with principals. When asked for their impressions on the perceived SBDM Council effectiveness in their schools, four

principals stated that their councils were “better than average” as compared with other SBDM Councils in JCPS. One principal responded that the school SBDM Council was moderately effective, and another claimed it was mildly effective.

## **Other Important Membership Issues**

Through qualitative interviews, teachers, parents, and principals all indicated that finding people to run for positions on the SBDM Councils was often challenging. In many cases, candidates ran unopposed, reducing the election process to a formality devoid of any meaningful conversation about the work of SBDM Councils. Other times, principals actually recruited teacher candidates for the elections. The idea that SBDM Councils serve as “rubber stamping” committees could very well be rooted in the member selection process.

Finally, a few surveyed principals indicated that the real issue was not whether all members of the SBDM Councils are equally

qualified, but whether their motives for serving on the council were beneficial to the council, the school, and its students. Consider the following statements:

Some members are voted onto an SBDM to promote personal agendas aside from overall school success.

Some members have a narrow focus on issues that are personal, and [they] are unable to look at the broader spectrum of the entire school. Teacher members try to make decisions based off of their "likes" or "dislikes" of each other and administrators and do not focus on the students.

[Some members are] power happy—not wanting what is best for children.

What is clear from the above discussion is that very few, if any, council members have expertise and experience comparable to the principal, and no one on a SBDM Council holds the same level of responsibility that the principal does. As a result, principals should be well positioned to chart the course for their SBDM Councils—and ultimately, for their schools’ success.

## ***Governance Structures and the Role of SBDM Councils: Findings and Discussion***

One survey item asked principals, “If you could eliminate the SBDM Council from your school and replace it with a structure where you would be the traditional school decision maker for the activities occurring within the walls of your school, would you?” In response, 59.1% (N=52 of 88) of principals said they would eliminate the SBDM Council.

### **Keep the SBDM Councils**

Principals who wished to keep SBDM Councils offered a few words of advice on what they would like to see changed, and many of those comments involved council composition. One principal asserted that the number of staff on the committee needed to change. Another principal said:

I would prefer that someone other than the principal could be the chairman of the council.

A few principals would like to see changes in the way parents are involved on the SBDM Council. One principal wrote that the rules for parental membership on SBDM Councils should be rewritten to include the following change:

I would like to see flexibility to have parents on the committee that may be employees of the school. Just because you work in the lunchroom shouldn't mean that you can't be a part of your child's SBDM [Council] if

your child goes to the school where you work—which is usually the case [in] elementary [schools].

A principal opined that parents should not have voting rights on issues about which “they cannot truly be knowledgeable enough to make [decisions].” According to one principal, in the end:

The council effectiveness is determined by its members. The statute gives the council all the authority it needs to bring about change and improvement.

### **Eliminate the SBDM Councils**

Many other principals did not share the sentiments noted above. In fact, principals felt so strongly on this issue that more than half of respondents who wished to eliminate SBDM Councils (29 of 52) commented at length.

Nine principals unequivocally wished to have SBDM Councils eliminated, with explanations ranging from “It is a farce” and “a waste of time” to one principal who said, “I would like to see them banned from the state of Kentucky!”

Many principals voiced problems with required monthly meetings, claiming that oftentimes, they assemble merely “for the sake of meeting.”

*Fact: 59% of principals said they would eliminate the SBDM Council from their school and replace it with a structure where they were the traditional decision makers.*



One specific point of contention centered on the policies that SBDM Councils must write. Some principals expressed frustration that these numerous policies mirror those policies already written and enforced by the district, like the principal who wrote the following:

My job is to follow district policies and guidelines. The district has attorneys to make sure they are not violating laws and regulations. Schools do not; our policies all follow district policies, which are a repeat. We did try to write a couple of unique policies, and they were rejected...because [they] did not comply with the teacher's union contract. Yet it was critical to building a successful culture in our school for our students.

Other principals mentioned parental involvement on the SBDM Council as an area for potential change. Two principals wished to have parents removed from the councils, noting that while their opinions are valued, parents lack the knowledge and background to make the correct decisions. In their place, a few principals would like to see their schools governed by the Instructional Leadership Team with representatives from all grades and disciplines. One principal even admitted to circumventing the SBDM Council by first bringing topics of interest to staff meetings, where consensus is reached before issues reach the whole council.

While other principals did not admit to skirting the SBDM Council process, teachers interviewed for the qualitative aspect of this project indicated other principals

practice a form of circumvention. One teacher claimed the following:

Decisions are already made by different teams and the principal long before they ever go to the SBDM Council.

Another teacher bluntly explained how the SBDM Council process is duplicative:

The work has been done by committees of teachers, and it is presented to the SBDM Council. Here it is. Discuss it and move on.

In other survey findings, two principals criticized the way principals are currently hired. One wrote, "I do not think SBDM Councils should choose their principals." Another principal advocated for principal selection to be conducted by the superintendent.

In what may be the most troubling comments, some principals see the SBDM Councils as a hindrance on the daily operation of schools. One wrote the following comment:

So many of the day-to-day operations require council approval. It would be nice to simply do what we need to do and mov[e] students toward proficiency without taking everything to the council.

Another principal said that if SBDM Councils were eliminated, principals would have "more time to work with instruction in the building." One principal stated it this way:

SBDM Council duties and responsibilities need to be re-defined by state law. The responsibilities of councils are too far-

*"The responsibilities of councils are too far-reaching and encroach on the ability of the principal to make appropriate and timely decisions."*  
—JGPS Principal

reaching and encroach on the ability of the principal to make **appropriate and timely** decisions. It is also important to note that the principal is the *only* council member who is ultimately accountable for the success or failure of a school. Council members can simply resign from the council at will. But the principal is personally accountable to his/her supervisors and to KDE and the Professional Standards Board. Principals bear the full weight of accountability but do not have the same degree of autonomy in making such decisions. (emphasis added)

Another principal candidly pointed out:

SBDM [Councils] don't get fired—principals do.

In summary, many principals expressed displeasure with SBDM Councils in general, and they cited numerous instances where the work of councils needs to change in order to allow schools to function more efficiently. While these results were not altogether unexpected, it is telling that principals see the current site-based decision-making process as one that hinders, rather than assists in, the day-to-day operation of schools.

One final plea from a principal was quite direct:

**Please help us eliminate SBDM Councils.**  
(emphasis added)



## *Findings Summary*

This project examined how SBDM Councils that govern schools in Jefferson County, Kentucky affect school-level policies and the work of principals. The analysis considered two questions:

- 1) How do JCPS principals perceive the impact of SBDM Councils in the mandated areas of curriculum, instructional practices, personnel, scheduling and student assignment to classes, use of school space, student discipline and school safety, procedural concerns, extracurricular participation, alignment with state standards, and program appraisals of their work as school leaders?
- 2) How do JCPS principals perceive the impact of the SBDM Councils on their day-to-day responsibilities as school leaders?

