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**THE EMERGENCE OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL
IN
INDEPENDENT EDUCATION**

**by
Lawrence S. Sykoff**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education**

**University of San Diego
1988**

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

The Emergence of the Middle School in Independent Education

SYKOFF, Lawrence S., Ed.D. University of San Diego, 1988
246 pp.
Director: Edward Kujawa, Jr., Ph.D.

Independent schools across the nation have adopted the middle school concept. The critical element in the evolution of the middle school in independent education is that the unique and marked changes in the overall intellectual and psycho-social development of adolescents have been systematically identified and integrated into a multi-divisional (K-12) structure.

The literature and statistical information documenting the emergence of the middle school in independent education has been minimal. While contemporary research on public middle schools is extensive, very little data collection or theoretical models have been accumulated about the middle school movement in the private sector.

The present study sought to document and analyze the process by which independent school administrators have not only realigned their curricula, but reorganized their educational programs in order to meet the inclusive needs of students during pre and early adolescence. This research utilized the survey method to elicit information from independent middle school educators about the nature of their programs. A questionnaire, incorporating both open-ended and

forced-choice questions, was designed to identify the factors that shaped trends and practices in middle level education. Five research objectives were developed to gather information about organizational change and grade level patterns, administrative reasons for adopting the middle school concept, successes of the middle school, achievements associated with middle schools, and the characteristics of effective middle schools.

This research indicated that the independent middle school has emerged as a separate and distinct entity from its divisional partners in the lower and upper school. A model for shared divisional alliances among the lower, middle and upper school divisions was identified as essential in the promotion of successful grade level matriculation. Independent school educators have created a climate and culture that integrate the multidimensional aspects of adolescent maturation into the learning process. That is, the K-12 structure utilizes the middle school as part of an overall program that acknowledges and organizes sequential periods of transition. In this context the middle school maintains, reinforces, and facilitates the development of the child into adolescence. The study concludes with a set of implications and recommendations for additional research.

DEDICATION

**To My Wife
Ashley Elisabeth**

**To My Parents
Mollie and Irving**

From Each of Them I Have Learned

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A research project of this size usually gets done with the help of many people. If it weren't for the support of some very special friends and colleagues, this dissertation would still be an idea instead of a reality. I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the members of my doctoral committee. Individually and collectively they provided me with encouragement and inspiration to seek new levels of understanding and challenged me to expand my own sense of accomplishment. My appreciation is extended to Dr. Ed Kujawa for his patience and great sense of calm. His advice was always beneficial and timely. It has been a pleasure to work with him and learn the details of thoughtful research.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Introduction

The first middle school opened in Bay City, Michigan, in 1950. Described as the most remarkable phenomena in the history of education (Gatewood & Dils, 1975), the expansion of the middle school in the years subsequent to 1950 highlighted one of the most dramatic educational reform movements centered around the teaching of pre and early adolescent learners.

Between the years 1950 and 1967, the number of middle schools grew to a little over one thousand. However, the most substantial growth was the ten year period 1967 to 1977 as the number grew from 1,101 (Alexander, 1968) to 4,060 (Brooks, 1978a). The establishment of the National Middle School Association with chapter and league affiliates at the state and local level along with the enormous growth of the middle school institutes, seminars, publications and conferences attested to the widespread interest in the movement toward middle schools.

The middle school movement today continues to generate support and interest among teachers, students, parents, administrators and public officials. The growth between 1977 and 1980 was equally as significant as the number of middle schools climbed to approximately 5,000 (Alexander & George,

1981). The estimated number of middle schools in 1988 far exceeds 5,000, although there are no current statistics supporting this estimate. According to George and Oldaker (1985), the middle school movement continues to be the most persuasive plan of educational reorganization in American education. The pre and early adolescent student presents a unique set of educational and social challenges to educators and administrators, and, therefore, it has become increasingly essential to recreate a climate and culture in the middle grades that integrates the physical, academic and social-emotional aspects of the student's growth and development. The characteristic of greatest importance in the evolution of the middle school is that it not only recognizes the marked changes in the student's overall intellectual and psycho-social development, but, in fact, it recognizes and is sensitive to the rapid and ever-changing period of maturation for learners in transition from childhood to adolescence (Alexander, 1978).

The Middle School Today

While some theorists and practitioners saw the middle school movement as an attempt to improve the pedagogy used in the junior high school, others (Alexander, 1978; Johnston, 1985; Lounsbury & Vars, 1971; Moss, 1971; Overly, 1972) declared that the middle school, if developed with planned strategies and creative ideas, had the potential of providing middle school students with an opportunity to develop their

full range of abilities in an environment that is positive, rewarding and mutually supportive. Overly (1972) referred to this type of education as humanizing, suggesting that our school systems have an obligation to adolescent youth to make the most tumultuous times of their lives positive and successful. Also, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, school administrators sensed the need to align curricular programs and pedagogy with rapidly changing societal needs. Schools, in general, must be responsive to cultural change in order to remain effective and relevant to the students they serve. Eichhorn (1966) explained the emergence of the middle school as a direct result of schools changing their sociological and cultural agendas to accommodate the changing needs of students. According to Eichhorn:

Due to cultural factors, physical maturation is occurring in individuals at an earlier chronological age than formerly; this trend is accompanied by similar trends in societal interests. It is characteristic of American education to develop organizational patterns commensurate with the nature of its students; the current status of human growth and development suggests there is a definite need for designing a middle school to be based on the compatible physical and social traits of the students. (p. 1)

Moreover, Eichhorn explains that the factors that lead to changes in educational patterns for pre and early adolescents

in the early 1960s are similar to those that led American educators to re-evaluate educational programs at the turn of the century. American education was influenced significantly at the beginning of the twentieth century as a result of the research by G. Stanley Hall. Much of Hall's research suggested that education should be based on psychology and, in that context, adolescence should be given serious consideration in the structure of those school programs serving adolescents.

By the late 1970s and the early 1980s, many middle school conversions were the result of school districts seeking more effective ways of improving student achievement and behavior by constructing goals aimed at the developmental needs of youngsters. Valentine (1981) coordinated a study for the National Association of Secondary School Principals. He polled 1,413 middle school principals in order to find out the reasons why so many school districts were changing from a junior high school to a middle school design. He was also interested in knowing if middle school conversions were the result of school districts really looking for a better way to educate students in transition from the elementary school to the high school. In the study, 61% of the respondents indicated that the number one reason for the shift to a middle school program was to provide a program suited to the pre and early adolescent learner.

Earlier studies by the National Association of Secondary

School Principals (Alexander, 1968a & Brooks, 1978a) reported results similar to those found by Valentine. However, Alexander, Brooks and Valentine also found the transition to the middle school concept was, according to some principals, the result of five additional factors: (a) to provide a better transition from elementary to high school, (b) to adjust to enrollment trends, (c) to employ new curricular innovations, (d) to utilize new school facilities, and (e) to move ninth graders into high school programs. Howard Johnston (1985), working in cooperation with the NASSP Council on Middle Level Education, guided a survey similar to the one done by Valentine in 1980. Johnston surveyed 218 respondents that represented 31 states at three major conferences aimed at middle school issues. Johnston's research essentially replicated that done by Valentine. He found that the major reason for the shift to a middle school design was to develop a program that was specifically geared to the pre and early adolescent. Similarly, Johnston found ancillary reasons for middle school adoptions which, for the most part, parallel those found by Valentine.

In 1985, the National Association of Secondary School Principals issued a report about the future of middle level education. An Agenda for Excellence at the Middle Level charts the direction of the middle school movement by expanding on twelve important issues. The authors of this national report recommend fundamental changes for the schools

organized around the teaching of emerging adolescents. The authors remind teachers and administrators that the middle school has a very special place in American education. Moreover, these schools have a special mission that requires a disciplined and systematic approach to the education of young teenagers. This report has been embraced by both public and private institutions as a formidable agenda for restructuring education at the middle level.

The Middle School and Independent Education

While there has been growing interest in the middle school in the public sector for over 25 years, only during the last five years have independent schools across the nation been adopting the middle school concept into their school programs. Recent statistics from the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) show that there are approximately 400 private middle schools in existence today. The number of conversions in K-12 programs is steadily increasing to include a middle school consisting of grades 5-8, 6-8, or 7-8. Thus, the new structure of many K-12 private schools consists of three divisions (lower, middle and upper) instead of the traditional two tier structure (lower K-6 and 7-12 upper schools). While NAIS does not have any comparative data to show the number of middle school conversions that have occurred over the years prior to 1985, they do indicate that independent school administrators are increasingly supporting the middle school.

The California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) has reported the emergence of 25 middle schools in the last five years among its 110 member schools. Many more are scheduled for the next few years. In fact, CAIS and other state affiliate organizations of NAIS have initiated a middle school movement in their respective states. To better understand the specific reasons why independent schools are adopting the middle school concept and to become more familiar with the characteristics of such school programs, this researcher surveyed a representative sample of independent middle schools across the nation.

The Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to collect data that will set the foundation for a better understanding of the middle school in independent education. According to John Esty, the president of the National Association of Independent Schools, very little research about the emergence of the independent middle school has been done (Appendix A). Gene Krausse, the head statistician at NAIS, indicated that little data has been accumulated by NAIS charting the history of middle schools. In fact, NAIS does not have a complete list of all its middle schools (Appendix B). In September, 1986, Esty indicated that NAIS was very interested in knowing more about the middle school movement in the private sector (Appendix C). He said that the increased interest in the middle school has lead NAIS officials to restructure its

Elementary Academic Services Committee to include middle school administrators and, as such, changed its name to the Elementary and Middle School Academic Services Committee. Moreover, NAIS officials have given more emphasis to the middle school concept by having a portion of their annual conference devoted to middle level education as well as focusing several of their summer workshops for teachers and administrators on this issue. Esty also mentioned that Harry Finks, the Head of the Middle School at the Lakeside School in Seattle, WA, is writing a handbook about middle level education, and data from this survey could be included in this new publication (Appendix C).

Thus, this research represents an investigation into an aspect of middle school growth and development that has not been studied in any comprehensive manner in the past. Amid the growing number of middle schools in the private sector, this study is not only timely, but will represent the first major study of independent middle schools.

Statement of The Research Objectives

The first objective of this study is to trace the evolution of independent middle schools so that information can be provided about organizational changes in K-12 schools. This information will attempt to explain how these schools changed their grade level structures to include a middle school division.

The second objective of this research is to determine the reasons independent school administrators give for implementing the middle school concept in their K-12 structures. The number of independent middle schools across the nation has grown rapidly over the last ten years, and little data have been accumulated documenting the reasons why independent school administrators have subscribed to this reform movement.

The third objective of this research is to assess how successful independent middle schools have been since their inception. To assess successfulness, middle school administrators were asked to rate the degree of success they have had in addressing their original reasons for adopting a middle school program. Analysis of this data addresses the question of how closely aligned the initial reasons for having started a middle school are with their actual outcome.

The fourth purpose of this research is to better understand the achievements middle school administrators attribute to the middle school program that have directly influenced the teaching of pre and early adolescents. Middle school administrators were asked to list the three most significant achievements of the middle school since its inception.

The fifth objective of this research is to examine the similarities and differences in philosophy and administration of independent middle school programs. The survey responses

from middle school administrators are compared to the characteristics of effective middle schools as described by Merenbloom (1982).

The Need for the Study

The middle school movement has been widely supported by our nation's public and private schools. In the public sector, the literature clearly shows the progress of this movement with data that illustrate the reasons for the change from the junior high to the middle school, the derived benefits, and comparative analyses. The public sector literature also contains survey information about the most common grade configurations that comprise the middle school. Conversely, the literature and statistical information about the emergence of the middle school in independent education is minimal. NAIS has little or no data documenting the middle school movement.

This study provides a basis for understanding the emergence of the middle school in the private sector as well as for comparing the similarities and differences of the independent middle school reforms with those in the public school. In support of the extensive research about the specialized programs needed to teach pre and early adolescent learners effectively, this study provides additional data that describe how independent school educators have realigned their own priorities in order to meet the developmental needs of students during adolescence. The research may be the

first to point out how the transitional years of schools are common areas of study in both public and independent schools. The research establishes the groundwork for further comparative research between public and independent schools.

Numerous issues and concerns have developed over recent years in the minds of middle school leaders in public and independent schools. The most appropriate educational system for teaching pre and early adolescents is the topic of much discussion among school leaders since the middle school movement has emerged as an alternative to previous methods and instructional strategies. In the public sector the middle school represents a reform movement which reacts to the junior high school. In independent education, there is no history of a junior high school program and very little evidence of any transitional program for middle school aged youngsters prior to the early 1970s.

In order for independent school leaders to assess current changes and plan educational agendas for middle level schools of the future, a base of knowledge about the middle school in independent education is essential. If independent middle schools are significantly different from prior institutional practices and arrangements, then leaders must adjust their future priorities to include a fairly sophisticated level of understanding about middle level educational programs and organizational structures.

Definition of Terms

For almost three decades now, the educational phenomenon known as the "middle school" has been emerging in both public and private school organizations. The term middle school was first coined by William Alexander in the mid 1960s. Since that time many terms and definitions have also emerged to describe that period of growth that spans the period from 10 to 14 years of age. In the late 1970s, the middle school concept was widely supported by both public and private school administrators and teachers. In the process, many terms were used interchangeably to describe similar concepts in public and private education. Given the variety of definitions possible for issues related to the education of students in transition from the elementary to the high school, the following definitions are offered to clarify and facilitate the terminology used in this study.

Preadolescent. This term is synonymous with the word transescence, a term developed by Eichhorn (1966). Eichhorn defines transescence in the following way:

The stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence. Since puberty does not occur for all precisely at the same chronological age in human development, the transescence designation is based on the many physical, social, emotional, and intellectual changes in body chemistry that appear prior to the

puberty cycle to the time in which the body gains practical degree of stabilization over these complex pubescent changes. (p. 3)

Middle School. A school division (or unit) which follows the elementary years of education and precedes the high school program. The middle school can include students from grades five through eight in a graded school organization.

Elementary School or Lower School. The term elementary school is generally used in public education and lower school is more frequently used in private schools. Both terms for the purpose of this study mean an educational division (or unit) that begins in pre-school or kindergarten and concludes at the beginning of middle school, which can be at either grade five or grade six.

High School or Upper School. High school and upper school for the purposes of this study are synonymous. Both refer to the division (or unit) that commences at the end of middle school and encompasses grades nine through twelve. The term upper school is frequently associated with private high schools.

Transition. The period of time in a student's life between childhood and adolescence. This period of time is often characterized by marked changes in physical, psychological, emotional and social development. Adaptation to environments during this time occur differently for each student. Other terms used synonymously in this study for

transition are preadolescence and early adolescence.

Summary

As the middle school movement continues to flourish in independent education, a body of literature is needed to help educators better understand the new characteristics of middle level education in private schools. This research profiles the evolution of independent middle schools as well as provides information describing some of the practices currently being used to teach pre and early adolescents in private schools. Since a very limited amount of data is presented in the literature describing the characteristics of the middle school in independent education, the data and analysis presented in this study should be of significance to educators who have an interest in the changing nature of middle level education.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Junior High School Movement

Between 1910 and 1915, the junior high school emerged in American education in response to problems with the 6-6 plan--six years of elementary school and six years of high school. Due to large amounts of attrition in the early high school years and an increasing number of morale problems among students at the high school level, the 6-6 plan proved to be a failure (Wiles and Bondi, 1986). Also, the evidence of a high dropout rate among high school students was abetted by laws that required school attendance only to the age of fourteen. Thus, the junior high school movement developed in an attempt to provide students with as much education and training as possible as a form of insurance against their premature departure from high school.

At the outset, the goals of the junior high school were to develop a broader curriculum modeled after the high school. In 1903, the burgeoning junior high concept received considerable support when the National Education Association and the National Council of Education recommended to educators that high school level courses be introduced at an earlier age. These national associations suggested that

secondary school subjects be taught, or at least introduced, at the seventh and eighth grade levels. Charles Eliot, a leading educator at the turn of the century and President of Harvard University, recommended as early as 1888 that courses, traditionally offered at the secondary level, be introduced as early as eighth grade. Eliot's proposal touched off a series of events that led American educators to revise the 6-6 plan, or in some school districts the 8-4 plan, to encompass a 6-3-3 organizational plan that included a junior high school division. The junior high school was patterned after the high school and was conceived with a departmentalized structure in mind. (Department of Interior, Bureau of Statistics, 1918).

Davis (1924) was one of the first to report that the design of the new junior high school should take into account the emotional and psychological problems children experience as they enter puberty. He indicated that children were entering puberty two years earlier than had been previously believed, thus suggesting that students in the age bracket between twelve and fifteen, usually in grades seven through nine, contained the largest group of students in transition from childhood to early adolescence.

From the very late 1800s to the early 1900s, several national committees and associations studied the 6-3-3 plan. Many of the early reports found that the seventh and eighth grades were merely repeating the curriculum of the elementary

grades. Following the proposal of Harvard President Eliot, who advocated the concept of "economy of time" whereby secondary level courses would be introduced considerably earlier in order to better prepare students for college, much interest was expressed in support of the downward extension of secondary level courses into grades seven, eight and nine. In short, the junior high school emerged as a preparatory program for high school.

In 1918, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education published a report titled, Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education. This report contained strong recommendations for the 6-3-3 plan and the formation of the junior high school.

