ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES AND
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

In
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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May 11, 2005
Blacksburg, Virginia

Key Words: Organization, Student Performance, Achievement, Leadership Behavior, Decision Making, Complexity

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The purpose of this study was to determine the odds of school organization features predicting schools meeting district or state performance goals. The school organization features were organizational complexity, shared decision making, and leadership behavior. The dependent variable was school performance, operationally defined as a principal’s *yes* response or *no* response to the question, “did your school meet district or state performance goals.” The independent variables representing organizational complexity were school size, diversity of role, span of control. The independent variables representing shared decision making were curriculum influence, policy influence, and professional development influence. The leadership behavior feature was a composite variable. The percent of school lunch was the covariate, as determined by the percentage of students receiving free lunch and reduced price lunch.

The sample for this study was taken from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) Public-Use Data (NCES: 2004-372) collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The sample consisted of 5,312 public schools and 5,312 public school principals. Data from the SASS Public School Questionnaire and the SASS Public School Principal Questionnaire were used for the data analysis.

The methods of data analysis consisted of the identification of indicator variables from SASS, the development of scales, and the fitting of a parsimonious logistic regression model. A principal components analysis was used to extract patterns of association among the indicator variables, shared decision making and leadership behavior.

The logistic regression analysis revealed that the best model for predicting the odds of whether schools would meet district or state performance goals consisted of the variables curriculum influence, policy influence, professional development influence, size, diversity of role, span of control, and the covariate, percent of free lunch. The significant variables were curriculum influence, policy influence, professional development influence, and span of control. The odds of school organization features predicting whether schools would meet performance goals was estimated to be .7243, which was less than one or less than chance. There were several limitations of this study that need to be considered when interpreting the results.
Four years ago, my life’s journey carried me down the path towards a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.

“I gained it so —
By climbing slow —
By catching at the Twigs that grow
Between the Bliss and Me
It hung so high .....”
Emily Dickinson (1955)

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the individuals who provided support and assistance as I studied to earn a doctoral degree. My advisor and chair, Dr. Lisa Driscoll: Her research knowledge, guidance, and patience throughout the process were essential to my completion of this dissertation. The other members of my committee: Dr. Jean Crockett, Dr. David Parks, and Dr. Richard Salmon; I am grateful to each of them for their support, encouragement, and recommendations throughout the dissertation process.

I extend thanks to the members of the Blacksburg Campus Leadership and Policy Studies Cohort for their confidence and support.

Finally, special thanks are extended to my husband for always being available. He offered words of encouragement, provided listening ears, cheered me on, and kept me focused on the task.
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