Findings suggest that the work of SBDM Councils, though largely symbolic, is valued in JCPS. Principals' self-perception affirms their belief that they are the educational leaders for their schools and that they are influential in working with the SBDM Councils. Although principals were found to have the greatest influence over school decision-making, SBDM Councils were the second-most influential actor in influencing school decision-making. Furthermore, interviews with SBDM Council parents and teachers revealed confidence in their principals as school community leaders.

The influence of principals as school leaders is confirmed by the project results. Despite the reforms to decentralize decision-making power and the "drastic shift in the work of schools" that SBDM Councils promised, principals wield a great amount of individual influence over the work of their schools 20 years after the passage of KERA. Even with laws mandating SBDM Council involvement in a number of decision-making areas, principals are still able to exercise independent decision-making power. Contradictory perceptions emerging from the findings suggest that while parents and principals view principal leadership from an extremely positive viewpoint, teachers were more likely to see the SBDM Council as a vehicle to "rubber stamp" principal initiatives.

JCPS principals report spending an average of 3.6 hours each week on work pertaining to the SBDM Councils in their schools, primarily focused on the time spent getting ready for and following up after the SBDM Council's monthly meetings. An overwhelming majority of principals believe that time spent on SBDM Council work could often be spent more effectively on other areas of school operations. Redundancy in SBDM Council work emerged as a constraint on the work of principals, who noted that SBDM Council meetings often involved presenting information or recommendations to the council that had already been discussed in leadership team meetings, instructional committee meetings, staff meetings, and parent-teacher association board meetings. The most common complaints from principals included dealing with the

paperwork and scheduling difficulties associated with SBDM Councils.

Constraints and limitations are clearly present in both the intent of SBDM Councils and in the actual working of the councils in JCPS. More than half of the principals surveyed indicated that they would eliminate SBDM Councils in their schools if they could. Others indicated that changes should be made in the structure of SBDM Councils, including required the membership of the councils, mandate that the principal chair the council, and voting rights extended to parents on the council who were truly lacking knowledge in areas such as curriculum and instruction. Negative aspects associated with SBDM Council mandates include writing redundant policies, participation in the hiring process, and parental involvement in decisions best handled by the professional staff. Overall, principals see the current site-based decision-making process as one that hinders, rather than assists in, the day-to-day operation of their schools.

This report confirms that principal leadership is thriving in JCPS and that while the intent of SBDM Councils as envisioned by Kentucky law is somewhat unfulfilled, the actual work of schools is being carried out through principal-guided collaborative structures. Teachers are deeply involved in decision-making in their schools. Parents have opportunities to participate in SBDM Councils in their schools, and parents are seemingly satisfied with this process, as evidenced by their low participation rates and high levels of satisfaction with the councils in their schools. Both parents and teachers affirm that principals are the indisputable leaders of school communities in JCPS. The recommendations from this report offer several possibilities for strengthening and streamlining the work of principals and SBDM Council members and may move SBDM Councils closer to the intent of KERA or support the need for changes in Kentucky law to reflect the collaborative culture of school work 20 years after KERA.

## ***Recommendations***

In the Jefferson County Public Schools, SBDM Councils, initially mandated by Kentucky law (KERA), are clearly valued by participating members, including parents, teachers, and principals. While stakeholders value SBDM Councils at different levels and for different reasons, there is clear support for the work they perform. The findings from this project suggest that practices and procedures are in place to support the operation of SBDM Councils in local schools. Nevertheless, the findings also suggests that despite centralized support, SBDM Councils may function as “rubber stamps” for other school processes, and they may not actually be involved in decision-making on many levels. This project also suggests that in JCPS, collaborative teamwork and principal leadership are thriving.

Five recommendations are offered as a means of both strengthening and streamlining the work of principals and SBDM Council members in JCPS. These recommendations acknowledge that some

### ***Project Recommendations***

- Continue to provide training to principals and council members concerning the internal processes of SBDM Council work
- Explore the possibility of merging SBDM Councils with other existing school structures, such as leadership teams or curriculum committees
- Support initiatives at the state level to eliminate personnel decisions from the realm of SBDM Council decision-making
- Encourage greater parental participation in their children’s schools, and seek to engage more parents in different areas of school operations
- Promote service to SBDM Councils as a worthwhile endeavor and a valuable experience for teachers who aspire to be school administrators, and consider teacher compensation for service to SBDM Councils

existing constraints will remain, as Kentucky law mandates them. Additionally, it is important to note that singular solutions rarely provide complete answers to the complexities facing public education. The project findings suggest that opportunities may exist to enhance the work of principals and SBDM Council members and to involve greater numbers of parents in their children’s schools.

### **Recommendation**

#### **#1:**

***Continue to provide training to principals and council members concerning the internal processes of SBDM Council work.***

Principals need ongoing, focused professional development to ensure that they are leading their councils effectively and managing councils’ internal processes efficiently. As noted by Johnson and Pajares

(1996), site-based management processes in schools were not only enhanced by the creation and adherence to democratic rules and procedures but were also constrained by the lack of experience of members with group decision making. Therefore, it is likely that Jefferson County's SBDM Council members could benefit from training in settings that would enhance their ability to work together.

It is clear from survey and qualitative interview responses that the principal is the primary source of influence in every area requiring decision making by the SBDM Council (as mandated by KERA). For the development of effective processes within a school's SBDM Council, principals need ongoing, focused professional development to ensure that they are a source of information to their councils. Furthermore, they must provide leadership to the council concerning its internal processes, help set the council agenda, and communicate effectively with all stakeholders about council activities.

A key practice that must be developed and nurtured in the leadership skills of the principals is the need to affirm council members that their views are important (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). The mandated yearly SBDM Council training does not address adequately the ongoing training needs of principals, and additional training should be developed to increase their leadership abilities. Such training should be concentrated on specific leadership deficits of school principals in JCPS. According to Jennings and Spillane (1996), an important enabling condition for successful SBDM Councils is the identification of opportunities for all SBDM participants to learn and access expert knowledge.

**Recommendation #2:**  
***Explore the possibility of merging SBDM Councils with other existing school structures, such as leadership teams or curriculum committees.***

Given that much of the work of SBDM Councils is being done through other school structures, such as leadership teams and curriculum committees, the possibility of merging such structures should be explored. According to qualitative interview responses, most important decisions are made before reaching SBDM Councils for consideration, even decisions that are part of the mandated authority of SBDM Councils.