We, therefore, recommend a reorganization of the school system, whereby the first six years shall be devoted to elementary education designed to meet the needs of pupils approximately 6 - 12 years of age, and the second six years to secondary education designed to meet the needs of pupils approximately 12 - 18 years of age. The six years to be devoted to secondary education may well be divided into two periods which may be designated as the junior and senior periods. (pp. 12-13)

Research studies during the years 1907 through 1911 supported complete reorganization of the junior high school making it a unique and separate entity (Ayres, 1909; Strayer, 1911; Thorndike, 1907). The recommendations

contained in these studies were supported by statistics that continued to show an overwhelming dropout rate among high school students and a large number of student grade repeaters in grades seven through twelve. The junior high plan was advocated by its proponents because it had the promise of offering a revised and enriched program that could keep students in school longer and ensure their regular progress through the grade levels. Moreover, junior high proponents believed the new division had the potential of "bridging the gap" between the elementary school curriculum and the curriculum used in the high school. Because of the sudden transition in educational philosophy and curriculum objectives between elementary and high school, many educators believed this gap was a fundamental reason for the high incidence of student dropouts, especially at grade nine.

In 1904, G. Stanley Hall drew a great deal of attention when he described the complexity of the physical, psychological, social and cultural changes adolescents underwent during adolescence. Hall characterized the adolescent period as a time of dynamic change that necessitated appropriate educational programs with emphasis on personal and emotional development. He recommended gradual instead of sudden transition between elementary and high school. Hall's emphasis on adolescent psychology further supported the need to have a separate and distinct school division between elementary and high school. In

addition to Hall's research and recommendation, further developments in educational psychology supported the theory that a tremendous amount of psychological and social variability existed among pre and early adolescents. Previously held notions about the uniformity of children were challenged by psychologists who talked about individual differences in and among young adolescent learners, especially in grades seven through nine. The junior high concept in a 6-3-3 plan represented an ideal and acceptable reorganization plan that would address the needs of early adolescents. This concept became the theme song of the junior high movement and prevailed long after other concepts and objectives vanished from the literature (Lounsbury and Vars, 1978).

During the years 1910 to 1969, the number of junior high schools across the United States grew substantially. While the very first junior high school opened in Richmond, Indiana in 1895, significant movement did not begin until 1910 when school districts in California and Ohio began to organize around the 6-3-3 plan. According to research conducted by Howard and Stoumbis (1970), there were approximately 385 junior high schools across the United States in 1920, 2,400 in 1940, 5,000 in 1960 and an estimated 6,000 in 1969.

While junior high schools were increasing in number, the research describing their purpose and value in American education was extensive and varied. Some proponents of the

junior high exalted the 6-3-3 plan as a major educational reform movement for students in transition between elementary and high school; others viewed the junior high movement as a practical change to deal with attrition and overcrowding in high schools. In fact, skeptics of the junior high believed the movement was created before definitions, goals and objectives for the education of pre and early adolescents could be fully developed (Moss, 1969).

Early studies about the purpose of the junior high school indicated that researchers had not established a consensus about the role of this new movement. Inglis (1918) saw the major functions of the junior high as providing better coordination and articulation between elementary and secondary schools and initiating vocational education courses preparing students for the working world. Davis (1924) saw the junior high as a separate entity, not a sub-secondary school, but rather a school division designed to inspire students and address their academic and social well-being. Lentz (1956) asserted that the original purpose of the junior high school was to support the economy of time theory. Lentz believed that the aims of the junior high were intended to give seventh, eighth and ninth graders an opportunity to take more advanced courses at an earlier age in case they were forced to leave school during the early high school years to join the work force. The variety of purposes ascribed to the junior high school led Lentz to conclude that in many cases

the junior high was established, not because of any strong and proved educational value, but as an expedient, usually to solve a housing problem, and in many cases because it was the thing to do in educational circles. (p. 523)

Alexander and Kealy (1969) agreed with Lentz on the widespread disagreement concerning the aims of the junior high school movement. They stated:

Unfortunately, the initial movement toward the junior high school was, in actuality, an attempt to alleviate the crowded conditions in existing school organizations caused by the post World War I population boom. The original goals of the junior high school were overlooked in the urgency of alleviating administrative problems (p. 152)

Amid varied opinions about the purpose of the junior high division, the 6-3-3 plan took root in the early 1900s and became the organizational structure associated with most school systems throughout the United States. As time moved on, the changes in laws in some states required students to complete schooling through the age of sixteen. These mandatory education laws kept students in school longer, thus giving them more time to take college preparatory courses during the high school years. In addition to mandatory education, the introduction of child labor laws meant that students would stay in school for longer periods of time before joining the labor force. Therefore, the 6-3-3 became

a very desirable arrangement of grades since the high school was then given more integrity as a division that could offer vocational training and emphasize college preparation and advanced study. As a result of the high school having an expanded role and function, the junior high acquired more latitude to initiate a new focus in its objectives that included more basic and general education courses, more emphasis on guidance and counseling, and exploratory courses that gave students an opportunity to develop their full range of interests (Howard and Stoumbis, 1970).

Gruhn and Douglass (1956) defined the functions of the junior high school and received broad-based support from many educators and researchers examining this subject. They defined the junior high school as having six definitive functions: "integration of a student's previous experiences with education, exploration of the student's aptitudes and special talents, guidance of a student's personal and social development, differentiation of opportunities for learning, socialization for participation in society, and articulation between elementary and high school." (p. 31)

As the research showed in later years, Gruhn and Douglass developed a workable blueprint for the functions of the junior high school movement that, in fact, was only refined over time but never altered significantly. As will be discussed later in this chapter, much of the research on the emergence of middle schools draws heavily on the work of

Gruhn and Douglass, who developed many parallels between the widely accepted aims of the junior high school and middle school movements, each separated by almost fifty years.

Researchers in the 1960s reported that teachers and administrators strongly supported the junior high school movement (Spagnoli, 1967; Stoffler, 1967; Stuckwisch, 1966; Zdanowicz, 1965). However, early research about the junior high school showed considerable divergence between instructional practices and educational theory. The earliest study describing the variety of programs instituted in junior high schools across the United States was done in 1918 by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. As part of this study, the Association researched the variety of strategies junior schools were using in order to identify some general curriculum patterns and educational practices. The 293 responses to the survey showed considerable differences among junior high schools with regard to grade organization, departmentalized teaching, requirements for secondary level courses, and the utilization of personnel in vocational guidance programs. Lounsbury and Marani (1964) reported that junior high school educators had considerable difficulty in their attempt to provide an education compatible with the interests of the students. Lounsbury and Marani conducted shadow studies in 26 junior high schools across the United States. Lounsbury and Marani concluded from these studies that the junior high program was not

meeting the needs and interests of eighth graders. The overall program and attitudes of the teachers were not distinctive enough to address the special interests of young adolescents.

According to Coffland (1975) and Moss (1971), the junior high school had difficulty in establishing itself as a major alternative to the original 6-6 and 8-4 plans. Coffland and Moss believed:

1. The junior high school never really achieved its original goals, that is, to provide a program with a philosophy geared toward the needs of the adolescent learner.

2. The junior high school evolved into mini-high school with its emphasis on subject matter skills and neglected to consider the psychology of adolescence.

3. The ninth grade in the junior high school continued to emphasize college preparation even though these students shared the same facilities and participated in the same programs with seventh and eighth graders.

4. The academic structure of the junior high school was departmentalized in a manner similar to the high school, thus forfeiting closer teacher-student attention and guidance.

Despite problems with the junior high school concept, the number of junior high schools grew significantly with major growth spurts in the decades following the two world wars. The following table summarizes the growth of the separate

junior high school from 1910 through 1969 (Howard and Stoumbis, 1970):

Table 1

Growth of Junior High Schools 1910 - 1969

Years	Number of Schools
1910	0
1920	385
1930	1,850
1940	2,400
1950	3,225
1960	5,000
1969	8,000 ^a

^a includes approximately 2000 middle schools.

Statistics reported by the United States Office of Education show that in 1964, 72% of the public secondary schools in the country were reorganized to include a separate junior high school division.

Disenchantment with the Junior High School

Amid the growth in the number of junior high schools, there was still growing dissatisfaction with it. Many educators saw the junior high as a replication of the senior high school in program and practice. According to Lounsbury and Vars (1978):

Unable to free itself from its big brother, the junior high school readily instituted high school practices such as interscholastic sports, sophisticated social activities, and other highly competitive activities. It tended also to assume a senior high school posture in teaching procedures and curriculum. (p. 56)

Conant (1960c), in a report about junior high school and high school reorganization, indicated that there were a variety of school organizational arrangements: 6-3-3; 5-3-4; 6-2-4; and even 7-1-4. Conant suggested that junior high school divisions were replete with different grade level patterns and, as such, undermined the movement in terms of having a definitive structure. Conant's 1960 assessment also found that some junior high schools were outstanding and effective while others were marginal or at best, satisfactory. Johnson (1964) represented the concern of educators when he concluded that the junior high school was not distinctive enough from the high school with regard to curriculum and scheduling procedures.

Another problem facing junior high schools had to do with the placement of the ninth grade. Because the vast majority of colleges required a four year college preparatory curriculum, the ninth grade of a three year junior high school remained the first year of the college entrance program. Therefore, many junior high schools found it difficult to develop a continuous three year course of study

for the students they served. As a result, the ninth grade in most junior high schools remained oriented to a high school program and not to the junior high. In fact, the ninth grade still remained an area of considerable discussion even after the introduction of the middle school in the 1960s.

Even though the junior high school had its share of critics, it served a much needed transitional function between elementary and high school. Contradictory perspectives abounded: Hull (1965) stated, "the junior high school, in my opinion, may be America's greatest blunder" (p. 213); whereas Alexander and George (1981) asserted, "the junior high school made a very positive contribution toward relieving the rather sterile elementary curriculum for older students and toward keeping more students interested in formal education." (p. 10)

The enormous debate about the perceived and real success of the junior high school movement in American education provided fertile soil for a new plan to be considered for the teaching of students at the middle level. The middle school movement, commencing in the 1960s, captured public attention very rapidly and another educational reform movement was well under way.

The Middle School Movement

Just as the junior high school was originally designed to accommodate the earlier maturation of youngsters, the middle

school appeared on the scene with many of the same objectives. According to Alexander and Kealy (1969), the three common themes found in statements of rationale of numerous middle schools were:

1. To provide a program especially adapted to the wide range of individual differences and special needs of the in-between-ager.
2. To create a school ladder arrangement that promotes continuity of education from school entrance to exit.
3. To facilitate through a new organization, the introduction of needed innovations in curriculum and instruction.

Similarly, Gruhn and Douglass (1956) pointed out three basic aims underlying the emergence of the junior high school which clearly show the common elements that were part of both movements:

1. Better provision for the needs of young adolescents.
2. Better provision for exploration by the pupils of their interests and abilities.
3. Better articulation between elementary and secondary education.

Additional research about the special nature of the young adolescent led many school administrators to believe that the major emphasis of schooling during the transitional years should be on the psychological and social growth of the student. This is one area where the junior high school curriculum was reported to be weak.

Theorists in related fields of psychology and sociology (Compton, 1980; Eichhorn, 1966; Kagan, 1971; Lipsitz, 1977; Mead, 1975) suggested that early adolescents have been neglected in junior high schools and that their overall education suffered adverse effects.

Alexander (1968) and Vars (1967) suggested that middle school teachers and administrators must address the enormity of individual differences that exist among students during the middle years. They supported the importance of individualized and personal teaching as being germane to middle level education. Vars thought that highly individual growth patterns among early adolescents give the middle school a more diverse student body than any other school unit. Kagan (1971) stressed the need for guidance and personalized education in the middle years. He recommended that middle school teachers and administrators be well-versed in the psychology of adolescence via specialized teacher training programs and advanced graduate level courses. Kagan strongly urged middle school administrators to employ and train faculty who can understand and work with students who are developing sexual identities, interpersonal power, autonomy and self direction, and emancipation from adults as primary sources of support. These researchers saw the middle school as a concept of educational planning that required specific attention to the psycho-social needs of the "in

between" years with the same level of intensity as other school disciplines.

The junior high school movement can assume credit for establishing the view that there is a definite need for a transitional division between the elementary classroom and the high school's departmentalized system of instruction. However, the transitional unit, above all, must be formed with emphasis on the physical, mental, emotional and social needs of emerging young adults. Eichhorn (1966) wrote:

Due to cultural factors, physical maturation is occurring in individuals at an earlier chronological age than formerly; this trend is accompanied by similar trends in social interests. It is characteristic of American education to develop organizational patterns commensurate with the nature of its students; the current status of human growth and development suggests there is a definite need for designing a middle school to be based on the compatible physical and social traits of the students. (p. 1)

Eichhorn coined the term, transescence, which he uses to describe the stage of development prior to the onset of puberty and extending through the early stages of adolescence. Eichhorn concludes that earlier maturation trends in contemporary society necessitate a school program that utilizes a socio-psychological model. Eichhorn's model emphasizes that students are motivated by forces from within

(physical, emotional, intellectual) and forces from the outside (sociological, political, economical). These forces are inextricably intertwined and determine transescent behavior. The interactivity of the internal and external forces are important to understand when planning educational programs for young adolescents, according to Eichhorn. Ames, Ilg, and Gesell (1956), Strang (1957) and Tanner (1962) support Eichhorn's model by postulating similar theories about the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social aspects of development during the pre and early adolescent years. Each suggests that to evaluate effectiveness in transitional schools, one must examine whether the program recognizes as well as facilitates diverse growth patterns among students. To this end, Eichhorn said, "school programs should be founded on goals which will enable the emerging youth to better understand their growth changes in order to keep a proper perspective" (p. 23).

Alexander (1968) conducted a survey asking 110 middle school principals to identify the reasons behind the establishment of their schools. Approximately 60% of the respondents cited the elimination of overcrowding as their number one reason for shifting to middle schools. Approximately 45% said the middle school design was an attempt to tailor a program addressing the needs of youngsters in their pre and early adolescent years. However, in later surveys conducted by Brooks (1978a, 1978b) and

Valentine (1981), both researchers found that the number one reason a majority of their respondents (principals of middle schools) gave for changing to a middle school was to provide a program suited to meet the physical, social, intellectual and psychological needs of the adolescent. Between 1968 and 1977, survey research showed that the reasons for establishing middle schools had changed. It is clear that the movement away from the junior high school and toward the middle school during these years had gained wide support and that middle school principals had begun to accept the middle school philosophy. Additional surveys by Bobruff (1974) and Sinks (1975) reported results similar to those done by Brooks and Valentine.

The Growth of Middle Schools

The middle school provided educators with a chance to change the education of early adolescents. In the late 1950s, educators were denouncing the junior high school movement for not meeting its initial aims, and others were asking the question, "Is the junior high school the most effective organization structure in which to educate early adolescents during the coming decades?" According to Moss (1969):

A combination of factors, social change, more rapid physical maturation, the college-preparatory 9th grade, over emphasis on interscholastic sports and social activities led to considerable disenchantment with the

junior high school and a search for reform of grade organization. (p. 17)

Alexander and Williams (1965) suggested very definitively that the enormous emphasis on academic subject matter and insufficient emphasis on the personal and social development of students was a significant reason for the decline in effectiveness of the junior high school.

The first middle school opened in Bay City, Michigan, in 1950. The movement toward the middle school, which usually begins with grades five and six and does not extend past grade eight gained considerable momentum from the late 1960s to the mid 1970s. Cuff (1967) reported that 29 states were operating 499 middle schools in 446 school districts during the 1965-1966 school year. Between 1965 and 1971, the number of middle schools quadrupled. Alexander (1969) reported that a total of 1,101 middle schools were in operation in 37 states in the 1967-1968 school year. According to Kealy (1971), there were approximately 2,000 middle schools across the United States in 1971. During the next six years, the numbers doubled. Brooks (1978a) identified 4,060 middle schools across the nation in 1977.

In a report by Schockley, Holt and Meichtry (1985), the number of middle schools across the nation for the 1983 and 1984 years were as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Growth of Middle Schools 1983-1984

<u>Grade Levels</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>Growth 1983-84</u>
7-8-9	3,340	3,172	- 168
7-8	2,550	2,776	+ 226
6-7-8	3,144	3,802	+ 658
5-6-7-8	944	1,005	+ 61
Other	1,428	944	- 488
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Total	11,406	11,695	+ 289

While the number of middle schools across the nation grew substantially starting in 1967, opinions about the ideal grade organizational structure remained unresolved. Without question, the onset of puberty creates new challenges and introduces new problems for the student. As a result, schools organized around the teaching of pre and early adolescents must carefully consider the best combination of grades. Individual differences in growth and dramatic transformations in personality development during puberty make the decision of which grade organization to choose a most compelling one for middle school administrators.

According to some research, grade organization appeared to have little or no influence on a student's academic

achievement (Lounsbury & Vars, 1978). However, in recent years, the 6-7-8 grade structure has emerged as the most preferred arrangement.

Middle schools principals in 1980 appeared to be in favor of the 6-7-8 grade arrangement over the 7-8-9 plan which was preferred in 1966. Valentine (1981) surveyed 1,413 principals for the National Association of Secondary School Principals and compared the responses to a 1966 survey. He found that in 1966, 65% of the respondents preferred the 7-8-9 grade arrangement and only 18% favored the 6-7-8 organization plan. Only 13% of the respondents preferred the 7-8 organization plan. Conversely, in 1980 his survey reported a major shift in thinking: 54% preferred the 6-7-8 plan; 17% preferred the 7-8-9 plan, and 18% preferred the 7-8 organizational plan.

In the minds of most educators, the junior high school is composed of grades 7, 8 and 9 while the middle school consists of grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 or 6, 7, and 8. The inclusion of the fifth grade in the middle school grade organization has been widely debated in the literature. Alexander (1969), Brooks (1978a) and Kealy (1971) concluded that middle schools should have at least three grades but not more than five, and they should include grades six and seven.

Research about the growth of the brain (Cramer, 1981 and Toepfer, 1980) suggests that brain growth is a significant factor in the ultimate decision to consider middle school

grade organizations. Since growth spurts tend to occur between the ages 2-4, 6-8, 10-12 and 14-16, the brain during these stages may increase in size as much as five to ten percent. According to Toepfer, "a plateau stage occurs between each of the alternating periods of brain growth during which little, if any, new growth takes place"

(p. 223). Therefore, the plateau periods occur between the growth stages, 4-6, 8-10, and 12-14. Periods of brain growth and plateau, then, suggest that schools need to be sensitive to the problems of puberty. According to Cramer, the growth spurts correspond to grades one, two, five, six, nine, and ten. The plateau periods occur in grades three, four, seven, and eight. If the implications of brain growth are accurate, then the 5th, 6th, 9th and 10th grades would be best for the introduction of new information and the development of refined thinking skills. The 7th and 8th grades would seem to be an appropriate time to integrate previously learned skills.

Even with literature on brain growth, considerable disagreement still exists as to the best grade arrangement for the middle school. There seems to be no general agreement on whether the initial years of middle school should be grade 5 or 6, but there is unanimous opinion that the 9th grade should be part of the high school. Lounsbury & Vars (1978) point out that grade organization is not the major issue in the middle school reform movement. They argue

that good teachers make good schools and middle schools should, regardless of the grade arrangement, provide for the special needs of early adolescent learners. The reorganization of grades, according to Lounsbury & Vars, is more an issue for administrators of schools who must decide the matter based on logistics, budgets, and physical plant considerations. Lounsbury and Vars stated:

An intermediate unit is established not to bring together students who are alike, but to bring together student who are not alike. It is the diversity of early adolescents that calls for special programs and a separate institution. Their lack of similarity is what they have in common. (p. 25)

Some agreement for a three year middle school, typically grades 6, 7, and 8 exists and is substantiated by the study done by Brooks (1978a). A three year middle school is preferred over a two year middle school (typically grades 7 and 8) because the longer time period gives students and faculty greater continuity for the development of relationships and student programs. However, because some research suggests (Glissmeyer, 1968) that there is no significant difference between the academic achievement of upper elementary students in a self-contained classroom and upper elementary students in a modified departmentalized program in middle school, the question of whether fifth or sixth graders are better served in a three year middle school

or in the elementary school is still unanswered.

Later research suggests that while grade organization is not a critical factor in students' academic and social progress, the sixth grade is regarded as the most appropriate entry level grade for the middle school. A study by Gateman (1974) looked at whether fifth and sixth graders showed better academic achievement, higher self concepts, and more favorable attitudes toward school when they attended a middle school as opposed to an elementary school. The results of the study favored middle schools for grade six and elementary schools for grade five. Gateman supported the middle school composed of three grades (6-7-8) and encouraged elementary schools to include grade five. The inclusion of three grades for middle school with the sixth grade as the year of entry was confirmed in another behavioral study conducted by Creek (1970). However, Shovelin (1967) studied the effects of elementary and middle school programs on the sixth graders. He concluded that while there were no significant differences between the two different school programs on the students' social development, there was a tendency for the middle school environment to accelerate some preadolescent behaviors in sixth graders such as dating, independence and conformity. Shovelin noted that the influence of grades seven and eight on sixth graders tends to accelerate their social behavior at a time when they might not be ready to handle it. He concluded that sixth graders would be better prepared for

middle school activities if they started at the seventh grade level. Despite Shovelin's conclusions, most research supports the middle school starting at sixth grade.

Another question facing middle school advocates is the placement of the ninth grade--are ninth graders better served in the high school or in the middle school? In the early junior high school movement, the ninth grade was clumped together with grades seven and eight creating the traditional 7-8-9 structure. The placement of the ninth grade has been discussed by several researchers. Strickland (1967) showed that there is no significant difference in academic achievement when ninth graders are placed in a 7-8-9 junior high structure as opposed to a 9-12 high school organization. Gruhn (1967) surveyed junior high school principals and found that most of them supported the 7-8-9 plan because it was one in which a superior academic program could be developed.

In more recent years, Johnston (1982) conducted research studies for the NASSP Council on Middle Level Education and concluded that there is no agreement on what constitutes the most appropriate grade arrangement for the middle school. In fact, what is most interesting to note in the literature is that many of the major theorists of the junior high and middle school movement contend that both organizational plans can be substantiated and can work as long as emphasis is placed on meeting the individual and diverse needs of the adolescent. Lounsbury and Vars writing in 1978, stated:

Both organizational patterns [middle school 6-7-8 and junior high 7-8-9] are at the same time, quite defensible, yet inherently vulnerable. . . We believe that the focal point of any intermediate institution, no matter what its label or grade composition, is diversity. Arguments over the purported advantage of one organizational arrangement over another are not intellectually resolvable, and often draw attention away from important matters like curriculum or staffing.

(p. 29)

Similarly, Johnson (1963) summed up the issues surrounding grade patterns by saying:

Any pattern is satisfactory that gives identity to youths during early adolescence, includes at least three grades for stability, and brackets those grades in which significant numbers of pupils reach pubescence. (p. 50)

In the final analysis, one would have to agree with the conclusions reported in Johnston's 1982 research when he asserts that the central issue in the success of a separate intermediate unit is whether that unit is meeting the specific needs of children in transition. Johnston summarized his views in four recommendations: (1) A middle school should conform to the unique transitional nature of the young adolescent; (2) The program should include an appropriate type of physical competition and activity; (3) The philosophy should embrace the notion of "transition" and

serve as a bridge between the elementary and secondary school programs; (4) The teachers in the program should provide activities that encourage appropriate social-emotional development (pp. 1-4).

At the same time the middle school movement was gaining in popularity as an alternative to the junior high, several researchers (Alexander, 1968; Brooks, 1978; and Gross, 1972) were quickly pointing out the lack of consistency in some middle schools. They suggested that some middle schools showed no appreciable difference from junior high schools in terms of their curriculum and grouping of students. Gross pointed out that many middle schools lacked consistency in their stated philosophy, mission statements and actual practices. Supporters of the movement were worried that some middle school conversions were, perhaps, a change in name only in order to become associated with an innovative reform movement.

The lack of agreement on the appropriate grade arrangement for pre and early adolescents has been an issue for principals for a long time. Educators have not been able to agree on the best organization for the structuring of grade levels at various schools. However, the National Center for Education Statistics in 1984 indicated increasing support for the 6-3-4 plan (K-5, 6-8, 9-12) which was a move away from the early pattern of eight years of elementary and four years of secondary school and different from the junior

high plan of 6-3-3.

The National Education Association Committee on Secondary School Studies (1969) supported the seventh grade through ninth grade arrangement as being the most effective during the pre and early adolescent years. However, Alexander (1968) and Valentine (1981) favored the fifth or sixth through eighth grade arrangement. Conant (1960a) believed the grade arrangement made no difference as long as the program was of high quality.

The key issue in the debate about grade arrangement has to do with establishing a sequential school program that helps young adolescents integrate academic achievement with the profound physical, socio-emotional and psychological changes that are associated with puberty. While Alexander and Williams (1965) argued for the middle school with grade five or six through eighth grade as the best arrangement, Howard and Stoumbis (1970), Johnston (1982), Kohut (1980), Lipsitz (1977), Vars (1967), and Wilson (1969) all agreed that it was not the grade arrangement that mattered, but rather the quality of the educational experience during the adolescent years that was the most fundamental and decisive factor.

Eichhorn (1980) and Tanner (1962) supported the theory that children today are maturing faster, both physically and socially, than their counterparts fifty years ago. In recent years, it has become more effective for some schools to group

fifth and sixth grade students with seventh and eighth graders because the developmental status of students in those four grades are more closely aligned. And, since ninth graders appear to hold more in common with high school students in terms of maturity and academic programs, the ninth through twelfth grade system has become more appealing to secondary school educators.

Middle Schools Are Needed

Most research on junior high schools and middle schools shows little evidence that either arrangement is significantly better than the other (Johnston, 1980; Kohut, 1980, and Lipsitz, 1984). Gatewood and Dils (1975) suggested that the reason for this conclusion was that a fundamental gap existed in many middle schools between their main objectives and their actual educational practices. Some schools changed in name only and in actual practice neglected to institute a learner-oriented approach. Thus, many middle schools resembled their junior high counterparts in practice.

Some research findings comparing middle schools to junior high schools showed that the middle school programs and grade organization enhanced the students' attitudes, self-concept and academic achievement (Draud, 1977; Schoo, 1974). Other researchers found that no significant differences existed between middle and junior high school students in terms of their attitudes toward school and academic performance (Bruce, 1974; Soares, 1973; and Wood,

1973). However, it is important to note in the literature that the middle school proponents recognize that the age at which preadolescence begins and ends has changed significantly since the turn of the century. Eichhorn (1980), Mead (1965), Sommer (1978) and Thornburg (1980) have pointed out that the onset of puberty and its accompanying physiological changes are occurring earlier in the United States than ever before. According to Alexander (1968), the same developmental age group enrolled in grades seven through nine at the beginning of the junior high school movement is now found primarily in grades five or six through eight. Additional research by Schoo (1974) supported the middle school concept by suggesting that maturation occurs earlier during the transition from childhood to adolescence. Schoo suggested that middle schools should organize their programs to accommodate three distinct stages of development: childhood, preadolescence, and adolescence. The middle school, therefore, is recognizing the uniqueness of the early adolescent transitional period that had apparently been overlooked for too long in the junior high schools (Alexander, 1968, 1971).

Middle School Teachers

One of the major problems facing middle school administrators was the lack of properly trained teachers at the middle level. Brogdon (1978) and Walter & Fanslow (1980) suggested that middle school effectiveness is a direct result

of well-trained teachers in adolescent development. These researchers argued that middle school personnel need certain teaching competences and specific attributes in order to qualify for teaching in a middle school. Brogdon developed a list of competencies for middle school teachers based on a survey of Alabama teachers. Brogdon's list has been widely supported by other middle school researchers and administrators. The following list by Brogdon is in order of importance.

The middle level teacher:

Understands social-emotional development;

Teaches communication skills;

Recognizes individual learning levels and designs curriculum;

Understands the intellectual stages of development;

Has good classroom management skills;

Participates in interdisciplinary team teaching;

Understands the stages of physical development;

Is available to counsel students;

Teaches problem-solving;

Utilizes self-evaluation;

Provides new and diverse learning opportunities;

Recognizes appropriate teaching resources;

Teaches in small groups;

Presents alternate value systems while developing individual values;

Develops leadership abilities;
Uses multi-media approaches to instruction; and
Develops behavioral objectives in planning the
curriculum. (p. 147)

The qualifications for teaching in a middle school outlined by Walter and Fanslow are very similar to those listed by Brogdon.

Alexander (1981) referred to the teaching functions in middle school as the critical starting point in the entire program for the student. He advocated that teacher-student relationships must be the highest priority in planning an effective program. Middle school teachers must help students move away from the one-to-one, student-teacher relationship often found at the elementary school level. "Most middle school students are beyond the need of the self-contained classroom and the relationships it provided, but are not yet ready to be completely on their own in a large school. The middle school attempts to help students move away from one type of relationship to the other, while providing its own special brand of teacher-student affiliation along the way" (p. 89). Alexander goes on in his description of the middle school teacher to say that effective middle school teachers facilitate the learning process by encouraging students to develop a relationship with several teachers, yet still maintain a special connection with one--the adviser. The adviser knows each of his/her advisees well and is often the

first level of support for a student. This arrangement of having several teachers with one special adviser is what makes middle school programs unique in providing for a smooth transition from the elementary to the high school (p. 90).

Lounsbury and Vars (1978) discussed in great detail the very special importance of middle school teaching. They made a strong case for integrating the teaching of values and character during the transition years. Lounsbury and Vars (1978) described middle school teaching as follows:

The traditions of the teacher as a schoolmaster and fountain of wisdom are deep-seated. To a nation whose educational institutions have long emphasized the acquisition of knowledge and the maintenance of order, it is difficult to accept the affective domain--attitudes, beliefs, values--as part of a teacher's responsibility. But only as the middle school comes to deal fully with the broader objectives of education, can it fulfill its mission. The failure of some junior high schools are stark reminders of this need. . . During these transition years, young people can be helped to build more appropriate, positive values, and to gain a more accurate view of themselves and the world. (pp. 2-3)

Lounsbury and Vars asserted that the middle school teacher is fundamental to the success of the program. The teacher's role is to improve self-concept, create an atmosphere that

accentuates the positive, and be sensitive to the special needs of boys and girls who are turning into young men and women. Teaching in middle school, according to Lounsbury and Vars, must be personal--it must transcend beyond the routine paperwork and implant itself in the special nature of each child's unique learning style. Academics must be balanced with the fostering of personal growth through meaningful human interactions--teaching the whole child is essential.

Moss (1969) advocated that middle school teachers are to be knowledgeable about the growth characteristics of children aged 10-14. Moss strongly emphasized the need for pre-service education for anyone interested in teaching middle school students. The very special nature of growth and development during the transition years required that teachers must be properly trained in child development and the psychology of adolescence. There are certain teaching traits middle school teachers should have, and Moss developed a list of eleven. Most of these eleven traits are contained in Brogdon's (1978) list reported earlier. Moss agrees with Lounsbury and Vars (1978) that middle school teachers should periodically update their knowledge of adolescence and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly.

DeVita, Pumerantz and Wilklow (1970) also listed essential qualifications for effective middle school teachers. The authors suggested, as Lounsbury & Vars (1978) did, that the middle school teacher is the most important

element in the school program: "It would not be over optimistic to state that the quality of any school is determined by the quality of the teaching staff" (p. 135). Knowledge of the nature of the young adolescent, thorough preparation in middle school teaching methods, and a strong sense of self with the ability to guide students in a positive learning environment are the essential characteristics of the effective middle school teacher. The authors strongly advocate for middle school teacher certification programs to be established in colleges of education.

The need to recognize that teaching in the middle school requires teachers to be warm, sensitive, and deliver personal guidance and counseling is strongly supported in the literature. Compton (1973), Harvey (1970), and Toepfer (1973) all concluded that regardless of a middle school's philosophy or objectives, nothing is more important in the middle school than the preparation of the teachers. Compton developed a middle school teacher preparation program at the baccalaureate level at the University of Georgia. The program includes: field experiences in middle schools so that prospective teachers can decide early on in their academic preparation if they are properly suited for this special age group; subject matter preparation in their particular area, liberal arts foundations; and, coursework in professional teaching methods and learning theory. Both Harvey and

Toepfer recommended periodic in-service training programs for teachers already in middle schools. Harvey thought that in-service training should focus on learner differences, while Toepfer emphasized teacher skill development and curriculum planning.

George (1975) concluded that middle schools will truly become unique educational institutions when they are staffed with faculty who have received special instruction enabling them to implement what all too often have remained as lofty theoretical constructs. In 1975, only eight state departments of education out of fifty offered a special certification for middle school teachers (George, 1975). Fourteen other states were, at the time, planning to adopt a special middle school certification or endorsement.

Alexander and McEwin (1986) indicated that the majority of teachers in middle schools today still do not have adequate training for that level. Teacher preparation institutions and certification agencies have been slow to establish specialized middle level programs (Gibson, 1978; McEwin and Allen, 1983a, 1983b).

McEwin and Allen (1983) indicated that 25 states in 1983 had some type of middle school teacher certification with only 9 states reporting certification as mandatory. Progress in teacher certification programs has been slow but steadily improving with time.

Valentine (1981) reported the results of a comprehensive

survey he conducted for NASSP about middle level teachers and programs. One thousand four hundred thirteen principals of middle schools responded to a list of ten personal characteristics in which they were asked to examine the list and assess those they considered to be the most important for teacher success. Ninety-seven percent of the administrators rated the following ten categories important or very important.

Middle school teachers must be:

1. Able to interact constructively with students and peers;
2. Able to work with students and bring out their best capabilities;
3. A good role model;
4. Committed to education of early adolescents;
5. Flexible;
6. Positive and maintain a strong self-concept;
7. Able to respect the dignity and worth of the individual;
8. Sensitive to cultural heritage of students;
9. Sensitive to socio-economic background of the students;
10. Understanding of the students' skills, abilities and interests. (p. 92)

The same principals in Valentine's study were asked to evaluate a listing of ten professional characteristics of

middle school teachers as they related to successful teaching of pre and early adolescents. The following list in order of importance, with items one and two outranking others by a large margin, is similar to other such professional characteristics discussed by Alexander (1981) and Wiles and Bondi (1986). Middle school teachers should:

1. Demonstrate positive methods of classroom control;
2. Employ varied learning strategies;
3. Teach communication skills;
4. Promote independent learning among students;
5. Counsel with students;
6. Use techniques that promote an inquiry approach to problem-solving;
7. Work across interdisciplinary lines;
8. Work as a member of a teaching team;
9. Utilize values clarification activities; and
10. Utilize multimedia approaches to instruction. (p. 93)

The literature overwhelmingly suggests that the teachers remain as the focal point for success in any school program. The middle school movement brought with it new expectations for teachers of pre and early adolescent learners. Many educators believed that revised teacher competencies, especially those that require a strong base of knowledge in adolescent psychology, were fundamental to the success of middle schools.

Middle School Curriculum

Curriculum planners for the middle school, when it emerged in the 1960s, were faced with the choice of applying existing methods and strategies used in elementary and junior high schools, developing new programs, or utilizing a combination of both ideas. As early as 1968, research about curriculum and program changes showed that little curriculum renovation had taken place. Much of the middle school curriculum at that time continued to use what was generally acceptable in most elementary and junior high school programs. As a result, most fifth and sixth grade curricula in middle schools resembled the elementary school curriculum, and seventh and eighth grade curricula in middle schools were patterned after their counterparts in junior high schools (Alexander, 1968).