Several teachers and principals indicated that the work of the SBDM council is redundant in nature and is time expensive. One teacher used the term "rubber stamp" to indicate the role of the SBDM Council in her school because all necessary work had occurred in specific school committees prior to SBDM Council meetings. The products of school leadership teams and their decisions is taken to SBDM Councils for approval, but this step ostensibly serves only to meet requirements for involving parents on the SBDM Council. All other SBDM Council members have already been involved in the development of policies and procedures and in addressing pertinent schools issues.

In many schools, there are overlapping responsibilities between the school leadership teams, which include virtually all teachers in some schools, and the SBDM Councils. Such overlap results from the same teachers serving simultaneously on

school leadership teams and SBDM Councils. Currently, the bulk of SBDM Council work involves become acquainted with or giving explicit approval to concepts, policies, and procedures that have been explored and developed in school leadership teams or other committees. In reality, this renders the work of existing councils inefficient and redundant.

The work of the SBDM Councils is largely symbolic in nature. Educationally substantive issues have, in many cases, been addressed long before reaching the council. It is unlikely that SBDM Councils will be eliminated in the near future, if at all, and a change that allowed SBDM Councils and other school leadership structures to merge would necessitate a change in Kentucky law. Nevertheless, the work of school leadership committees is an absolute necessity in leading schools to educate students better, and merging the work of SBDM Councils with school leadership teams would possibly avoid the inefficiencies and redundancies that currently exist.

**Recommendation #3:**  
***Support initiatives at the state level to eliminate personnel decisions from the realm of SBDM Council decision-making.***

At present, KERA mandates that SBDM Councils hire school principals and adopt policies, to be implemented by the school principal, that provide for consultation with SBDM Council members in the selection of school personnel (KERA, 1990). While not the focus of this project, interviews with SBDM Council members revealed that

principal hiring without the participation of the district superintendent was filled with potential pitfalls.

Currently, JCPS principals report that they exercise the greatest degree of decision-making power independent of their SBDM Council in the removal or firing of employees in their buildings. Principals report to have the least amount of independent decision-making power in the hiring of new teachers for their school. Given that principals are recognized as the educational leaders for their schools and that SBDM Council members in JCPS have expressed confidence in their principals, it appears contradictory that principals would not have more autonomy in making decisions about hiring teachers in their school. Another contradiction exists for principals in the teacher hiring process; principals are often held solely responsible for the outcomes of decisions made by the councils (Smylie & Crowson, 1993). Experts suggest that the principal is the single most important factor in school success. Therefore, it is imperative that JCPS support initiatives that return hiring of school staff to the principal's job description.

**Recommendation #4:**  
***Encourage greater parental participation in their children's schools, and seek to engage more parents in different areas of school operations.***

Principals and other SBDM Council members should encourage greater parental participation in schools. Thus, it is recommended that principals reach out to all parents, not just those serving on SBDM

Councils, and involve them in other school structures in order to eliminate the overlap of work that exists between leadership teams and SBDM Councils.

Parental involvement on SBDM Councils often serves little more than a symbolic role, and symbolic involvement does not foster the support schools need in creating good educational practices and systems that raise student achievement. Additionally, interviews revealed that in some schools, a very small number of parents pull double duty and participate in all formal roles (for example, SBDM Council parent members were also PTA Officers). Making SBDM Council parental involvement more than a position to “rubber stamp” the work of school leadership committees is a worthwhile goal that will require training of and support from school principals.

Parental participation on SBDM Councils is limited and is effectually weak, yet it is important to recognize that parents bring unique perspective and insight to the work of the councils. Essentially, school leaders must view parental participation on SBDM Councils as only one way of involving parents in schools. SBDM Councils and school leaders should encourage parents to become involved in many facets of the school community. Furthermore, according to Leithwood et al. (2004), promoting parental involvement should be a central mission of SBDM Councils because of the inherent moral authority that the SBDM Council parent position carries.

According to Chapman and Aspin (1997), councils with high parental involvement serve to engage other members of the wider community in conversations about community values, life aspirations, and

expectations for how education might contribute to such values and aspirations in children from the community. Furthermore, Wohlstetter et al. (2003) note that urban school districts may lack the organizational capacity to improve on their own, and collaborative networks may therefore enhance their capacity for reform. Given the significant number of Title I schools in Jefferson County and the federal government’s requirement that all Title I schools actively involve parents in school activities, such as conferences, committee assignments, and classroom volunteer work, it is imperative that JCPs foster greater parental involvement. The role of a parent serving on an SBDM Council provides that person with a platform to encourage involvement of other parents.

**Recommendation #5:**  
***Promote service to SBDM Councils as a worthwhile endeavor and a valuable experience for teachers who aspire to be school administrators, and consider teacher compensation for service to SBDM Councils.***

Interviews conducted as part of this project revealed that teacher service to SBDM Councils is likely not perceived as being important. Principals indicated that finding teachers who were willing to serve on the councils was often difficult, and while teacher members were elected by their peers to serve on SBDM Councils, those teachers on the ballot were often solicited by the principal to run and did so without opposition. Additionally, comments from

teacher council members indicated that they were not all serving on their SBDM Councils to contribute selflessly and positively to their school communities. Furthermore, teachers perceived councils as “rubber stamping” work that had already been done and as offering special approval to the particular wishes of school principals. Given the importance of teachers and teaching as key elements in site-based decision-making councils (Wohlstetter, Malloy, Chau, & Polhemus, 2003), it is imperative that each school’s SBDM Council has teacher members who consider service to the SBDM Council valuable.

While monetary compensation for serving on SBDM Councils would likely not be possible, it would be worthwhile to consider compensating teachers for serving on SBDM Councils in other ways, such as a reduction of duties or a reduction or change in teaching assignments to fewer classes or minimal class preparations. Elevating the perception of SBDM Council service so that it could be considered important

experience for teacher leaders who aspire to be school administrators would also provide compensation of an in-kind, non-monetary nature. Teachers, in turn, could include SBDM Council service as part of their experience in preparation to become school leaders, and they could assume valuable roles on the SBDM Councils as committee chairpersons and liaisons for other school processes.

With the likelihood that SBDM Councils will continue to be mandated by Kentucky law, it is imperative that their work be viewed as important and that service to them be viewed as worthwhile. Jefferson County should consider taking steps to attract greater interest in teacher service to SBDM Councils by promoting service to SBDM Councils as both a worthwhile endeavor and a valuable experience for teachers who aspire to be school administrators. Further, JCPS principals should consider some form of compensation to teachers who serve on SBDM Councils.

## ***Appendix A: JCPS Principal SBDM Survey***

### **1. Welcome & Informed Consent**

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for participating in this research endeavor. This study seeks to explore the degree to which Site Based Decision Making Councils influence decision making in Jefferson County Public Schools using the JCPS policy domains/SBDM areas of responsibility as a guide to aid this understanding.

This study is being conducted by Jamin Lane Bercaw, Gary Dean Hughes, and Nancy Sharpe Strawbridge, doctoral candidates in the Leadership, Policy, and Organizations program of Peabody College at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, under the supervision of Claire Smrekar, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education and Public Policy, and in cooperation with Jefferson County Public Schools.

All principals in the Jefferson County Public School system have been chosen to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. To participate in this study, please complete the survey that follows. Completing the survey connotes your consent to be a participant in this study. This survey is composed of questions that address your responsibilities and influence as a member of a site based decision making council at your school, the responsibilities and influence of other members of your school's council, and basic demographic information. Completion of this survey should take no longer than 30 minutes. Once you begin answering the survey, you are under no obligation to complete the survey if you choose not to. Simply exit the survey by closing your computer's browser. You can leave the survey and return at another time by clicking the exit button on the survey. You can return at a later time and complete the survey by following the web link provided to you.

Your participation is confidential. However, complete confidentiality can't be guaranteed. You are asked not to put any information in the survey that would identify you individually. All data obtained in this survey will be reported as group data. No individual can or will be identified. We plan on sharing the results with JCPS officials, with Vanderbilt University professors and students, and others interested in site based decision making councils in Kentucky. The results of the survey may be published.

There are neither risks anticipated should you participate in this study nor any anticipated benefits from being involved with it. However, there may be professional benefit from this study, as information we obtain will be communicated to the education profession, district officials, and others. There is no cost to you or financial benefit for your participation.

If you have any questions about this research study or possible injury, please contact Gary D. Hughes, principal investigator, at (615) 772-5354 or our Faculty Advisor, Dr. Claire Smrekar at (615) 322-8001.

Thank you for considering participation in this study. We hope that we can share you views with the greater professional community and use your responses to help shape policy recommendations concerning site based decision making councils in Kentucky.

Sincerely,

Gary Dean Hughes, Principal Investigator  
Jamin Lane Bercaw  
Nancy Sharpe Strawbridge

**\* 1. I have read the above consent form and give my full consent to participate in this survey.**

Yes

No



## 2. Decision Making

In this section, we seek to understand the role of this school's SBDM team and others in the making of decisions for your school.

**\* 1. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the establishment of curriculum at THIS school?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 2. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the determining of the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers in this school?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 3. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the evaluating of teachers at this school?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 4. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the hiring of new, full-time teachers at this school?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 5. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning setting discipline policy at this school?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 6. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning how your school budget will be spent?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 7. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the assignment of students to classes and programs within the school?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 8. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the use of school space during the school day?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**\* 9. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions determining the schedule of the school day and week for your school?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 10. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the alignment of your school's curriculum with Kentucky state standards?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 11. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the assignment of faculty instructional time?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 12. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the assignment of faculty non-instructional time in your school?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 13. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions determining the academic qualifications for students participating in extracurricular programs at your school?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 14. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions determining which extracurricular programs your school offers?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 15. How much ACTUAL influence do you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the use of technology within your school?**

	No influence	Minor influence	Moderate influence	Major influence	Not applicable
Curriculum specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local school board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal (YOU)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SBDM Council as a whole (principal, teachers, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School district staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State department of education or other state-level bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers not serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers serving on the SBDM Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

In this section, we seek to understand the influence of your school's SBDM Council and the roles that you and members of your SBDM Council exercise in the management of school functions.

**\* 1. Which of these responsibilities do you exert decision-making influence over independently of your SBDM Council?**

	Never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Curriculum development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty instructional time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty non-instructional time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assigning students to classes and programs within the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determining the beginning and end times for the school day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructional practices used by teachers in their classrooms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiring new teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiring new staff members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Removal of teachers from your school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Removal of staff members from your school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Firing of teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Firing of staff members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determining the use of school facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student discipline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Athletics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extracurricular activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 2. If you have exerted decision-making influence independently of your SBDM Council, which of the following occurred?**

- No conflict occurred
- Conflict occurred with one member of the SBDM team
- Conflict occurred with more than one member of the SBDM team
- I do not exert decision making influence independently of the SBDM team

**3. If you responded that you have exerted decision-making influence independently of the SBDM Council and conflict occurred, please give an example and describe what occurred, including short term and long term ramifications.**

**\* 4. Over which of the following areas do YOU THINK you should have final decision-making control regardless of the views of others serving on your school's SBDM Council? (You may choose multiple answers.)**

- Assigning students to classes and programs within the school
- Athletics
- Curriculum development
- Determining the beginning and end times for the school day
- Determining the use of school facilities
- Extracurricular activities
- Faculty instructional time
- Faculty non-instructional time
- Firing of staff members
- Firing of teachers
- Hiring new staff members
- Hiring new teachers
- I do not think that I should have final decision-making control in any of these areas
- Instructional practices used by teachers in their classrooms
- Removal of staff members from your school
- Removal of teachers from your school
- Student discipline

**\* 5. What effect do YOU THINK your school's SBDM Council has on the following areas?**

	No effect	Minor positive effect	Moderate positive effect	Major positive effect	Minor negative effect	Moderate negative effect	Major negative effect	N/A
Student academic achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School climate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parental involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faculty cohesion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology usage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student participation in extracurricular activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community involvement with your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business involvement with your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attracting highly qualified teachers to teach in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 4. Your School's SBDM Team Influence

In this section, we are interested in learning about the influence of your SBDM Council, your relationship with the Council, and the effect these factors have on student academic achievement at your school.

**\* 1. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on work pertaining to your SBDM Council responsibilities?**

**\* 2. How often do you feel that the time you spend on work pertaining to your SBDM Council responsibilities could have been spent more effectively on other duties?**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often

**3. What leads you to believe this about your time spent as part of the SBDM Council at your school?**

**\* 4. Do you feel that SBDM Councils across JCPS are consistent in the scope of their duties?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**\* 5. Do you feel that SBDM Councils across JCPS are consistent in the carrying out of their duties?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**6. If you do not think that SBDM Councils across JCPS are consistent in the scope and/or execution of their duties, please describe what leads you to think this.**

**\* 7. Comparing what you know about other JCPS SBDM Councils, how would you rate your SBDM Council?**

- Better than other SBDM Councils
- Equal to other SBDM Councils
- Worse than other SBDM Councils
- I don't know enough about other SBDM Councils to form an opinion

**\* 8. What effect do you feel your SBDM Council has on the academic achievement of your school?**

- Positive effect
- Negative effect
- No effect

**9. Why do you believe your SBDM Council has this effect on student achievement at your school?**

**\* 10. Do you feel that student academic achievement would improve if you did not have a SBDM Council at your school?**

- Yes
- No

**\* 11. When considering your SBDM Council, do you feel that all members of your school's SBDM Council ARE equally qualified to make decisions about the school?**