DiVirgilio (1973) echoed the same sentiments of Alexander five years later by suggesting little had been done in the way of curriculum reform to enhance the development of students during their middle school years.

The changes that have been made in middle schools are in such areas as clubs, athletics, socials, and general school environment. Currently, the practice is to continue curriculum programs as they existed in the elementary fifth and sixth grades and the junior high seventh and eighth grades, and to incorporate these programs into a middle school setting. This being so,

it is apparent to educators interested in middle school growth that more effort is needed in projecting and organizing a curriculum that will enhance the further development of young people of middle school age.

(p. 201)

While curriculum reform was slow, several researchers and middle school proponents developed specific theories and strategies regarding the program for early adolescents. As was observed in the early 1900s when G. Stanley Hall provided impetus for the junior high school movement with focus on the psychology of adolescence, the mid 1960s saw a similar movement develop in support of the middle school student.

Eichhorn (1966) explained the very special nature of transescence as a period of transition that applies to young people who are approaching or passing through puberty. As a consequent, a functional middle school curriculum must utilize an integrative model--one that recognizes the relationships among the physical, mental, emotional, and cultural characteristics of transescents. The three major components in Eichhorn's model include the learning process, personal development, and knowledge.

Each component has several subcategories that give clear focus and specialization to curriculum planning and development.

Eichhorn explains his model as follows:

There are three fundamental curriculum needs. These

include the acquisition of learning processes necessary for self-education; the actualization of self through self-awareness, understanding and interaction; and the active involvement of the learner with knowledge as it relates to the various aspects of man's heritage and contribution. (p. 42)

Moss (1969) developed a curriculum model with four major areas that possessed an interrelatedness and an acknowledgement of the fact that curriculum must recognize individual differences in intellect, personality, physical growth and learning style. Moss' model described four areas of instruction.

Area I - Individual Instruction: Specific skills development in reading, spelling, writing, computation, typing, library, and listening.

Area II - Group Instruction: English, social studies, sciences, mathematics, foreign languages.

Area III - Group and Individual Instruction: The arts--music, drama, and industrial arts.

Area IV - Group and Individual Instruction: Health, recreation, physical education--personal health, sex education, outdoor education, and physical fitness.

Moss strongly advocated that the middle school curriculum, while specifically defined in terms of core components, should be applied with flexibility--that is, each student should move through it at a pace commensurate with ability.

Alexander (1968) proposed a model similar to that of Eichhorn. He divided his curriculum model into three main areas: personal development, skills for continued learning, and organized knowledge (p. 56). Within this model, Alexander proposed specific criteria to ensure that there is balance, continuity, flexibility and individualization inherent in the total curriculum. Moreover, a home-base (homeroom) program is essential for dealing with student concerns and value-related issues. The teacher-counselor in the home-base program is responsible for most of the personal development component. Both individual and group guidance sessions are planned by the teacher-counselor. Skills for continued learning are developed within every classroom, with special (individualized) instruction as needed. While Alexander did not advocate a specific core curriculum for the teaching of "organized knowledge," he did emphasize the acquisition of basic facts and information in the different subjects studied.

Lounsbury and Vars (1978) described their curriculum model using the terms: core, continuous progress, and, variable (p. 45). These components differ primarily in structure but not in content or purpose. The three components contain an interrelated aspect, providing for crossover learning in the three different areas. The core is described as that part of the school day that gives students a chance to examine personal and social issues and concerns.

These core classes are graded (age level designations) in order to maintain stable peer relations and promote student rapport. Continued progress is the nongraded (no age level designations) component that provides for the acquisition of basic facts and information in specific courses. This component groups students according to their "variable rates of growth" (p. 47). The sequence is continuous in that it extends in many directions allowing students to progress at their own pace. The variable component contains those courses in the fine arts, physical education, industrial arts, and all student activities. Whether these courses and activities fit into the curriculum as graded or nongraded is a matter each middle school can decide. Lounsbury and Vars state, "Learning programs of such diversity (arts, physical education, etc.) call for flexibility in grouping, scheduling, and curriculum organization. The decisions made here, as in the middle schools overall design, should be based on an analysis of learner characteristics, societal demands, and the nature of knowledge as applied to each field or activity" (p. 48).

Literature about middle school curriculum is thorough and offers a variety of different approaches. However, this researcher found several recurring themes that are worthy of mention.

First, curriculum must be responsive to the special needs of pre and early adolescent learners. This component

of pre and early adolescent learners. This component requires curriculum planners to have specialized knowledge about adolescent psychology. Secondly, the curriculum should provide for sequential learning through an organized program of developmental and prerequisite courses through advanced courses. Thirdly, the curriculum should promote self understanding and self awareness through activities that address personal and social development. Fourth, an effective curriculum should develop strong study skills and methods of disciplined inquiry. The ability to analyze and synthesize material is essential. Fifth, the curriculum should be balanced with opportunities for students to explore ancillary disciplines in fine arts and physical education. Sixth, while this particular item is not emphasized in the literature, this researcher believes that collaborative curriculum planning among teachers and administrators--with opportunities for revision, evaluation and renewal--is an essential feature of a successful and progressive curriculum model.

Guidance and Counseling in Middle Schools

Most of the literature regarding counseling and guidance in the middle schools is based on some of the educational theory exposed by Bantel (1968), Coleman (1965), Eichhorn (1966), and Mead (1965). Each suggests that the pre and early adolescent is in a "transitional state" and, as such, needs a supportive environment that will provide stability

and security during those years of rapid change. While societal pressures today are different for teenagers due to changes in the family structure, communication problems arise between the young adolescent and the adults in his or her world (Mead, 1965). In addition, additional stress is brought to bear on the early adolescent when society promotes the idea of an earlier readiness for adulthood, especially through the mass media.

Those who support the basic tenents of middle school philosophy suggest that the failure of the junior high school to effectively function as a bridge between childhood and adolescence has highlighted the need for guidance and counseling in the middle school as a prominent function. The varied growth patterns and individual learning styles exhibited by middle school students are key reasons for effective guidance and counseling programs (Cole, 1986). Many of the leading writers about middle school reorganization (Alexander and George, 1981; DeVita, Pumerantz and Wilklow, 1970; Lounsbury and Vars, 1978; Moss, 1969) agree that guidance should begin in the classroom. Moss asserted; "While a trained counselor is necessary, he should work with teachers and children as a valuable resource person in a middle school" (p. 188). The teacher, therefore, must possess the personal attributes and professional competencies to help the middle school student make sound personal and social adjustments during the years of transition.

The literature suggests that effective guidance systems mean total involvement of the staff working with students. In the various models presented about middle school curriculum, each contained a component that dealt with personal and social development. Lounsbury and Vars referred to this part of the curriculum as the core. Eichhorn and Alexander used the term, personal development, and Moss assigned the term, skill development to the guidance and problem-solving function of the curriculum. Each theorist expressed the need for teachers to work in conjunction with school counselors to maximize individualized support for the student.

Alexander and George (1981) promoted the adviser-advisee relationship as being a significant aspect of middle school guidance programs. According to the authors, "the adviser-advisee program is possibly the most attractive part of the entire middle school concept" (p. 104). In order for such a program to be effective, teachers must receive training through staff development programs, teachers and counselors must collaborate frequently about students' issues, adviser-advisee contact time should be built in to the daily/weekly schedule and not be left to arbitrary scheduling, and all teachers should be given an opportunity to participate in the program. In addition, parents can be receptive to and supportive of the effort of the advisers if they are given information and explanation of the programs' goals and procedures.

The guidance counselor is both the chief service provider and manager of the guidance and counseling program. According to Cole (1979), the counselor has three major functions: (1) Counseling--help students and parents make course selections and help them understand their long-range implications; help students and parents interpret aptitude, achievement, and vocational interest measures; attend to the personal concerns of students; and provide group counseling sessions as needed; (2) Consultation--working with teachers, administrators, parents, community resource people and social agencies on behalf of the student; (3) Instruction--teaching of career development, study skills, communication skills and/or personal health.

The Cole model for the guidance counselor's role was perceived by teachers and administrators as the most common found in public middle schools. The teacher in the middle school works directly with the guidance counselor. Alexander and George (1981) and Daresh and Pautsch (1983) recognized the teacher as having a definite counseling function in the adviser-advisee program. The adviser-advisee program and the functions of the guidance counselor must be strongly supported by the administration. "When administrators are enthusiastically in favor of a program and are willing to put themselves forward in support of it, the chances for success are good" (Alexander and George, 1981, p. 108).

Alexander and George also believed that when we consider

the tumultous times middle school students pass through during the pre and early adolescent years, it is imperative that there be an effective program of guidance and counseling in the school. Without doubt, a well-developed and properly organized counseling program will greatly enhance the success of middle school.

Effective Middle Schools

Moran (1969) studied the effect of the middle school concept on the academic achievement and the attitudes of sixth graders. Moran found that students in the middle school program showed slightly higher scores in English, mathematics, social studies and science while students in the traditional, self-contained elementary schools showed greater gains in reading only. Moreover, Moran found slightly higher scores on tests measuring attitudes toward school for sixth graders in the middle school.

Armstrong (1975) identified, through a survey, two groups of middle schools in Ohio: (a) a group that was considered ideal in terms of implementing middle school practices, and (b) an instrumental group that was not as effective in implementing the middle school concept. Sampling students from each group, Armstrong found that the students in the ideal group had more favorable perceptions of their school environment than did students in the instrumental group. Armstrong concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between the extent to which the ideal middle school

practices are implemented and a favorable school environment as perceived by students.

Case (1970) studied the academic and the attitudinal growth of fifth graders, some of whom were in middle school and some of whom attended self-contained classrooms in the elementary school. Case's research was extensive in that he gave each group of students pre tests at the beginning of the year and post tests at the end of the year. In addition, Case charted the students' progress during the year. Case found that both groups made significant progress in achievement with middle school students showing only slightly greater gains in reading and arithmetic. Both groups of fifth graders showed a decline in self concept and middle school fifth graders showed a more significant loss. On the attitude towards school inventory, both groups lost significantly even though the middle school group showed less loss. Neither group of school differed in terms of students social acceptance. Case concluded that while there were no significant differences between the two groups, fifth grade students in the middle school were offered advantages in terms of academic achievement which led to better attitudes toward school than fifth grades in the self-contained elementary school program.

Coffland (1975) showed only very minor differences between the effectiveness of the middle school and the elementary school through grade six.

Toepfer (1982) recommended that effective middle school programs offer students a rich blend of intramural and interscholastic sports opportunities. He cautioned teachers and administrators to focus interscholastic sports on those students who demonstrate the unique ability and attitude to compete in an atmosphere similar to high school athletics. Toepfer stressed the fact that not all middle school students may be ready physically and mentally for a full-fledged interscholastic program.

Merenbloom (1982) delineated nine characteristics that describe the effective middle school. He based these characteristics on what he believed the needs of early adolescent learners to be. An effective middle school:

1. Features a program that responds to the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and moral needs of the early adolescent learner;
2. Possesses a definite curriculum plan that includes factual information or organized knowledge, skills and personal development activities that are correlated with each other on a formal basis;
3. Builds on the successes of elementary education and in turn prepares pupils for a successful experience in the senior high school;
4. Employs teachers who can focus on the learning needs of pupils by using a variety of teaching techniques that actively involve students;

5. Organizes teachers into interdisciplinary and/or disciplinary teaching teams using blocks-of-time and modular scheduling techniques to better implement the instructional program;

6. Recognizes the importance of effective education by providing for a home-base or teacher/adviser program, stressing the importance of self-concept in the curricula as well as the co-curricular program, and working as a staff to provide a positive climate for learning;

7. Promotes flexibility in the implementation of the daily, weekly, and monthly schedule of classes and activities to best meet the unique and varying needs of the students;

8. Emphasizes the guidance and counseling function of each member of the curricula and co-curricular programs by demonstrating a genuine concern for the welfare of each student; and

9. Evaluates the program on a regular basis and makes changes that enhance the learning process.

Merenbloom's nine characteristics have become widely accepted among middle school researchers and have been adopted, with some variations, by school administrators across the country.

Similar characteristics of the effective middle school model were prepared by Alexander and George (1981) and by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in a report titled, An Agenda For Excellence at the Middle Level (Arth, Johnston, Lounsbury, Toepfer, and Melton, 1986).

While several researchers on effective middle schools have identified for teachers and administrators the characteristics of an excellent middle school program, Alexander and George pointed out that no one school will exhibit to perfection all of the recommended features of middle school effectiveness. Many individual schools, school districts, and state organizations are developing their own statements about the goals and characteristics of middle school education using Merenbloom's nine characteristics with some variations.

Strahan (1983) said, "In primary grades students learn to read; in middle grades they read to learn" (p. 1). Just as middle school advocates stressed the importance of learning how to learn and the need for the acquisition of refined study skills in grades five or six through eight (Lounsbury and Vars, 1978), Strahan pointed out that effective middle school programs, according to national assessments, were not teaching students to think critically as well as they might. Also, national reports suggest that students entering middle level programs in the 1980s and 1990s will be demonstrating stronger reading and thinking abilities. Effective middle school programs must teach beyond the basics of reading and writing and stress critical thinking skills that promote more analysis and synthesis of facts and information.

Arth and Freeman (1983) asserted that peer pressure, always a factor and an influential variable in student

success and especially during the early adolescent years, requires the special attention of teachers and administrators. Peer pressure, often reflecting the students' need for acceptance and social approval, influences students' behavior in the classroom. According to Arth and Freeman, "Middle level students often tend not to view the adult authority figure as a source of validation, preferring instead the consensual validation of their peers" (p. 2). As such, middle level educators are encouraged by Arth and Freeman to exercise classroom management procedures that will allow for peer interaction to manifest itself in a way that is both productive for the individual and the group. Effective middle school teachers are "negotiators, mediators, and clarifiers of instruction" (p. 4).

Clark and Clark (1983) encouraged middle level administrators to provide substantive and systematic programs of in service training for school teachers. Effectiveness is closely aligned with the continuous development of teachers' awareness to the needs of the young adolescent. "Middle level schools, because of the changing nature of their clientele, must be on an ever moving cycle of self-renewal" (p. 12).

Johnston (1985) delineated 14 characteristics of effective middle schools. Many of these characteristics are similar to those developed by Merenbloom (1982). Johnston and Perez, participating in a study coordinated by the United

States Department of Education, visited middle schools in five mid-western states. The researchers focused their study on school climate, and were able to identify four climates which were most observable in the middle schools they visited: physical, academic, social-emotional, organizational. These four climates interact with each other thus creating the culture of middle school life. Johnston and Perez indicated that, "Climates affect the quality of schooling. . . The creation of a school culture is more dependent upon the behavior of adults in the school than on characteristics of students. . . Now we must be sure that the things we [teachers and administrators] do are the things that make schools effective--not just the things that make them look effective" (p. 8).

Lipsitz (1984) conducted a study asking 100 researchers and practitioners to each identify characteristics of effective middle schools for early adolescents. Most of the respondents focused their answers on personal and social development and little on academic achievement. Based on her survey, Lipsitz concluded that effective middle level programs focus their goals on helping students develop appropriate attitudes and socially acceptable patterns of social behavior in conjunction with academic success.

George and Oldaker (1985) collected data from 130 exemplary middle schools and found that a change to a middle school design in form and substance can positively affect

student achievement, personal development, learning climate, faculty morale, staff development, and parental and community development. Middle schools that conform to the recommendations in the literature of middle level education are more effective. Dorman, Lipsitz and Verner (1985) also supported the theory that the most effective middle schools are those that actually incorporate research findings about the psychological development of ten to fifteen year olds into their school philosophy and educational practices.

Garvin (1986) developed a list of characteristics that he found to be "common denominators" in effective middle schools. Garvin developed this list after visiting 22 middle level public schools in New England as part of the Secondary School Recognition Program sponsored by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Garvin's characteristics, similar to those of Alexander and George (1981), Arth and Freeman (1983), Johnston (1985) and Merenbloom (1982), emphasized that effectiveness was closely aligned with the commitment of the teacher to the total life of the student. Moreover, Garvin found that the most successful and effective schools were those where parent involvement was strong and active. Another important and influential variable in effective middle schools is the high quality of the adults in them. Good teachers make a major difference in the success of any school program--a factor that should not be overlooked or minimized in any way.

Lounsbury (1987) makes a strong statement about the importance of teaching values in our educational programs, especially at the middle level.

Character is like measles. It can be caught by close contact with someone who has it. . . The morality of men, women, and children is the key ingredient in a productive and satisfying life. And the value of our schools are showing. Be sure they represent the beliefs we intend to teach--integrity, honesty, tolerance, compassion, respect for the rights of others, civility, self-control, open-mindedness, the common good. We need to apply our best educational efforts to develop values. . . that our students might not only be grammatically correct, but that they would also be good.

(p. 4)

Integrating the teaching of personal awareness and social responsibility with basic academic disciplines provides for a rich blend of intellectual and psychological development. The research points to the fact that values in education are an essential characteristic of the middle school program. "Moral responsibility, says Lounsbury, "is the oldest basic of all in this country" (p. 2). Alexander (1986b) and Gruhn (1983) both support Lounsbury in his strong recommendation for moral education. Students are not only enrolled in school to learn more, but to be more. Effective middle schools proponents claim to have met the challenge.

Leadership in the Middle School

The effective middle school administrator takes on several different roles. In those schools where the leader has a vision of excellence in schooling that is shared by others, ultimate success can be achieved (Shockley, Holt, Meichtry, 1985). In exemplary schools where the principal is a strong administrator and leader, the following characteristics could be observed:

1. The principal has a positive attitude toward the staff;
2. The principal is dynamic and assertive;
3. The principal is responsive and spends time communicating with parents, teachers, and students;
4. The principal knows local, state and federal agencies and contacts them for support; and
5. The principal is seen as a role model and regarded as a leader by teachers and parents (Garvin, 1986, pp 1-4).