- Yes
- No

**12. When considering your SBDM Council, do you feel that all members of your school's team SHOULD BE equally qualified to make decision about the school?**

- Yes
- No

**13. If you do not believe that all of you SBDM Council members are equally qualified, what leads you to this conclusion?**

**\* 14. At the end of LAST school year (2007-2008), did your school make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)? (Adequate Yearly Progress is your state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards).**

- Yes  
 No

**\* 15. If you answered "No", your school did not make AYP for the 2007-2008 school year, was your school identified for improvement due to Adequate Yearly Progress requirements? (A school is identified for improvement if it does not make Adequate Yearly Progress for two consecutive years or more in the same content area).**

- Yes  
 No  
 Not applicable

**\* 16. How often have you experienced conflicts with other members of your school's SBDM Council?**

- Never  
 Some of the time  
 Most of the time  
 All of the time

**17. If you have had a conflict with your SBDM Council, please describe one such situation and how the situation was resolved.**

**\* 18. What member of your SBDM Council do you think has the most influence over SBDM decisions?**

- A parent  
 A teacher  
 You, the principal  
 All members of the SBDM Council have equal influence at my school

**\* 19. If you could eliminate the SBDM Council from your school and replace it with a structure where you would be the traditional school decision maker for the activities occurring within the walls of your school, would you?**

- Yes  
 No

**20. What, if anything, would you like to see changed in the current SBDM structure?**



## 5. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

**\* 1. PRIOR to this school year, how many years did you serve as the principal of THIS OR ANY OTHER school?**

**\* 2. PRIOR to this school year, how many years did you serve as principal of THIS school?**

**\* 3. Before you became a principal, how many years of elementary or secondary teaching experience did you have?**

**\* 4. Before you became a principal, did you participate in any district or school training or development program for ASPIRING school principals?**

Yes

No

**5. What specific training related to Site Based Decision Making have your received?**

**\* 6. Before you became a principal, did you have any management experience outside of the field of education?**

Yes

No

**\* 7. What is your gender?**

Male

Female

**\* 8. What is the highest degree you have earned?**

Do not have a degree

Associate degree

Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)

Master's degree (M.A., M.S., M.A.T., M.B.A., M.Ed., etc.)

Educational specialist or professional diploma (at least one year beyond master's level)

Doctorate or first professional degree (Ph.D., Ed.D, M.D., J.D., L.L.B., D.D.S.)

**\* 9. Do you have a Master's degree or higher in Educational Administration?**

Yes

No

**\* 10. In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities related to your role as a principal?**

- Yes  
 No

**\* 11. With what racial or ethnic group do you identify?**

- African American  
 Caucasian  
 Hispanic/Latino  
 Native American  
 Pacific Islander/Asian  
 Other

**\* 12. What is the school level in which you currently serve as principal?**

- Elementary  
 Middle  
 High  
 Special

**\* 13. Rounding to the nearest hundred, how many students are currently enrolled in your school?**

**\* 14. What percentage of your enrolled students receive free or reduced lunch?**

**\* 15. What percent of your enrolled students are ethnic minorities?**

**\* 16. Is YOUR SCHOOL a Title I school?**

- Yes  
 No

**\* 17. Including yourself, how many people serve on YOUR SCHOOL'S SBDM Council?**

## 6. Final Comments?

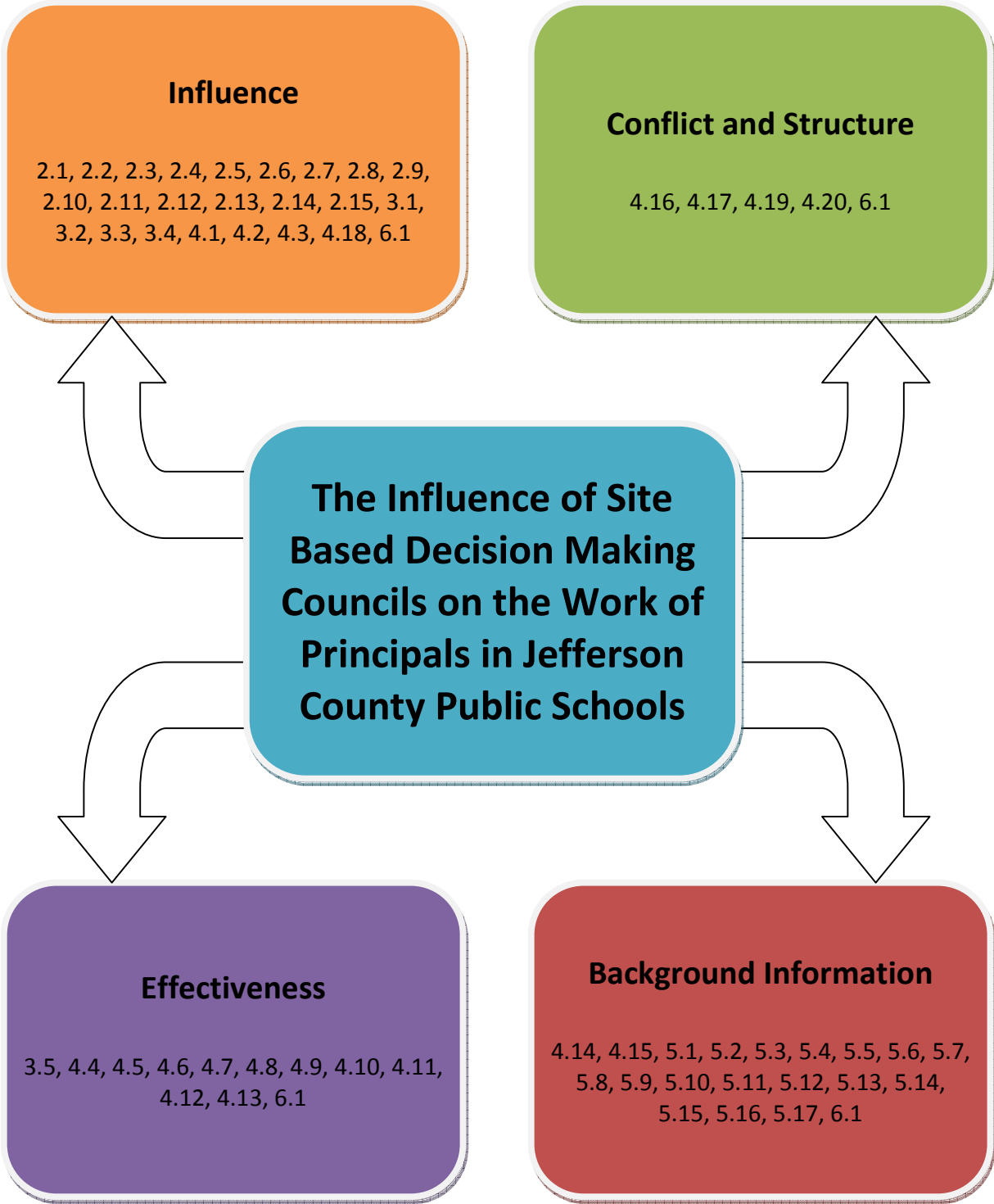
Thank you for completing this survey. We realize that your time is valuable, and we are very grateful for your input and cooperation.

**1. Is there anything else you would like us to know concerning your SBDM team and its influence on the decisionmaking that shapes the course of your school?**

## 7. Thank you!



## Appendix B: Survey Map



## ***Appendix C: Data Tables***

### *Background Information Tables*

**All District Principal Demographics, by Gender (Male)**

	<i>White Males</i>	<i>African American Males</i>	<i>Total Males</i>	<i>Percentage Males</i>
Elementary Schools	14	2	16	35.6%
Middle Schools	9	3	12	26.7%
High Schools	14	2	16	35.6%
Combined Schools	1	0	1	2.2%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>45</b>	

**All District Principal Demographics, by Gender (Female)**

	<i>White Females</i>	<i>African American Females</i>	<i>Total Females</i>	<i>Percentage Females</i>
Elementary Schools	53	20	73	83.0%
Middle Schools	5	6	11	12.5%
High Schools	3	0	4	3.4%
Combined Schools	1	0	1	1.1%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>88</b>	

### *Survey Question 2, Parts 1-15*

**1. Establishment of Curriculum Influence**

	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	3	11	26	50	3.37	90	0.827
Local School Board	2	20	29	40	3.18	91	0.851
School District Staff	2	17	35	37	3.18	91	0.811
Principal	0	6	17	68	3.68	91	0.594
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	6	22	39	23	2.88	90	0.872
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	23	51	12	2	1.92	88	0.698
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	4	16	27	43	3.21	90	0.893
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	6	30	36	19	2.75	91	0.864
Curriculum Specialists	11	21	32	27	2.82	91	0.995
Parent Association	19	49	19	4	2.09	91	0.770
SBDM Council as a Whole	2	15	27	46	3.30	90	0.827

**2. Content of Professional Development Programs Influence**

	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	10	34	37	10	2.52	91	0.835
Local School Board	16	32	31	12	2.43	91	0.933
School District Staff	3	18	38	32	3.09	91	0.825
Principal	1	1	11	78	3.82	91	0.485
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	18	33	30	8	2.31	89	0.899
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	42	43	4	1	1.60	90	0.632
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	7	9	37	36	3.15	89	0.899
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	10	29	35	16	2.63	90	0.905
Curriculum Specialists	11	25	28	27	2.78	91	1.009
Parent Association	38	41	10	1	1.71	90	0.707
SBDM Council as a Whole	3	13	39	35	3.18	90	0.801

**3. Evaluating Teachers Influence**

	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	30	17	29	13	2.28	89	1.087
Local School Board	31	25	18	15	2.19	89	1.096
School District Staff	29	23	25	12	2.22	89	1.053
Principal	0	1	1	88	3.97	90	0.235
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	67	12	6	3	1.38	88	0.763
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	75	10	4	0	1.20	89	0.504
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	58	20	5	5	1.51	88	0.844
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	67	15	5	2	1.35	89	0.693
Curriculum Specialists	58	24	6	1	1.44	89	0.673
Parent Association	75	11	3	0	1.19	89	0.474
SBDM Council as a Whole	53	22	8	5	1.60	88	0.878

**4. Hiring Teachers Influence**

	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	52	23	11	4	1.63	90	0.867
Local School Board	33	29	16	12	2.08	90	1.041
School District Staff	20	21	30	19	2.53	90	1.062
Principal	0	1	3	85	3.94	89	0.276
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	12	15	29	33	2.93	89	1.042
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	73	9	8	0	1.28	90	0.619
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	10	9	30	41	3.13	90	0.997
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	30	28	23	10	2.14	91	1.006
Curriculum Specialists	70	15	4	1	1.29	90	0.604
Parent Association	73	12	5	0	1.24	90	0.547
SBDM Council as a Whole	7	7	25	51	3.33	90	0.924

**5. Discipline Policy Influence**

	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	42	25	19	3	1.81	89	0.890
Local School Board	9	25	37	19	2.73	90	0.909
School District Staff	20	31	29	9	2.30	89	0.934
Principal	1	0	3	86	3.93	90	0.361
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	9	21	28	31	2.91	89	0.996
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	37	41	11	1	1.73	90	0.716
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	7	7	33	43	3.24	90	0.903
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	15	25	33	17	2.58	90	0.983
Curriculum Specialists	57	30	2	0	1.38	89	0.533
Parent Association	37	36	15	1	1.79	90	0.772
SBDM Council as a Whole	4	5	28	53	3.44	90	0.795

**6. School Budget Influence**

	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	32	30	18	10	2.07	90	1.003
Local School Board	17	26	23	24	2.60	90	1.079
School District Staff	17	35	31	6	2.29	89	0.855
Principal	1	1	3	86	3.91	91	0.412
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	4	18	24	44	3.20	90	0.914
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	52	32	4	1	1.48	89	0.642
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	3	6	26	55	3.48	90	0.768
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	15	27	30	17	2.55	89	0.989
Curriculum Specialists	53	30	5	1	1.48	89	0.659
Parent Association	47	34	8	0	1.56	89	0.656
SBDM Council as a Whole	2	4	27	57	3.54	90	0.690

**7. Student Assignment Influence**

	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	57	18	14	0	1.52	89	0.755
Local School Board	54	23	9	3	1.56	89	0.811
School District Staff	45	24	16	4	1.76	89	0.905
Principal	0	1	12	78	3.85	91	0.392
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	31	27	16	15	2.17	89	1.090
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	57	24	8	1	1.48	90	0.707
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	14	14	36	25	2.81	89	1.021
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	21	19	34	16	2.50	90	1.041
Curriculum Specialists	69	13	6	1	1.31	89	0.650
Parent Association	73	13	2	2	1.26	90	0.610
SBDM Council as a Whole	15	22	26	26	2.71	89	1.068

**8. School Space Influence**

	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	62	21	4	1	1.36	88	0.628
Local School Board	45	26	10	7	1.76	88	0.947
School District Staff	33	27	22	6	2.01	88	0.953
Principal	0	0	7	83	3.92	90	0.269
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	22	24	26	16	2.41	88	1.057
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	71	13	3	2	1.28	89	0.639
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	10	17	32	29	2.91	88	0.990
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	31	25	22	10	2.13	88	1.026
Curriculum Specialists	70	15	2	1	1.25	88	0.552
Parent Association	69	16	2	1	1.26	88	0.557
SBDM Council as a Whole	7	17	27	37	3.07	88	0.968