As Lipsitz (1981) concluded, effective middle schools that meet the needs of their students have a clear and direct sense of their purpose and mission. A common belief system and a shared understanding about the function of the institution needs to be supported and articulated by the school's leaders. Effective leaders focus on key issues and work to see that these issues have purpose and are realized. Strong principals have a clear vision of the mission for the school and help the school move in a direction to make that

vision a reality (Shockley, Holt, Meichtry, 1985). With the tremendous growth of the middle school movement, many changes have occurred in the education for young adolescents. Consequently, leadership at the middle level is different from the elementary and high school. Effective middle level principals must not only have a vision for their schools, they must possess a vision that is open to reform and accepting of change.

Leadership responsibilities require that one must help people move in a common direction, with norms that define what people should accomplish and how with a source of meaning and significance (Sergiovanni, 1984). Since norms in middle level education have been frequently associated with elementary and high school, redefining norms for the middle school is an essential requirement of the middle school leader. The principal must help middle level teachers see that their role is different from teachers at other levels and that their significance and contributions will be different. Teachers must find value in their work as this will enhance their motivation, commitment, dedication and loyalty (Shockely, Holt, and Meichtry, 1985). An atmosphere of collaborative decision making with a mutually defined mission provides teachers with a sense of reasonable control over their activities and meaning in their work. The unique identity of a middle school, accurately articulated by the principal, will enhance the sense of leadership in the

school. The leadership function of the principal is thus seen as joining together teachers, students, and parents in an atmosphere that provides for the advancement of children through the middle years.

According to Alexander and George (1981), middle school leadership is different from elementary and high school leadership due to the expanded amount of research that has been developed around the special needs of young adolescents. Specifically, Alexander and George suggest five major functions of a responsible leader in effective schools:

1. Maintains a good school that satisfies generally accepted criteria of such a school and fulfills its stated objectives;
2. Motivates the performance of students, teachers and parents to maintain the high quality of the school;
3. Provides opportunity and utilization of shared decision-making;
4. Facilitates processes of educational improvement within the school community; and
5. Works cooperatively and effectively with other school personnel in the school and district for optimum educational opportunity. (p. 258)

Blumberg and Greenfield (1980), in studies of effective administrators, found that the principal is not afraid to "rock the boat" or to change the status quo if advocating change is in the best interest of the school. Thus, if

middle schools are to continue to evolve as institutions that encompass new goals based on the growing literature about pre and early adolescents, strong school leadership at the middle level is desired. Without strong leadership, middle schools will be susceptible to the traditional forces in education that wish to make it more like a "miniature high school or an elaborate elementary school" (Shockley, Holt, Meichtry, 1985, p. 2).

Middle Schools - Implications for the Future

This review of the literature has thus far covered the history of the junior high and middle school movement, the reasons for and the growth of middle schools, middle school grade organizations, teachers in the middle school, middle school curriculum, guidance and counseling in the middle school, current research on effective middle schools, and leadership in middle schools. These areas were reviewed because they are the major topics covered in the questionnaire discussed in the next chapter. It is appropriate in this last section to consider future issues and challenges facing middle schools in American education.

In discussing the future needs of middle schools, Alexander (1986) recommended that better articulation between the elementary and secondary schools still needs to be developed and made more effective. Articulation refers to the period of time when the student is moving into the middle school from the elementary program and the period of time

when the student is leaving the middle school for the high school. These two transition periods, or as it is often referred to "bridging years," require middle schools teachers and administrators to work in collaboration with their counterparts on both sides of the spectrum to provide better continuity in the educational process. Surveys of middle schools by NASSP in 1967, 1977 and 1981 asking principals the reasons for the establishment of middle schools found the articulation (bridging) function a very popular one: 40% citing this in 1967; 62.7% in 1977; and, 57% in 1981. Gruhn (1983) also suggested that articulation issues, especially "inter-faculty participation" (p. 2), still remain an area of concern.

The preparation of middle school teachers is another major concern if middle level education is going to be distinctive and unlike elementary schools or mini-high schools. The National Middle School Association (1986) position on teacher preparation listed several essential components of a middle level teacher preparation program. Such a program should include:

1. A thorough study of the nature and needs of early adolescents;
2. A broad academic program, including concentration in at least two academic areas at the undergraduate level;
3. Early and continuing field experiences in good middle level schools; and

4. Specialized methods and reading courses.

This researcher believes that the changing nature of families and the increased use of drugs and alcohol among young teenagers creates great challenges for our middle schools. Never before has there been such a paramount need for positive influences on the young adolescent's personal and social development. There is a great need for middle schools to provide guidance and counseling on a regular basis. Personal and social development in middle schools must remain an integral part of program planning and curriculum development.

Middle Schools and Independent Education

Research on middle schools and independent education is extremely limited. What is presented here represents a thorough manual and computer review of articles, papers, reports, dissertations and books on independent middle schools. Much of the information included in this section was found as a result of three different computer searches using a variety of different descriptors to locate literature. The database used for the computer search was Dialog--an extensive information source covering current and historical data. The very limited amount of information in the literature about the emergence of the middle school concept in independent education suggests that this particular research study will be one of the first, if not the first, to contribute initial data to this private sector movement.

The Teacher Services Committee (TSC) of the National Association of Independent Schools has provided some information about middle schools and their activities via a biannual newsletter. Since 1980, TSC has devoted three of its newsletters to middle school issues. These issues were about student activities, academic disciplines and the current research on adolescent development.

Bergmann (1981) and Berry (1982), both writers for TSC and independent school educators, drew heavily on public sector research when they addressed the developmental needs of pre and early adolescent learners. The individual needs that come to the forefront during transescence are the same for students in independent middle schools as those in public middle schools. Bergmann listed fifteen characteristics that are essential for any independent middle school with an emerging adolescent population. While these fifteen characteristics are very specific in nature, they do reflect the attitudes of public middle school educators discussed earlier in this chapter. Berry makes specific mention of the importance of teaching adolescent learners how to become self reliant, self sufficient and independent. She described a program that is used at Holton-Arms School, an independent school in Bethesda, Md., that stresses the need to combine social and intellectual development during the middle school years. The descriptive model offered by Berry reflects and parallels the research about the social and intellectual

development of students in public middle schools.

Research by several independent school educators (Allen, 1980; Schauffler, 1980; and Senecal, 1980) further substantiate the similarities between the needs of the emerging adolescent learner in public and private schools. Such similarities with public middle school initiatives suggest a high level of congruence regarding the attitudes and practices of teachers in public and private schools.

Summary

The review of the literature traced the historical development of the junior high and the middle school in public schools. A review of the significant factors that led to the establishment of junior high schools in the early 1900s and the middle school in the 1960's preceded the review of the literature about independent middle schools. Since so little information exists about the evolution of the independent middle school, a more extensive review was done in the public sector.

In both the public and private sector, the role of the teacher was found to be a significant factor in the success of the middle school program. Teachers who are aware of and sensitive to the special needs of pre and early adolescent learners were considered a major factor for students' success during the middle school years.

Research about what type of curriculum is best suited for the middle school emphasized the concepts of balance and

variety. Middle school students are always expanding their intellectual, social, and personal qualities and require a broad-based program in which to operate. Because of variability in brain growth during the middle school years, each student's maturity level is very different. The differences in physical, intellectual, social and personal development among middle school students is what characterizes the middle school and distinguishes it from lower or upper schools.

The characteristics of the independent middle school are in many ways similar to those in public middle schools. A well balanced curriculum, augmented by extra curricular opportunities, students' activities and physical education, are basic to the middle school program. A strong emphasis on guidance and counseling is repeatedly cited as a significant factor in a middle school program. Specialized guidance programs with trained counselors are found more frequently in public middle schools. Independent middle schools emphasize guidance and counseling as a function of the classroom teacher.

The emergence of the independent middle school is relatively new as the bulk of schools reported in this research started their program after 1970. Very few studies are available documenting this reform movement in the private sector.

Research on private schools, as limited as it is, has

centered on the need for adopting specialized programs in the middle grades. The concept of middle school is rapidly gaining popularity among many private schools with many of the same issues and agendas as those associated with public schools.

Regardless of whether they are in public or private schools, students in the middle experience a number of conflicting influences. The key concept prevalent in most of the literature on middle school education is intensely sensitive to students' overall development, especially to the personal attitudes of early adolescent learners. Such factors, according to middle school proponents, positively influence learning during a crucial developmental period.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The history of the middle school movement in independent education is relatively short in comparison to the public sector. As a result of this rapidly growing trend, independent schools across the country are re-examining their educational agendas and considering the inclusion of a middle school program. This movement in the private sector includes many of the same goals, philosophy and practices associated with middle school programs in public education. While independent schools, in general, are less regulated by governmental agencies and, as a result, have more freedom and latitude to develop programs that can be unique to their particular community and environment, each independent school must be familiar with its own strengths and weaknesses so as to make changes that are purposeful and long lasting. According to Judy (1984), "Despite the freedom to design and implement any type of programs desired, each independent school must know intimately the reality of what is successful in its own sphere of influence" (p. 101). In addition to careful evaluation of one's own programs and policies, a school administrator's decision to incorporate a middle

school division into an established school structure necessitates an investigation of the research that examines similar movements in other independent schools.

This research focuses on the emergence of the middle school movement in independent schools. The findings provide middle school administrators with data about independent middle schools that will initiate comparisons and highlight differences in middle school education in the private sector.

Babbie (1973) described survey research as a study of a segment or portion of a population for the distinct purpose of making estimated assertions or characterizations about the nature of the total population from which the sample has been selected. This survey research was designed to identify some of the characteristics of the independent middle school movement since so little exists in the literature. A major aim of this research is to describe the characteristics of the independent middle school today; a cross-sectional survey design was utilized to accomplish the task. The cross-sectional research design includes an evaluation of relationships among certain variables that include: (a) the year the middle school began; (b) grade level patterns; (c) student population, and (d) geographical location. The questionnaire was developed to collect basic descriptive information from the sample selected. Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations are used to report the data, and charts and graphs illustrate the composition of the group.

This research focuses on independent schools with K-12 structures that have developed a middle school division. No data collection or analysis has been reported in the literature that documents the characteristics of this particular movement. A comprehensive review of the literature reported a lack of research about middle level education in American private schools. The survey design was selected to gather preliminary information about this educational movement in private schools. Not only are the findings in this research study descriptive of the current trends and practices in independent middle schools, but the final conclusions and recommendations are important for future investigations into this topic.

Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, the researcher set up the following design.

Step A - At the researcher's request, a list of 182 independent middle schools was generated from a computer search conducted by statisticians at NAIS. These middle schools were identified as being part of a K-12 school program.

Step B - The researcher developed a questionnaire based on the research about middle schools. The questionnaire (Appendix C) has four major components. Part A traces the history and examines the profile of the independent middle

school. Part B investigates the reasons why independent middle schools utilize a middle school program and how successful the middle school division has been in the K-12 structure. Part C explores the perceived success of the middle school. Part D examines the characteristics of the independent middle school.

Step C - The questionnaire was completed by eight middle school principals as a field test and to receive feedback. The questionnaire was given to several of these principals at the 1987 NAIS Conference in Boston.

Step D - The questionnaire was filled out and completed in April, 1987 by another eight middle school administrators who were members of the Southern California Association of Middle Schools. These administrators' responses were used to check content validity.

Step E - The questionnaire was mailed out to 182 middle school principals across the United States. The data received from the respondents in this survey was analyzed in chapter four in order to satisfy the purposes of this study. The data will provide a base of knowledge about independent middle schools that will assist school administrators, educational leaders and researchers at NAIS further evaluate middle level education in the private sector.

Subject Selection and Response Rate

The 182 middle schools selected were identified by a computer search conducted at the NAIS data bank.

The selection of the 182 schools which represents the sample in this study was done in a two step computer search:

1. NAIS updates its statistical data every few years regarding the three types of independent school divisions--lower school, middle school and upper school. However, information about the divisional structure of these schools is obtained only through data accumulated about teacher and administrator salaries. NAIS does not ask its member schools to report divisional (lower, middle, upper) structures in their requests for information (Appendix B).

When obtaining data about teachers and administrators salaries, NAIS asks its member schools to indicate the division of its teachers and administrators. Therefore, the first step in the sample selection process was to have NAIS do a computer search for this researcher indicating the number of independent schools throughout the United States that had reported salary information regarding a middle school administrator. This search identified 400 schools.

2. These 400 schools represent institutions that have a variety of different divisional structures. They are not solely K-12 schools with a lower, middle and upper school divisional plan. Some are only lower and middle schools, others are middle and upper schools, and some are only middle schools.

For this study, the researcher wanted to survey independent schools with a K-12 grade structure because they

had the most flexibility in their large span of grades to choose the middle school grade configuration that best met their middle level needs. Therefore, the second part of the sample selection process was to identify from the 400 schools listed by NAIS, all these K-12 schools with a middle school division. The identified K-12 schools totalled 182. To further substantiate the 182 middle schools in the sample, another computer search was done by NAIS using salary information about middle school teachers in K-12 schools as descriptor information. This search (Appendix E) identified the 182 schools originally selected in the first computer search. The schools on both lists were cross-referenced for accuracy and thus the sample was substantiated. Since this research represents the first investigation into the emergence of the middle school in the private sector, all 182 schools were selected for study. As such, the number of middle school administrators responding to the questionnaire is of sufficient size to draw conclusions that are generalizable to the larger population. By including all 182 K-12 schools in this study, the reasons why certain middle school grade patterns were chosen have a greater chance of being understood.

The 182 schools in this sample are representative of the different regions of the United States. A response rate of 50% from the school directors responsible for the administration of the middle school division was pursued for

analysis of the collected data. Such a response rate is considered adequate by survey research experts. Babbie (1973) stated that "a response rate of at least 50 percent is adequate for analysis and reporting. A response of at least 60 percent is good. And a response rate of 70 percent or more is very good" (p. 165).

"The purpose of survey research is to estimate characteristics of a population. . . Sampling implies some discrepancy between the actual and the estimated value of a characteristic" (Backstrom and Hursh, 1963, p. 28). In this particular research project, the researcher was determined to maintain a small sampling error because the results could have an impact on the future planning of independent middle level programs. According to Backstrom and Hursh, "The discrepancy between the sample estimate and the number (value) that would have been found under identical conditions by a census of all respondents is the sampling error. The sampling error for which we must allow affects the precision (reliability) of the sample estimate" (p. 28). The inclusion of the 182 schools reduces the percentage of sample error and increases the chances of more accurate generalizations about the total population. The 182 schools represent 45.5% of the total population of independent middle schools (400).

Middle school administrators were chosen as respondents because of their broad based involvement in all aspects of middle school life. Generalizations about the

characteristics of the independent middle school require measurements to be made along a broad spectrum of opinions, attitudes and beliefs from people who have had direct experience in as many aspects of middle school administration as possible. The middle school administrator was the person with the widest range of involvement in all aspects of the middle school division.

Instrumentation

The questions included in the survey instrument were drawn from research about the middle school as described in the review of the literature. The questionnaire has four parts. Part A was designed to elicit general information about the history and current grade level patterns of the middle school. In addition, several questions were designed to obtain biographical data about the middle school administrator. This information was used to distinguish categories among the different respondents.

Part B of the questionnaire was developed utilizing the reasons for transition to a middle school program described in research studies conducted by Alexander (1967), Brooks (1986) and Valentine (1981). Seven of the eleven reasons in the rank-order design are taken directly from the research. These seven reasons are: (1) Employ new curriculum designs and/or instructional innovation; (2) Provide a smoother transition from the elementary grades to the upper school; (3) Remain competitive with other schools that have developed

a middle school program; (4) Adjust to or better utilize the school facilities and buildings; (5) Provide 5th and/or 6th graders with more curricular specialization moving away from the self-contained classroom concept of the elementary grades; (6) Employ a program specifically designed to meet the physical, psychological, social and emotional needs of the student in this age group; and (7) Adjust to enrollment patterns by distributing the school's total student population over three divisions (lower, middle, upper) instead of two (lower and upper). Four additional reasons were added by the researcher based on his experience as a middle school administrator. These four additional items are: (1) Establish a program where teaching is highly personal and sensitive to this age group; (2) Provide 7th and 8th graders with a flexible scheduling arrangement that is different from the departmentalized structure typically found in the upper school (3) Establish a separate middle school faculty with special knowledge and skills for dealing with pre and early adolescent learners; and (4) Separate pre and early adolescents from upper school (9-12) students.

While rank-ordering responses is often difficult for respondents since they have to read and reread the list several times, this procedure does help to eliminate any respondent bias. The seven reasons that come from the literature are frequently talked about in the educational community. In order to prevent respondents from merely

selecting these reasons middle school that have been generally accepted as being the most important, the respondents were asked to rank order the 11 reasons given in the questionnaire. A short introduction was used to explain to the respondent the purpose of the rank-order format. Since a variety of different types of questions were used in this questionnaire, the instructions were carefully worded to help the respondent understand the rank-ordering design.

The questions in Part B are aimed at the success middle school administrators have had in addressing their reasons for adopting a middle school. Since the successfulness of each reason was pursued in order to determine a relationship between the reasons for establishing a middle school and its actual outcomes, this researcher placed the successfulness scale on the same page as the reasons for adopting a middle school. In this way, the respondent could make quick reference to the list of reasons for transition and evaluate them without much delay. The scaled-response type question was used to add more exactness to the measure of opinion to the respondent's answers (Backstrom and Hursh, 1963). Scaled responses yield more information about the amount of difference there is among structured responses. The successfulness scale utilizes a seven-step rating scale with the selection of number 1 being "very successful" and the selection of number 7 being "unsuccessful." The respondent was able to select the number between 1 and 7 that most

accurately reflected the degree of success he/she perceives his/her middle school has had in addressing the reason for adoption of middle school. The respondent was asked to rate each of the eleven reasons, leaving no blank spaces.