**9. Schedule Influence**

	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	38	25	16	10	1.98	89	1.033
Local School Board	31	26	17	17	2.22	91	1.114
School District Staff	25	27	26	12	2.28	90	1.017
Principal	3	1	8	79	3.79	91	0.624
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	20	22	24	23	2.56	89	1.107
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	67	17	4	1	1.31	89	0.614
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	8	15	28	38	3.08	89	0.980
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	24	30	20	15	2.29	89	1.047
Curriculum Specialists	54	26	7	2	1.52	89	0.740
Parent Association	73	12	4	0	1.22	89	0.517
SBDM Council as a Whole	7	12	24	46	3.22	89	0.962

**10. Curriculum Alignment Influence**

	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	14	12	27	36	2.96	89	1.086
Local School Board	12	24	28	27	2.77	91	1.023
School District Staff	7	13	31	39	3.13	90	0.939
Principal	2	5	13	71	3.68	91	0.681
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	23	23	24	19	2.44	89	1.097
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	58	29	2	0	1.37	89	0.530
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	10	11	28	40	3.10	89	1.012
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	12	27	28	22	2.67	89	0.997
Curriculum Specialists	7	13	32	38	3.12	90	0.934
Parent Association	57	28	4	0	1.40	89	0.578
SBDM Council as a Whole	7	8	35	39	3.19	89	0.903

<b>11. Assignment of Faculty Instruction Time</b>	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	33	31	17	8	2.00	89	0.965
Local School Board	38	24	17	10	1.99	89	1.039
School District Staff	27	29	27	6	2.13	89	0.932
Principal	0	0	6	85	3.93	91	0.250
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	37	21	19	12	2.07	89	1.085
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	75	11	2	1	1.20	89	0.526
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	14	19	33	23	2.73	89	1.020
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	27	30	22	10	2.17	89	0.991
Curriculum Specialists	48	28	10	3	1.64	89	0.815
Parent Association	78	7	3	1	1.18	89	0.534
SBDM Council as a Whole	13	14	33	29	2.88	89	1.032

<b>12. Assignment of Faculty Non-Instruction Time Influence</b>	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	50	22	12	6	1.71	90	0.939
Local School Board	48	26	9	6	1.70	89	0.910
School District Staff	42	25	18	5	1.84	90	0.935
Principal	1	1	11	78	3.82	91	0.485
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	37	26	15	11	2.00	89	1.044
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	75	11	4	0	1.21	90	0.508
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	20	19	32	18	2.54	89	1.056
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	31	30	21	8	2.07	90	0.969
Curriculum Specialists	64	18	6	1	1.37	89	0.664
Parent Association	76	9	4	0	1.19	89	0.497
SBDM Council as a Whole	19	18	31	21	2.61	89	1.073

<b>13. Academic Qualifications for Extracurricular Participation Influence</b>	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	46	18	16	6	1.79	86	0.984
Local School Board	37	20	19	11	2.05	87	1.077
School District Staff	37	21	18	10	2.01	86	1.057
Principal	2	3	21	62	3.63	88	0.666
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	27	17	23	19	2.40	86	1.151
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	59	22	3	3	1.43	87	0.725
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	11	18	30	27	2.85	86	1.012
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	29	23	17	17	2.26	86	1.129
Curriculum Specialists	72	10	3	1	1.22	86	0.562
Parent Association	60	17	5	3	1.42	85	0.762
SBDM Council as a Whole	15	15	23	33	2.86	86	1.118

<b>14. Extracurricular Offerings Influence</b>	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	51	26	10	1	1.19	88	0.500
Local School Board	40	27	13	8	1.56	88	0.741
School District Staff	38	24	20	6	1.78	88	0.915
Principal	0	1	19	70	1.82	90	0.856
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	23	19	29	18	1.88	88	0.980
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	39	31	17	3	1.93	88	0.968
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	13	16	33	27	2.29	89	1.047
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	25	27	23	14	2.47	89	1.088
Curriculum Specialists	74	12	1	1	2.83	89	1.025
Parent Association	45	20	20	3	2.91	89	1.041
SBDM Council as a Whole	12	16	29	32	3.77	90	0.451

<b>15. Technology Use Influence</b>	<i>No Influence</i>	<i>Minor Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Major Influence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
State Department of Education	25	31	22	10	1.54	90	0.673
Local School Board	26	23	25	16	1.55	88	0.710
School District Staff	15	27	28	20	2.19	88	0.981
Principal	0	4	14	73	2.23	90	0.912
Parents Serving on the SBDM Council	23	23	24	20	2.34	90	1.083
Parents Not Serving on the SBDM Council	49	34	6	1	2.46	90	1.103
Teachers Serving on the SBDM Council	6	16	33	35	2.58	89	0.975
Teachers Not Serving on the SBDM	13	29	29	18	2.59	90	1.016
Curriculum Specialists	23	29	32	6	3.08	90	0.915
Parent Association	50	29	8	1	3.11	89	0.959
SBDM Council as a Whole	8	12	31	38	3.76	91	0.524

<b>SBDM Effect</b>	<i>Negative Effect</i>		<i>No Effect</i>		<i>Positive Effect</i>		<i>N</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
Student academic achievement	4	4.5	10	11.4	74	84.1	88
School climate	5	5.7	10	11.4	73	83	88
Parental involvement	3	3.4	10	11.4	75	85.2	88
Faculty cohesion	6	7.1	24	28.2	55	64.7	85
Student discipline	6	7	20	23.3	60	69.8	86
Technology usage	2	2.3	17	19.5	68	78.2	87
Student participation in extra-curricular activities	3	3.5	25	29.1	58	67.4	86
Curriculum development	3	3.4	16	18.2	69	78.4	88
Community involvement with your school	4	4.6	14	16.1	69	79.3	87
Business involvement with your school	3	3.4	25	28.7	59	67.8	87
Attracting highly qualified teachers to teach in your school	4	4.6	33	37.9	50	57.5	87

<b>Independent Influence</b>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Some of the Time</i>	<i>Most of the Time</i>	<i>All of the Time</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Curriculum development	23	26	21	8	2.16	88	0.921
Faculty instructional time	10	24	45	10	2.62	89	0.833
Faculty non-instructional time	10	24	40	15	2.67	89	0.889
Assigning students to classes and programs	10	19	33	27	2.87	89	0.979
Determining the beginning and end times for the school day	45	15	11	18	2.02	89	1.206
Instructional practices used by teachers in their classrooms	9	24	37	19	2.74	89	0.911
Hiring new teachers	44	11	25	9	1.99	89	1.092
Hiring new staff members	39	15	24	11	2.08	89	1.100
Removal of teachers from your school	22	6	13	47	2.97	88	1.273
Removal of staff members from your school	22	6	14	46	2.95	88	1.268
Firing of teachers	27	3	17	41	2.82	88	1.309
Firing of staff members	25	4	15	44	2.89	88	1.299
Determining the use of school facilities	13	24	40	12	2.57	89	0.903
Student discipline	10	15	37	27	2.91	89	0.961
Athletics	18	21	35	15	2.53	89	1.001
Extracurricular activities	15	26	35	12	2.50	88	0.935

## ***Appendix D: Qualitative Interview Protocol***

### **What do SBDMs do and how do they shape policy?**

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#### **PRINCIPAL**

- ◆ How many total years have you been employed in education?
- ◆ How many years did you serve as a classroom teacher?
- ◆ How many years have you served as a principal?
  - How many years have you served as a principal at this school?
  - *(if principal before 1990)* How has governing schools changed before and after 1990?
- ◆ What is your educational background?