Sudman and Bradburn (1982) cautioned the researchers to use a visual aid on the instrument that actually shows the rating scale. This is especially important when the numerical rating scale exceeds five points. Part B was constructed with the rating scale directly on the questionnaire since the scale had seven points for the respondent to consider.

Part C of the questionnaire is an open-ended statement asking administrators to list the achievements in their middle school program that they believe have been the most significant. The open-ended format is designed to elicit general data about the different kind of successes middle schools across the nation have had.

While open-ended questions can take more time to answer than closed questions, they allow respondents to make distinctions that are not usually possible with closed question formats. Moreover, an open-ended format gives the respondents the opportunity "to express themselves in a language that is comfortable for them and congenial to their views" (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982, p. 50). The researcher considered it essential to give the respondents the opportunity to express their opinions without being cued into a particular response by the suggestions and information

contained in other questions. As Schuman and Presser (1981) pointed out, "respondents are apt to be influenced by the specific closed question alternatives given, and therefore a more valid picture of respondent choice is obtained if they must produce an answer themselves" (p. 81).

In order to facilitate the evaluation of the respondents' open responses, each of the three open-ended questions contained a section with explanations. This format provided space for the respondent to explicate the achievement, and allowed the researcher to probe a little deeper into the respondents' opinions about the achievements attributed to the middle school concept. The data from the open-questions are organized into clusters on the basis of logical relationships.

Part C contains three open-ended spaces for the respondent to write answers. The results of the pilot study indicated that respondents would probably provide no more than three achievements. So as to not exhaust the patience of the respondent with a lengthy response to Part C, only three achievements were requested.

Part D of the questionnaire was developed using the nine points of effective middle schools delineated by Merenbloom (1982). Each of Merenbloom's nine characteristics has four corresponding statements that the researcher constructed. The respondent was asked to read each statement and rate the importance of each as it applied to his/her school. A Likert

scale was used with a range from 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest).

The closed-question format with a numerical rating scale of 1 - 5 was used to determine how closely aligned the characteristics of the independent middle school are with the model suggested by Merenbloom.

Characteristic 1: features a program that responds to the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and moral needs of the early adolescent.

The corresponding statements for characteristic 1 are:

1. Our middle school philosophy gives equal amounts of importance and recognition to students for outstanding performance in academic, athletics and fine arts.

9. Curriculum goals and practices should promote awareness and sensitivity to cultural and ethnic differences.

15. In order to accommodate individual learning differences, students should be assigned to regular and accelerated courses.

24. The middle school philosophy should include the teaching of moral education.

Characteristic 2: possesses a definite curriculum plan that includes factual information or organized knowledge, skills and personal development activities that are correlated with each other on a formal basis.

The corresponding statements for characteristic 2 are:

4. Study skills are taught at all grade levels as part of the regular course of study.

13. Middle school students should be required to take courses in music and fine arts.

14. The middle school curriculum should be reviewed annually by the faculty in collaboration with the administration.

40. Student effort as well as academic performance (grades) should be acknowledged at the end of designated grading periods.

Characteristic 3: builds on the successes of elementary education and in turn prepares pupils for a successful experience in the senior high school.

The corresponding statements for characteristic 3 are:

7. Students in their last year of the middle school should participate in a series of articulation activities with students in the first year of the upper school in order to develop a smooth transition from one division to the next.

8. Lower and middle school teachers should meet during the school year to coordinate curriculum objectives.

12. Middle and upper school teachers should meet during the year to discuss the transition from one division to the next.

20. Information programs that address the philosophy and curriculum of the middle school should be given to all parents who will have a child entering the program.

Characteristic 4: employs teachers who can focus on the learning needs of pupils by using a variety of teaching

techniques that actively involve students.

The corresponding statements for characteristic 4 are:

2. Each student in our middle school receives regular and supportive counsel in an adviser/advisee program.

25. Middle school teachers must be knowledgeable about the varying degrees of maturity exhibited by early adolescents.

28. The most important quality to consider in the hiring of a middle school teacher should be the ability to work with the emerging adolescent.

39. The middle school should have a student council with elected officers.

Characteristic 5: Organizes teachers into interdisciplinary and/or disciplinary teaching teams using block-of-time and modular scheduling techniques to better implement the instructional program.

The corresponding statements for characteristic 5 are:

32. The middle school schedule should provide for interdisciplinary teaching teams.

26. The fifth and/or sixth grade schedule should rely on the self-contained classroom concept.

10. Middle school teachers should learn the techniques and strategies associated with team teaching.

36. Teachers in the middle school should not teach in the upper school.

Characteristic 6: Recognizes the importance of effective education by providing for a home-base or teacher/adviser

program, stressing the importance of self-concept in the curricula as well as the co-curricular programs by demonstrating a genuine concern for the welfare of each student.

The corresponding statements for characteristic 6 are:

5. Middle school students participate in a daily homeroom program.

22. The curriculum should emphasize critical thinking skills at each grade level.

27. Meetings between the homeroom teacher and/or the adviser should include discussions about personal and social development.

29. Advisers and/or homeroom teachers should discuss peer relationships with the students they counsel.

Characteristic 7: Promotes flexibility in the implementation of the daily, weekly, and monthly schedule of classes and activities to best meet the unique and varying needs of the students.

The corresponding statements for characteristic 7 are:

19. Teachers and administrators should collaborate on the formation of the daily schedule of classes.

21. Classes at the seventh and eighth grade levels should be departmentalized.

30. The middle school schedule should be flexible and accommodate a large variety of required and elective courses.

34. The middle and the upper school schedules should be the same.

Characteristic 8: Emphasizes the guidance and counseling function of each member of the curricula and co-curricular programs by demonstrating a genuine concern for the welfare of each student.

The corresponding statements for characteristic 8 are:

3. Periodic in-service programs throughout the school year are used to help teachers learn more about the special physical, psychological and social needs of the middle school student.

16. Teacher in-service programs should emphasize how teachers can help students deal with stress.

31. Faculty professional growth money should be used to help teachers take graduate level courses in adolescent development.

35. Teachers should receive periodic information about chemical and substance abuse education for students.

Characteristic 9: Evaluates the program on a regular basis and makes changes that enhance the learning process.

The corresponding statements for characteristic 9 are:

6. A student opinion survey can be utilized to evaluate teacher effectiveness in promoting a positive school climate.

11. Academic achievement is measured through the use of standardized tests.

17. The annual review of the middle school program should

include feedback from parents.

23. Teacher feedback should be elicited annually in order to make changes in the program.

The researcher added questions 18, 33, 37, and 38. They do not correspond directly to any of Merenbloom's nine points.

Question 18 was designed to elicit information about the importance of a core curriculum which emphasizes basic skill development in reading, mathematics and language arts.

Question 33 was designed to find out how important it is for a trained guidance counselor to be on site. In practice, very few independent schools have a guidance counselor on campus. Counseling functions are very often delegated to one of the administrators.

Question 37 was designed to elicit information about the importance of a formal commencement ceremony at the end of the middle school experience. In some K-12 schools, students spend their elementary, middle and upper school years on one campus. As a result, some schools highlight the transitions from one division to the next with a closing ceremony.

Question 38 addresses the role of off-campus excursions in the curriculum. Outdoor education programs have become very popular in private day schools as a means of developing stronger relationships among students and teachers as well as to expand the parameters of learning beyond the classroom.

Through the use of scaled responses as to the degree of importance a particular characteristic has in the

respondent's middle school, information was gathered about the nature of middle level program. The five point rating scale was used as opposed to a broader numerical rating to force the respondent to think carefully and thoroughly about his/her school. However, the researcher wanted the respondent to have a middle alternative response since a prime disadvantage of a closed-structured question is the difficulty in interpretation of the degree of intensity or importance, with which the respondent holds his/her opinion. The middle alternative adds more exactness to the measure of opinion about institutional characteristics (Sudman & Bradburn, 1982; Backstrom & Harsh, 1963).

The researcher is aware of the fact that selective perception--people see things as they want to see them--often interferes with exact and accurate interpretations and conclusions. For this reason, the five point scaled response is considered appropriate as it encourages more precise thinking on the part of the respondent and provides latitude to opt for an average position in the middle range on the scale. Average responses are just as valid as responses that cluster about the extremes on the scale. Middle alternative responses are legitimate, logical positions in survey questions, even though some research experts believe that the middle alternative allows the respondent a place of refuge in a non committal position. However, further investigation of middle alternative responses suggests that respondents who

take such a position on a question are actually providing more accurate information than if they were forced to choose a polar alternative, which could lead to some form of systematic error (Schuman & Presser 1981; Smith & Glass, 1987).

The Merenbloom model for effective middle schools was chosen because it contained most of the characteristics discussed by other experts in the field. Moreover, Merenbloom's nine characteristics of effective middle schools are incorporated into An Agenda For Excellence at the Middle Level (Arth, Johnston, Lounsbury & Toepfer, 1985), the most recent publication sponsored by NASSP. The data used to construct the 36 questions that correspond to Merenbloom's nine characteristics were obtained from the literature about middle school programs. The additional four questions were added by the researcher and represent his experience as an administrator in an independent middle school.

Content Validity

The validity of the questionnaire was developed in a preliminary test of the questionnaire and then followed up by an actual pilot study. The preliminary testing of the questionnaire included eight middle school administrators from across the United States. The researcher met several of these administrators at the National Association of Independent Schools Annual Conference in Boston in February, 1987 (Letter of Transmittal, Appendix F). The other

administrator received the proposed questionnaire in the mail. All eight administrators were asked to review the proposed questionnaire for the following:

1. Ambiguity in wording;
2. Completeness of topics;
3. Clarity of instructions;
4. Relevance to middle level education;
5. Length of entire questionnaire;
6. Loaded questions--are the questions neutral or emotionally charged?
7. The timing of the proposed mailing--what would be considered an acceptable time of year that would yield a high response rate from respondents?

The administrators were instructed to make their comments directly on the questionnaire. They did not actually answer the questions. The preliminary testing was the first step in securing important feedback from a representative number of respondents about the content validity of the proposed questionnaire. The preliminary testing was an extremely valuable step as it provided the researcher with substantive recommendations about the questionnaire that were then incorporated into a second revision. Survey research experts strongly urge field testing procedures as was done in this project (Backstrom and Hursh, 1983; Borg and Gall, 1979).

Recommendations from the eight administrators about how the questionnaire could be improved included:

1. Add a question about the enrollment in the school.
2. Add personal questions about the respondent. How long had the respondent been in his/her present position and how many years of teaching experience had this person had prior to becoming an administrator?
3. Shorten Part C regarding the number of achievements.
4. Reword some of the questions in Part D making them more applicable to a private school environment.

As a result of the preliminary field testing, the questionnaire was revised incorporating the recommended changes. An actual pilot study of the questionnaire took place in April, 1987 to determine the content validity of the proposed questionnaire. The subjects for the pilot study represented independent middle school administrators who worked in a school that had a grade level structure different from K-12. All eight of the pilot study subjects were members of the Southern California Association of Middle Schools. The questionnaire was mailed to the pilot subjects with a letter of transmittal (Appendix G). They were instructed to fill out the questionnaire following all the directions. Each administrator was requested to indicate how long the questionnaire took to fill out. In addition, to completing the questionnaire, the administrators were asked for more feedback about the clarity of the instructions and wording of the questions, the style and format of the questionnaire design, and the relevance of the questions to independent

middle level education. All eight of the administrators responded with meaningful feedback. The recommended changes included: (1) New wording in the rank-order design of Part B; (2) Inclusion of a not applicable response in Part B; and (3) Revision of the amount of blank spaces given respondents in the design of Part C.

The pilot testing constituted a run of the questionnaire under actual conditions. The results were:

1. Most questions contained answers. However, there were several questions that were unanswered by the respondents, but the researcher concluded that these were probably overlooked by the respondents because there was no observable pattern to the same questions.

2. The instructions were clear as all parts of the questionnaire were answered the same way by all of the respondents.

3. The answers were evenly distributed on scaled response formats in Parts B and D suggesting the questions evoked a broad range of answers.

4. The open-ended answers in Part C were much easier to evaluate with the inclusion of the "brief explanation" column.

The results of the pilot study allowed the researcher to conclude that content validity had been obtained.

Data Collection

After constructing the questionnaire and testing it for content validity, the researcher sent it to the 182 middle school administrators included in the sample along with a letter of transmittal (Appendix H). Each packet contained a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the respondent to use to return the questionnaire to the researcher.

Using the guidelines for letters of transmittal described by Borg & Gall (1979), Backstrom and Hursh (1963) and Babbie (1973), the letter contained the following information:

1. The purposes of the study;
2. Reasons for completing the questionnaire;
3. The importance of this particular research project;
4. The availability of the final results of the survey;
5. The date the questionnaire had to be returned; and
6. How long the questionnaire would take to complete.

The letter of transmittal was kept to one page and each one was personally signed by the researcher. The questionnaires were mailed in mid-May, 1987 with a return date of June 10. This gave the administrators ten days to complete the questionnaire and return it by the due date. Each packet that was mailed was pre-coded so that follow-up requests could be made to those who did not respond. A return rate graph was utilized to chart the number of first round returned questionnaires and to determine the number of follow-up requests that were made in rounds two and three of

the data collection.

Schools listed in The Handbook of Private Schools (Porter Sargent, 1986), the resource used to find the addresses of the 182 schools in this study, include only the names of the headmaster as the chief administrator of the school. Thus, the questionnaire packet was directed to headmasters instead of middle school administrators. The letter of transmittal accompanying the questionnaire was very specific in requesting the headmaster to forward the questionnaire directly to the administrator specifically charged with the responsibility of supervising the middle school. According to research experts, questionnaires mailed directly to a person yield a higher response rate than those mailed anonymously or with only a title or position.

The decision to mail the questionnaire packet out in May, close to the end of the school year had several distinct advantages and disadvantages with regard to the projected response rate. The advantages were:

1. The end of the year was a time when each school administrator was able to reflect upon the past year and apply this current knowledge and information to his response.
2. The end of May and the beginning of June was not a likely time other researchers would be making requests for information from school administrators.
3. The June 10 date for the questionnaire to be returned was considered to be sufficient motivation for the

administrator to want to complete all business before the summer season.

The disadvantages were:

1. The end of May and the beginning of June is a very busy time of the school year for many administrators--graduation, final exams scheduled, the usual and customary end of the year business take up much of the time.

2. If these administrators had received questionnaires from other researchers earlier in the school year, there might not be sufficient motivation to complete one more.

The researcher discussed the advantages and disadvantages with several colleagues who are in administrative positions throughout the State of California. Six administrators were contacted by phone to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a mid-May mailing. Five of the six administrators recommended that the questionnaire be mailed in May as planned, suggesting that the desire among independent school administrators to develop a body of knowledge about the middle school was strong enough to encourage them to complete the proposed questionnaire even at a busy time of the year. One colleague indicated that the proposed mid-May mailing posed a definite timing problem for school administrators and cautioned the researcher against it. The researcher decided to go forth with the mid-May mailing based on the informal survey results from colleagues. However, the researcher decided to make reference to this

potential timing issue in the letter of transmittal.

The letter contained wording that made the prospective respondent aware of the fact that the researcher was sensitive to the request for information during a potentially busy time of the school year. It was considered important by the researcher to use language that would help the prospective respondent identify with the researcher as a colleague. By showing sensitivity to the busy year-end activities all middle school administrators are faced with, it was believed that the prospective respondent would be more inclined to complete and return the questionnaire on time. In addition, the letter of transmittal gave a rationale to the prospective respondent for the end of the year mailing by indicating that, "it is precisely at such a time that reflection about your middle school program can be of great value and benefit to us both."

The letter of transmittal was revised to include the necessary changes.

By June 10, 54 questionnaires (30%) had been completed and returned. With a good first round response, the researcher concluded that the timing of the mailing had been successful due to the many letters of interest and support that the respondents mailed back with their questionnaires. In some cases, the researcher was extended a personal invitation to visit the respondent's school during the summer months. A thank you letter was mailed to each respondent in

the first round (Appendix I).

The first round responses were monitored using a return rate graph. As the questionnaires were returned, a recording of the data ensued. The purpose of this early data analysis was done to determine if any major differences would be discernible among the early (first round) returns and subsequent (second and third round) returns with regard to the answers to the questions. Such a procedure allowed the researcher to draw some possible conclusions in estimating nonresponse biases in the survey. According to Babbie (1973), "Barring more direct tests of bias, the researcher may wish to assume that those respondents who failed to answer the questionnaire will be more like those who delayed answering than like those who answered right away. An analysis of questionnaires received at different points in the data collection might then be used for estimates of sampling bias" (p. 163).

Borg and Gall (1979) also urged that distinctions be made among early and subsequent returns. They argued that, "A common sampling bias of this type is that persons having a good program are more likely to respond than those having a poor program. . . School administrators are often reluctant to admit the deficiencies of their schools and therefore fail to return questionnaires (or return them late) in which their deficiencies would be revealed" (p. 308).

To increase the percentage of returns, a second mailing

in early July was sent to all nonrespondents from the first round mailing. The second packet contained a revised letter of transmittal (Appendix J), another copy of the questionnaire and another stamped, self-addressed envelope. By the end of July, the second mailing yielded another 36 questionnaires (20%). The third round of data collection consisted of personal phone calls to selected middle school administrators with whom the researcher had some prior contact. The phone calls appeared to be the least successful method of data collection because many of the school administrators had left their schools for vacation during the summer months. Phone calls yielded another 13 questionnaires bringing the total to 103, representing 56% response rate. Thank you notes were mailed to each respondent who returned the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

As the respondents returned their questionnaires, their responses for each item were tallied on a data grid. Responses to the closed questions were arranged on a matrix.

After the cut-off date for each, the responses were recorded and compiled. Subgroup divisions were made on the basis of school size, year middle school began operation, geographical location, and grade level pattern.

Frequency distributions were used to compile the data in sections A and B of the questionnaire. Scaled responses in sections B and D were analyzed with summaries of dispersion

that report the mean and the mode. The representativeness of the data is illustrated in a meaningful display of charts and tables. Raw scores are shown only where appropriate and where they add descriptive explanation to the analysis. With regard to the open-ended data in section C of the questionnaire, all responses were abbreviated and similar responses were grouped together and frequencies determined.

Only a very small number of respondents left blank spaces. The researcher did not consider them significant enough to affect the survey with a sampling bias.

Comparative analyses were made to highlight the similarities and differences of both the public and private school reform movements toward a middle school structure.

Limitations of the Study

This research has several limitations. First, the study is limited to independent middle schools within a K-12 structure. Thus, those independent middle schools in any other school structure are not part of this research and, therefore, the results of the study may not apply to them.

Second, the scope of the research is limited by the instruments used in the study. There may be more information regarding the emergence of the middle school that is not brought out in this research. While this problem is often the case in any survey design, the nature of the potential research is limited and needs to be acknowledged as such.

Third, the questionnaire was not mailed directly to each

middle school administrator in the sample. Because the names of the middle school administrators are not available in any reference materials, securing them would have been a laborious and time consuming task. As a result, the questionnaire packet was mailed to the heads of schools whose names are listed in Porter Sargent (1986). If the head of the school did not feel from the letter of transmittal that the questionnaire was worthy of completion, he/she may not have passed it along, as instructed, to the middle school administrator. Further, any other communication or organizational problems that possibly existed between the head of the school and the middle school administrator could have interfered with the middle school administrator receiving the questionnaire.

Fourth, the timing of the mailing of the questionnaire was good in that it yielded a high response rate on the first mailing. The wording of the first letter of transmittal was considered to be a major factor for this success. However, second and third round attempts to secure a higher percentage of returns were not as successful as the first because these attempts took place during the summer season when many school administrators were not at school. While the overall response rate is satisfactory, an even greater number of completed questionnaires could have been returned had the second and third round taken place during the regular academic school year.

Fifth, the study elicited information only from middle school principals. Teachers, students, parents, headmasters and trustees were not part of this study. Thus, the research reflects the responses from one group of individuals in the school setting. However, since middle school principals are major change agents in the schools and, as such, are in large part responsible for the future planning of middle school agendas, the data provide a valuable base of information in an area that has not been adequately researched before.

Summary

The researcher utilized the survey method to elicit information from independent middle school administrators about the nature of their program. The questionnaire used to carry out the survey included open-ended and closed questions which gave the participants different opportunities to express their views. The survey was designed to gather information from a cross-section of independent middle schools across the country. Much of the analysis was done using statistical computer programs.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this research study is to gain additional insight into the growth and development of independent middle schools. An analysis was made to determine the reasons why independent school administrators decided to adopt a middle school division in their K-12 structure. An analysis of the similarities and differences among the middle school divisions was also included in this study. Demographic factors such as school size (enrollment), divisional structure, grade level arrangements, the number of years the director has been head of the middle school, the previous teaching experience of the middle school director, and the number of teachers in the middle school have been evaluated and are reported in this chapter to provide descriptive information in table format about the respondents and their schools. Additional demographic data collected and evaluated in this chapter include: the grade level pattern and divisional structure before the middle school division was adopted; the year the middle school began; and the sex of the respondents. These additional demographic data were obtained in order to spot any substantive trends that might be significant in the analysis.

The representativeness of the data is illustrated in a meaningful display of charts and tables. Raw scores are shown only where appropriate and where they add descriptive explanation to the analysis. With regard to the open-ended responses in section C of the questionnaire, all responses were abbreviated and similar responses were grouped together and frequencies determined. If not indicated otherwise, all percentages calculated at .5% or higher have been rounded to the nearest whole percent.

Presentation of the Data

The analysis of the data was done using a software program called Stat-View. This program is designed to manipulate large amounts of data and produce descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The questionnaire was carefully reviewed to produce the necessary categories and descriptors for entry into the software program.

During the middle of May, 1987, 182 surveys were mailed to school administrators in the sample. The surveys returned by June 10th represented a return rate of 30% (54 surveys). By the end of June, 1987, an additional 20% (36 surveys) were returned, and another 13 surveys were returned by the end of July. The total percentage of returns is 56%, which is 103 surveys.

Demographic Analysis of the Sample

This sample was obtained from a computer search of K-12 member schools of the National Association of Independent

Schools during 1986-1987. The 103 responses were organized into geographical regions as given in Table 3.

Table 3

Geographical Regions

Number of Schools Represented	Regions
New England	21
Middle Atlantic	22
South Atlantic	19
South Central	13
East North Central	13
West North Central	6
Mountain and Southwest	3
Pacific	6

N = 103

Ninety-two (89%) schools in the survey were day schools and 11 (11%) were day and boarding schools.

The enrollment patterns among the middle schools in the survey were separated into three groupings (see Table 4). The first grouping, 0 to 150 students, contained the largest number of schools with a total of 51 (50%).

The survey represented coeducational, boys' and girls' schools. The largest group responding represented coeducational schools with a total of 79 (77%).

Table 4

Student Enrollment in Middle Schools Surveyed

Enrollment (Number of Students)	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
0 to 150	51	50
151 to 300	43	41
301 to 450	9	9

N = 103

Eighteen (17%) represented girls' school and 6 (6%) were boys' schools. The single sex schools were considerably fewer in number.

Of the 103 respondents, 96 wrote their names on the questionnaire which was optional. By assigning common standards of name distinction, the researcher was able to determine that 54 of the respondents were male, 42 were female and 4 were not known because the respondent did not give his or her name.

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of full time teachers they had employed in their middle school along with a request for male and female distinction. However, many respondents were unable to answer this question because more than 50% indicated that many of their middle school teachers also had teaching assignments in the other two divisions (lower and upper).

Each middle school administrator was asked to indicate, in years, how long he or she had been the head of the middle school. Sixty (58%) of the respondents indicated that they had been head of their middle school between 1 to 6 years, and 20 (19%) were heads between 7 to 10 years. The remaining 23 (22%) respondents were middle school heads for longer than 10 years. A complete analysis of this data is included in Appendix K.

Of the 103 respondents, 90 (87%) indicated they were middle school teachers before they became administrators, and 11 (11%) indicated they were not. Two respondents (2%) left the question blank. Appendix L illustrates the analysis of this data.

The respondents reported on their teaching experience prior to becoming a middle school administrator: lower school level (K-4); middle school level (5-8); or upper school (9-12). Sixty-eight (66%) of the respondents had been a middle school teacher from 1 to 10 years prior to becoming a middle school administrator, 12 (12%) had been lower school teachers between 1 and 10 years, and 57 (55%) had been upper school teachers between 1 and 10 years.

No analysis was made of the number of years the respondents taught at two or possibly all three levels (lower, middle, upper) prior to becoming a middle school administrator. However, it is clear with only 12 (12%) of the respondents indicating they taught at the lower school level,

most of the overlap would probably be found at the middle and upper school levels. An analysis of this data is included in Appendix M.

Analysis of the Study

Research Objective I

The first objective of this study was to trace the evolution of independent middle schools to find out about the changes in organizational structures in K-12 independent schools. This information helps to explain how these schools changed their grade level structures to include a middle school division.

The 103 respondents in this study were given the opportunity to select the grade configuration that constituted their middle school from the following categories: grades 5-8; grades 6-8; grades 7 and 8; and grades 7-9. If the middle school was composed of a configuration other than one of the categories listed, the respondents indicated that configuration under the heading of "other."

The breakdown of middle school grade configurations are listed in Table 5.

The mode in the selection of grade configurations was the 6-8 pattern as it was selected by 41 (40%) of the respondents. The "other" category included eight responses representing these patterns: two 4-7 configurations; two 4-9 configurations; two 5-7 configurations; and two 6-9 configurations.

Table 5

Middle School Grade Configurations

Grade Configuration	Number	Percentage
5-8	35	34
6-8	41	40
7 and 8	19	18
7-9	0	0
Other	8	8

N = 103

Since there was no discernible pattern among the eight responses, they were merely listed in Table 5 as "other."

In order to determine what pre-existing divisional structures prevailed in these K-12 schools prior to the inclusion of the middle school division, middle school administrators were asked to list their school's divisional structure prior to the implementation of the mie school. Forty-five (44%) respondents reported that their K-12 school had a two divisional structure consisting of a lower school (K-6) and upper school (7-12) before adopting a middle school. However, 25 (24%) middle school administrators indicated that their K-12 school always had a middle school division (see Table 6).

In the following tables, the terms lower school, middle school and upper school are abbreviated as follows: LS = lower school; MS = middle school; and US = upper school.

Table 6

Pre-existing Grade and Divisional Patterns of K-12 Schools

Pre-existing Pattern		Number of Schools	Percentage
Grades and Divisions			
LS	US		
K-4	5-12	1	1
K-5	6-12	2	2
K-6	7-12	45	44
K-7	8-12	3	3
K-8	9-12	17	16
K-9	10-12	1	1
Always had a middle school division		25	24
No response		9	9

N = 103

Tables 7 and 8 together present additional analysis about the 25 (24%) schools that always had a middle school division in their K-12 structure. Table 7 is a definite indication that the middle school in independent education did not include the ninth grade. Therefore, the eighth grade represented the final year of middle level education. Conversely, the initial year of the middle school appears to have no defined patterns as the study indicates that the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh grade were all considered entry points into the middle school.

Table 8 illustrates the fact that the ninth grade remained part of the high school for those schools that switched their middle level grade patterns as all nine middle schools end at grade 8. Six of the 9 schools that changed their middle grades adopted a 6-8 pattern, indicating that grade 6 was the preferred initial year for schools that had tried a number of other options. These changes in grade level patterns, along with the figures from Table 5 showing that 40% of all the middle schools preferred the 6-8 configuration, provide strong evidence for concluding that the 6-8 pattern is now the dominant configuration for private middle schools.

Table 7

Existing Grade and Divisional Patterns Among K-12 Schools That Always Had a Middle School Division

Existing Pattern			Number of Schools	Percentage of
Grades and Division				Schools
LS	MS	US		
K-3	4-8	9-12	2	13
K-4	5-8	9-12	8	50
K-5	6-8	9-12	3	19
K-6	7-8	9-12	3	18

N = 16

Table 8

K-12 Schools That Started With One Middle School Grade
Arrangement And Changed To Another

Grades/Division Started With			Grades/Division Changed to			Number of Schools
LS	MS	US	LS	MS	US	
K-6	7-9	10-12	K-4	5-8	9-12	2
K-6	7-9	10-12	K-5	6-8	9-12	1
K-6	7-8	9-12	K-5	6-8	9-12	1
K-3	4-6	7-12	K-5	6-8	9-12	1
K-4	5-7	8-12	K-5	6-8	9-12	1
K-4	5-8	9-12	K-5	6-8	9-12	1
K-5	6-7	8-12	K-5	6-8	9-12	1
2-5	6-8	9-12	K-3	4-8	9-12	1

N = 9

The earliest middle school in independent education began in 1884 at the Haverford School in Haverford, PA with a grade level and divisional structure that included a lower school with grades K-6, a middle school with grades 7-8, and an upper school with grades 9-12. The Episcopal Academy in Merion, PA began a middle school in 1921, utilizing a K-3, 4-8, and 9-12 structure. However, most independent middle schools were started in the last 25 years as Table 9 shows.

Seventy-six (84%) of the 91 schools responding to this question began since 1961. One conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that the middle school movement is indeed a modern phenomena. While several middle schools have a history that goes back 50 and 60 years, these schools were clearly the exception to the general pattern of lower and upper schools that dominated independent education until the 1960s.

Table 9

The Years Independent Middle Schools Began

Years	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
Prior to 1900	1	1
1900 - 1910	0	0
1911 - 1920	1	1
1921 - 1930	2	2
1931 - 1940	2	2
1941 - 1950	3	2
1951 - 1960	6	6
1961 - 1970	16	16
1971 - 1980	39	38
1981 - 1986	21	20
Non-responses	12	12

N = 103

In summary, the evolution of the middle school in education has been the most pronounced in the last thirty years. Most middle schools today use a 6-8 grade configuration and the ninth grade is almost always part of the upper school. The 5-8 grade pattern is a second runner-up to the 6-8 pattern. The K-12 independent school today appears to have adopted the three tier structure encompassing lower, middle and upper school divisions. Some K-12 schools that started with one type of middle school have changed their grade level patterns to include grades 6-8. According to the research done by Schockley, Holt and Meichtry (1985), the 6-8 pattern has emerged as the leader in public middle schools. Thus, both public and private middle schools have adapted the same grade pattern for middle level education.

Research Objective 2

The second objective of this research was to determine the reasons independent school administrators give for implementing the middle school concept in their K-12 structures. The respondents rank-ordered eleven reasons in Part B of the questionnaire. In order to facilitate the analysis, the eleven reasons are listed in numerical order, 1 through 11, representing the order as they appeared in the questionnaire. The phrase preceding each statement has been provided as a means of quick reference when used in subsequent sections of this study. The assignment of these numbers is unrelated to any value given to them by the researcher.

1. (Separate Students) Separate pre and early adolescents from the upper school (9-12).
2. (Separate Faculty) Establish a separate middle school faculty with special knowledge and skills for dealing with pre and early adolescent learners.
3. (Flexible Scheduling) Provide 7th and 8th graders with a flexible scheduling arrangement that is different from the departmentalized structure typically found in the upper school (9-12).
4. (New Curriculum) Employ new curriculum designs and/or instructional innovations.
5. (Transition) Provide a smoother transition from the elementary grades to the upper school.
6. (Competition) Remain competitive with other schools that have developed a middle school program.
7. (Sensitive Teaching) Establish a program where teaching is highly personal and sensitive to this special age group.
8. (Facilities) Adjust to a better utilization of the school facilities and buildings.
9. (Curricular Specialization) Provide 5th and 6th graders with more curricular specialization moving away from the self-contained classroom concept of the elementary grades.
10. (Whole Child Philosophy) Employ a program specially designed to meet the physical, psychological, social and

emotional needs of the student in this age group.

11. (Enrollment Patterns) Adjust to enrollment patterns by distributing the school's total student population over three divisions (lower, middle, upper) instead of two (lower and upper).

There were 86 (83%) scoreable Part B questionnaires where the respondents rank-ordered the eleven reasons. Three respondents rank-ordered the reasons incorrectly, and 14 respondents left the section blank while completing other sections of the questionnaire. The researcher gave blank responses an average value based on the sum total of N/A responses for each respondent. Therefore, if a respondent rank-ordered only eight out of the eleven reasons, the remaining three blank reasons were added and then averaged in order to determine a value for each blank. The average value was then applied to the blank reasons.

The researcher believes that 17 unscorable sections in this analysis is largely due to the difficulty respondents in general have with rank-order designs. Rank-ordering requires the respondent to read and reread all the possible choices before making a selection. This process was apparently difficult for some respondents in this study. However, the researcher did not feel this problem skewed the data to the point of making the group percentages irrelevant. The frequency distributions of those reasons selected as the most favored are so significantly higher in percentage than the

others, that the unscorable responses would not make any substantive change even if they were included.

The frequency distributions for reasons one through eleven are reported separately so that each reason can be viewed as to the exact number of times it was chosen as first, second, third and so on through eleventh choice. The frequency distributions list the selection variables (choices one through eleven), the number of times each reason was chosen along with the corresponding percentage.

In addition, each frequency distribution has a mean score (M) which represents the average ranked score of all the choices made by the respondents for a particular reason. One of the more interesting features of this rank-order design was to obtain an average ranking for each reason, which takes into account all the selections the respondents made. The mean score tests the strength of all the responses in comparison to only those selected as the number one choice.

All percentages considered in this analysis are based on the number of respondents who completed the rank-order section. For the analysis, the following applies:

N = total number of respondents who rank-ordered the eleven reasons

n = number of respondents in a particular group who selected a certain variable

% = percentage of the number of respondents selecting a variable in a given group.

The frequency distributions of the eleven ranked reasons are shown in Tables 10 through 13. In the distributions, all values at .05% or higher have been rounded off to the nearest tenth of a percent.

Table 13 is a summary of the mean scores for the eleven reasons. Each score summarizes all the responses made by the respondents for a given reason. These scores were generated to give value to the weight of all the responses for each reason. In addition to the mean scores, Table 13 also summarizes the number of first place rankings for each reason that is included in Tables 10 through 12. These numbers will highlight comparisons among the respondents' first choice rankings with those reasons that were favored more evenly over the 11 choices.