#### **PARENT**

- ◆ How many children do you have enrolled at this school currently?
- ◆ How many total years have you served on any SBDM?
  - How many years have you served on this site council?
  - On which, if any, other SBDMs have you served?
- ◆ What is your primary occupation?
- ◆ What is your educational background?

#### **TEACHER**

- ◆ How many total years have you been employed in education?
- ◆ How many years have you served as a classroom teacher?
  - How many years have you served as a teacher at this school?
  - *At which, if any, other schools have you served in JCPS? (probe if after 1990)*
- ◆ How many total years have you served on any SBDM?
  - How many years have you served on this site council?
  - On which, if any, other SBDMs have you served?
- ◆ What is your educational background?

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- ◆ What types of training have you received to facilitate your position on the SBDM?
  - ◆ **(1)** How would you describe your role in determining the curriculum for the school?
    - Give examples
    - How do you evaluate whether or not the curriculum is aligned to the KY standards?
    - Who is in charge and shapes policy in this area? (state, district, SBDM, principal, etc.)
  - ◆ How do you determine the student academic needs when developing the curriculum?
  - ◆ **(9)** How does the council align the curriculum with the KY state standards?
    - Give examples

- How do you evaluate whether or not the curriculum is aligned to the KY standards?
- What measures do you employ to determine the standards' effect on students?
- Who is in charge and shapes policy in this area? (state, district, SBDM, principal, etc.)
- ◆ How do you determine the technological needs of the school?
- ◆ (2) What is your role in assigning instructional and non-instructional staff time?
  - Give examples
  - Who is in charge and shapes policy in this area? (state, district, SBDM, principal, etc.)
- ◆ (3) What role do you play in assigning students to classes and programs within the school?
  - Give examples
  - Who is in charge and shapes policy in this area? (state, district, SBDM, principal, etc.)
- ◆ (4) Thinking about the school's schedule, for what aspects of the schedule development are you responsible? (examples)
  - How do you determine beginning and end times for the school day?
  - How much of the scheduling process is based on decisions made in the central office?
  - Does your SBDM have any input in the district development of the school calendar?
  - What measures do you employ to determine the standards' effect on students?
  - Who is in charge and shapes policy in this area? (state, district, SBDM, principal, etc.)
- ◆ (5) How does your SBDM determine the use of school facilities?
  - Give examples
  - Can community groups use school space?
  - Can members of the community (general public) use the space?
  - What sorts of school activities are permitted to use the facilities?
  - How is scheduling of school facility space determined?
  - Who is in charge and shapes policy in this area? (state, district, SBDM, principal, etc.)
- ◆ (6) How would you describe your role in determining which instructional practices teachers use in their classrooms?
  - Give examples
  - Do you believe this is/would be an appropriate role for SBDM council members? Why or why not?
  - Who is in charge and shapes policy in this area? (state, district, SBDM, principal, etc.)
- ◆ (7) How does your SBDM work to develop the school discipline plan?
  - How would you describe your role in this area?
  - Give examples
  - Are there any non-council members involved in creating the discipline plan (other teachers, students, faculty members, parents etc.)?
  - Do you employ any professional or volunteer advisory groups to assist with developing the discipline plan or with any other work you do as an SBDM member?
  - Who is in charge and shapes policy in this area? (state, district, SBDM, principal, etc.)
- ◆ (8) Who is responsible for deciding which extracurricular activities and athletics are offered to students?



- Give examples
- How often are the offerings reexamined to determine adequacy?
- How often are the policies pertaining to extracurricular activities and athletics reviewed?
- How is student eligibility for extracurricular activities or athletics determined? (*probe for details pertaining to district guidelines*)
- Who is in charge and shapes policy in this area? (state, district, SBDM, principal, etc.)
- ◆ (10) What role do you play in hiring new employees?
  - Give examples
  - How are new teachers and support staff hired?
  - How are principals hired? (*probe for details concerning principal hiring*)
  - Does your SBDM review all applications, or do you utilize a pool of applicants that has been recommended by the superintendent?
  - Who is in charge and shapes policy in this area? (state, district, SBDM, principal, etc.)
- ◆ What role do you play in removing employees?
  - Does the SBDM have the power to remove teachers or principals?
  - To what extent do the decisions of the SBDM influence continued employment?
- ◆ On average, how many hours per week do you spend on work pertaining to your SBDM?
  - (PARENT ONLY) On average, how many hours per week do you spend in this school?
- ◆ Do you feel that SBDMs across JCPS are consistent in the scope and execution of their duties? (*probe*)
- ◆ Are some SBDMs perceived as being more powerful within the district? (*probe*)
- ◆ Thinking about the effectiveness of an average SBDM, do you feel that your SBDM is better than the average SBDM, equal to the average SBDM, or below the average SBDM? (*DO NOT QUALIFY*)
- ◆ Would you rate your SBDM as being very effective, moderately effective, mildly effective, or ineffective?
- ◆ What effect does your SBDM have on the academic achievement of this school?
- ◆ When considering your SBDM, do you feel that all members of this school's SBDM are equally qualified to make decisions about the school?
  - What shapes the dynamic of this decision-making process?
  - What matters?
  - Who is in charge?
  - Do you think the SBDM would be more effective if it included individuals with more qualifications?
- ◆ What conflicts have you experienced with other members of the SBDM?
  - What types of conflicts have arisen? (any categorical issues)
  - How were these conflicts resolved? (give examples)

- Do you ever unite with likeminded members of your SBDM to ensure that your ideas or suggestions are adopted?
- ◆ Who do you feel wields the most power on your SBDM?
  - Why does this person wield more power than others do?
  - How do you feel that power should be distributed in an SBDM (as it is now or in some other manner)? (*probe about SBDM composition divisions, size, etc.*)
- ◆ What, if anything, would you like to see changed in the current SBDM structure?

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