Table 10

Frequency Distributions for Separate Students, Separate Faculty and Flexible Scheduling

Ranked Choice	Separate Students		Separate Faculty		Flexible Scheduling	
	M = 4.7		M = 3.9		M = 7.5	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	8	9.3	11	12.8	1	1.2
2	12	14	22	25.6	1	1.2
3	11	12.8	15	17.4	6	7
4	10	11.6	13	15.1	10	11.6
5	19	22.1	5	5.8	11	12.8
6	5	5.8	4	4.7	0	0
7	5	5.8	5	5.8	10	11.6
8	8	9.3	5	5.8	18	21
9	5	5.8	2	2.3	13	15.1
10	1	1.2	2	2.3	9	10.5
11	2	2.3	2	2.3	7	8.1

N = 86

Table 11

Frequency Distributions for New Curriculum, Transition,
Competition and Sensitive Teaching

Ranked Choice	New				Sensitive			
	Curriculum		Transition		Competition		Teaching	
	M = 5.9		M = 5.1		M = 9.5		M = 3.1	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	2	2.3	7	8.1	1	1.2	6	7.0
2	5	5.8	6	7	1	1.2	28	32.6
3	15	17.4	8	9.3	0	0	29	33.7
4	0	0	10	11.6	0	0	0	0
5	11	12.8	16	18.6	3	3.5	11	12.8
6	24	27.9	0	0	0	0	4	4.7
7	12	13.6	12	14	6	7	4	4.7
8	0	0	16	18.6	8	9.3	0	0
9	6	7	8	9.3	13	15.1	2	2.3
10	9	10.5	2	2.3	24	28	1	1.2
11	2	2.3	1	1.2	30	34.9	1	1.2

N = 86

Table 12

Frequency Distributions for Facilities, Curricular
Specialization, Whole Child Philosophy and Enrollment
Patterns

Ranked Choice	Facilities		Curricular Specialization		Whole Child Philosophy		Enrollment Patterns	
	M = 8.6		M = 6.9		M = 2.2		M = 8.7	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	2	2.3	1	1.2	50	58.1	1	1.2
2	0	0	3	3.5	10	11.6	1	1.2
3	2	2.3	3	3.5	9	10.5	2	2.3
4	4	4.7	8	9.3	0	0	3	3.5
5	1	1.2	12	14	6	7	4	4.7
6	4	4.7	13	15.1	4	4.7	2	2.3
7	8	9.3	13	15.1	4	4.7	4	4.7
8	7	8.1	12	14	0	0	8	9.3
9	23	26.8	5	5.8	2	2.3	21	24.4
10	23	26.8	5	5.8	0	0	29	33.7
11	12	14	11	12.8	1	1.2	11	12.8

N = 86

Table 13

Comparison Between Mean Scores and First Choice Rankings of
Eleven Reasons

Reason	Mean		Number of Times	
	Distribution	M	Selected As First Choice	
	Ranking		Ranking	Number
Whole Child	1	2.2	1	50
Sensitive				
Teaching	2	3.1	5	6
Separate Faculty	3	3.9	2	11
Separate				
Students	4	4.7	3	8
Transition	5	5.1	4	7
New Curriculum	6	5.9	6	2
Curricular				
Specialization	7	6.9	10	1
Flexible				
Scheduling	8	7.5	8	1
Facilities	9	8.6	7	2
Enrollment				
Patterns	10	8.7	11	1
Competition	11	9.5	9	1

The frequency distributions indicate that teaching the whole child was most frequently selected by the respondents as the number one choice. Fifty respondents (58%) ranked it first, and the next highest first place choice only had 11 people selecting it. That is a substantial spread and shows how important the whole child philosophy is to middle school administrators. The mean score for the whole child philosophy (2.2) was significantly higher than the other reasons, almost a full percentage point ahead of the next highest mean, sensitive teaching at 3.1. Based on the review of the literature about the special nature of middle level programs and the special needs of the students they serve, it is certainly not surprising to see that the whole child philosophy was ranked so frequently as the number one choice of respondents.

Separating the middle school faculty from lower and upper school teachers received the second highest number of first place rankings. While there is a substantial difference between the whole child philosophy and separate middle school faculty, both of these reasons were also selected most frequently for second, third and fourth place rankings. Separating middle school students from lower and upper school students received 8 (9%) of the first place rankings. The emphasis on the whole child philosophy, having a separate middle school faculty, and separating the middle school students from the upper school clearly suggests that

the respondents have placed a great deal of importance on the middle school as a program that has a very special purpose and in need of teachers with specific skills and experiences who can assist the student through the transition years. A separate middle school faculty and separating students from the other divisions of the school are very important issues to independent school educators. However, separating students and faculty from lower school and upper school is probably not as strong an issue in the public sector because most junior high schools were already separated from their elementary and high school partners. This is an important difference between independent and public schools as it relates to the reasons why each adopted the middle school concept.

The respondents also stressed the important aspect of transition from lower school to high school by selecting this reason seven times (8%). Sensitive teaching was selected six times (7%) as a first choice which further substantiated the need for middle school administrators to not only establish a separate faculty to teach this age group, but to employ teachers who will teach with a sensitivity to and an awareness of the personal and social development of the middle level student. New curriculum, facilities, flexible scheduling, competition and enrollment patterns were ranked very low suggesting the respondents placed more importance on

the educational benefits of the middle school and the teachers who staff it.

While the raw scores in Tables 10 through 12 clearly indicate how the reasons were rank-ordered by the respondents, the value of the mean scores is equally as important. The mean score reflects the average of all the respondents' answers to a particular reason thereby comparing the strength of one reason to another.

The whole child philosophy was an overwhelming first choice of the respondents with a mean score of 2.2. The whole child philosophy emphasizes the importance of a well-balanced middle level program where the personal, physical and social needs of pre and early adolescents can be effectively addressed. Teaching the whole child received the highest mean score (2.2) demonstrating that its overall weight as a reason was as significant as its high percentage of first choice rankings.

While sensitive teaching as a reason had the second highest mean score (3.1), it ranked fifth among first choice rankings. Also, separate faculty had a mean score of 3.9 placing it third in the mean rankings, but it had 11 first choice selections placing it second in these rankings. Thus, separating middle school faculty from lower and upper school teachers appears to be an important reason among middle school administrators for creating a middle school program. Unlike public middle schools, where the faculty is already

separate because elementary and high schools are generally on another campus, private school teachers in a K-12 structure usually share the same campus and facilities with teachers at the lower and upper levels. As a result, many private school teachers are often assigned teaching schedules that have them overlap in two divisions of the school. As such, middle school administrators may find it difficult under such arrangements to unify a separate core group of teachers who can devote their full time to the middle level. Thus, it is not surprising to see the mean score and first place choices of a separate faculty rated second and third respectively.

It is important to notice in Table 13 the large difference in first choice selection between the whole child philosophy and having a separate faculty. The respondents clearly favored the whole child philosophy over all the other reasons.

In summary, the most preferred reason among independent middle school administrators for creating a middle division is related to the whole child philosophy. A middle level program that integrates the intellectual, physical and psychosocial characteristics of early adolescent development into the educational system ranks as the number one reason for establishing a separate middle school division. The whole child philosophy is a central theme in the literature about middle schools. Many independent school administrators believe that in order to achieve such a philosophy in the

middle school, a highly trained faculty working with students in a program specifically oriented to their needs is not only desirable but essential.

Research Objective 3

The third purpose of this research was to measure how successful independent middle schools have been since their inception. To measure successfulness, middle school administrators were asked to rate the degree of success they have had in addressing the eleven reasons that they had previously rank-ordered. The analysis of this data broaches the question of how closely aligned the initial reasons for having started middle schools were with the actual results the school administrators experienced.

After rank-ordering the eleven reasons, the respondents rated each reason on a successfulness scale with values ranging from 1 through 7. A value of 1 was considered very successful, and a value of 7 was considered unsuccessful. In the analysis, the following applies:

M = mean score

N = total number of respondents who rated the 11 reasons

n = total number of respondents in a particular group who selected a certain variable

% = percentage of number of respondents selecting a variable in a given group.

Tables 14 through 18 illustrate the distribution of the successfulness ratings.

Table 14

Frequency Distributions of Successfulness Ratings for
Separate Students from Upper School, Separate Middle School
Faculty and Flexible Scheduling

Successfulness Ratings	Separate Students		Separate Faculty		Flexible Scheduling	
	M = 2.4		M = 3.2		M = 4.4	
	a n	%	b n	%	c n	%

1	33	36.3	16	16.7	5	6.2
2	23	25.3	25	26.0	11	13.6
3	15	16.5	16	16.7	11	13.6
4	12	13.2	15	15.6	12	14.8
5	3	3.3	13	13.5	15	18.5
6	2	2.2	5	5.2	16	19.8
7	3	3.3	6	6.2	11	13.6

a
n = 91

b
n = 96

c
n = 81

Table 15

Frequency Distributions of Successfulness Ratings for New Curriculum, Transition and Competition

Successfulness Ratings	New					
	Curriculum		Transition		Competition	
	M = 3.4		M = 2.3		M = 2.1	
	a n	%	a n	%	b n	%
1	9	9.2	34	34.7	35	46.7
2	17	17.3	33	33.7	20	26.7
3	28	28.6	14	14.3	11	14.7
4	22	22.4	6	6.1	1	1.3
5	17	17.3	6	6.1	4	5.3
6	5	5.1	2	2.0	2	2.7
7	0	0	3	3.1	2	2.7

a
n = 98

a
n = 75

Table 15

Frequency Distributions of Successfulness Ratings for New Curriculum, Transition and Competition

Successfulness Ratings	New					
	Curriculum		Transition		Competition	
	M = 3.4		M = 2.3		M = 2.1	
	a n	%	a n	%	b n	%
1	9	9.2	34	34.7	35	46.7
2	17	17.3	33	33.7	20	26.7
3	28	28.6	14	14.3	11	14.7
4	22	22.4	6	6.1	1	1.3
5	17	17.3	6	6.1	4	5.3
6	5	5.1	2	2.0	2	2.7
7	0	0	3	3.1	2	2.7

a
n = 98

a
n = 75

Table 16

Frequency Distributions of Successfulness Ratings for
Sensitive Teaching, Facilities and Curricular Specialization

Successfulness Ratings	Sensitive Teaching		Facilities		Curriculum Specialization	
	M = 2.4		M = 3.3		M = 2.2	
	a		b		c	
	n	%	n	%	n	%

1	25	25.3	14	17.3	30	36.1
2	39	39.4	20	24.7	20	36.1
3	21	21.2	8	9.9	10	12.0
4	6	6.1	17	21.0	8	9.6
5	4	4.0	14	17.3	1	1.2
6	3	3.0	3	3.7	2	2.4
7	1	1.0	5	6.2	2	2.4

a
n = 99

b
n = 81

c
n = 83

Table 17

Frequency Distributions of Successfulness Ratings for Whole Child Philosophy and Enrollment Patterns

Successfulness Ratings	Whole Child Philosophy M = 2.5		Enrollment Patterns M = 3.1	
	a n	%	b n	%
1	26	26.3	22	30.6
2	30	30.3	15	20.8
3	26	26.3	8	11.1
4	8	8.1	7	9.7
5	5	5.1	10	13.9
6	3	3.0	4	5.6
7	1	1.0	6	8.3

a
n = 99

b
n = 72

Most of the 103 respondents completed the successfulness scale. However, some respondents chose the No Answer (N/A) response. The N/A responses ranged from as many as 31 for the enrollment patterns and 28 for competition to as few as 4 for the whole child philosophy and sensitive teaching. The

N/A responses seem to have been used by the administrators when they thought the reasons did not apply to their particular situation or when they did not consider the reason important. The N/A responses confirm the rankings previously analyzed. The administrators consistently chose not to answer more often for reasons that were previously ranked as unimportant or irrelevant.

Tables 14 through 17 show the actual counts and percentages each reason received on the 7 point successfulness scale. A mean score is recorded so that distinctions can be made between highly rated reasons and those that have more of an even distribution among all the possibilities on the rating scale.

In Table 18, the frequency distributions of the successfulness ratings indicate that competition and curricular specialization are very close in mean scores with 2.1 and 2.2 respectively. Both of these reasons have a large cluster of ratings ranging from 1 through 4 on the successfulness scale. Apparently, these two reasons were clearly seen as having been successfully dealt with in the respondents' schools.

It is important to note that the range of mean scores for the successfulness ratings is from 2.1 to 4.4. These scores are quite high in rating success since the scale ran from 1 to 7. One conclusion that can be derived from such high ratings is that the respondents, as a total group, reflect some of the progress that has been made in

developing middle level programs in independent schools. The high ratings suggest that middle school administrators have been working closely with teachers in order to implement changes aimed at the improvement of education of pre and early adolescents. Not only do the ratings start with a high rating of 2.1, but the range from the highest rating to the lowest rating is only 2.3.

Table 18

Summary of Means Scores of Successfulness Ratings

Reasons	Rank-order	Mean Score
Competition	1	2.1
Curricular Specialization	2	2.2
Transition	3	2.3
Sensitive Teaching	4	2.37
Separate Students	5	2.41
Whole Child Philosophy	6	2.5
Enrollment Patterns	7	3.1
Separate Faculty	8	3.2
Facilities	9	3.3
New Curriculum	10	3.4
Flexible Scheduling	11	4.4

Another conclusion that may be drawn from the high ratings is that the high scores may reflect the biased judgments of the respondents. Since the respondents in this

study were asked to rate the success of programs which they were, in large part, responsible for implementing as middle school administrators, the answers to questions of successfulness may represent scores that reflect the respondents' close association with the programs and the favorable judgments they want to put on them.

In analyzing the successfulness ratings, the researcher believes that the mean scores are also significant in that they represent the sum total of all the responses on the 7 point rating scale. According to all objective standards, the concept of competition was an unlikely reason to be rated the highest among the respondents. Competition received only 1 first choice rating as the number one reason for establishing a middle school, compared to the whole child philosophy which received 50. The competitive element among independent middle school is a vastly different reason for starting a middle school from the more theoretical and educationally focused reasons ranked higher by the administrators. However, it appears that remaining competitive with other schools turned out to be a successful characteristic of having established a middle level program, even though such a reason was not considered important by the respondents as a reason for starting such programs. Therefore, the respondents may have rated competition higher than other reasons because the implementation of a middle level program probably enhanced their viability as a school in the

communities they serve. This striking difference in competition as having the lowest mean percentage in the rank-ordering of reasons and the highest mean rating on the successfulness scale may suggest that the independent school administrators in the survey have established middle level programs according to educational theory, but in practice they may have placed more emphasis on such practical matters as competitiveness. Or it may mean that competition was, in reality, a more important reason to the administrators than they were willing to rank-order in theory.

Table 18 reflects the actual counts of the successfulness ratings. In order to further analyze the impact of the N/A responses, the researcher recalculated the successfulness ratings by assigning them a 3.5, which represents a middle range score on the 7 point successfulness scale. The median score of 3.5 was chosen because the researcher does not believe that it is possible to input motives to the respondents not answering. Therefore, a 3.5 score represents the most unbiased assignment of a score with a 7 point success criteria. Table 19 shows the recalculated successfulness ratings in comparison to the ratings with actual counts shown in Table 18.

Table 19

Comparison of Actual Mean Successfulness Ratings and
Recalculated Mean Ratings

Reason	Successfulness Ratings			
	Actual Score		Recalculated Score	
	Rank-order	Mean	Rank-order	Mean
Competition	1	2.1	4	2.48
Curricular				
Specialization	2	2.2	2	2.46
Transition	3	2.3	1	2.4
Sensitive				
Teaching	4	2.37	3	2.47
Separate				
Students	5	2.41	6	2.54
Whole Child				
Philosophy	6	2.5	5	2.53
Enrollment				
Patterns	7	3.1	7	3.2
Separate Faculty	8	3.2	8	3.3
Facilities	9	3.3	10	3.42
New Curriculum	10	3.4	9	3.4
Flexible				
Scheduling	11	4.4	11	4.20

Table 20

Comparison of Mean Scores in Rank-Ordered Reasons and
Successfulness Ratings

Reason	Rank-Ordered		Successfulness	
	Reasons		Ratings	
	Mean Distribution		Mean Distribution	
	Ranking	M	Ranking	M

Whole Child				
Philosophy	1	2.2	6	2.5
Sensitive				
Teaching	2	3.1	4	2.37
Separate Faculty	3	3.9	8	3.2
Separate Students	4	4.7	5	2.41
Transition	5	5.1	3	2.3
New Curriculum	6	5.9	10	3.4
Curricular				
Specialization	7	6.9	2	2.2
Flexible				
Scheduling	8	7.5	11	4.4
Facilities	9	8.6	9	3.3
Enrollment				
Patterns	10	8.7	7	3.1
Competition	11	9.5	1	2.1

Table 19 shows that the N/A responses do make a difference, albeit small, in rearranging the first several ratings. Competition shifted from first place to fourth and transition from third place to first. The other ratings fluctuate very little in rank-order and in mean score. While competition may have had less significance in comparison to the other reasons if all the respondents had given it a successfulness rating, it still appears that the 75 respondents who did rate it considered it to be a significant criteria for denoting success. Moreover, because most independent schools are non-profit organizations and actively recruit students who pay tuition, remaining competitive with other schools is essential for survival. Thus, education reform at the middle level in independent schools may in fact commence with high sounding theoretical assumptions, but in reality may be grounded in such practical matters as competition.

Table 20 illustrates the substantive differences that show up between the means in the rank-ordering of reasons and the ratings of successfulness. This comparison is important in that it highlights the differences between the respondents' original reasons to implement a middle school program and the actual outcomes of such programs.

In addition to the extreme posture of the respondents in regard to the concept of competition, the issue of curricular specialization was ranked in the low end of the scale as a

reason for starting a middle school and rated second in successfulness. Thus, curricular specialization which emphasizes the elimination of the self-contained classroom appears to be a successful aspect of such middle level programs, but it was not considered important in starting those programs. It is apparent in education today that a downward extension of course material into the middle grades has emerged, making it necessary to have teachers who are well-versed in specific content areas. Moreover, while it may be ideal in theory to have a separate middle school faculty to teach subject matter skills, in practice separating the middle school teachers from the other divisions of the school may not be feasible. This conclusion shows up in Table 20 when separate faculty is ranked third as a reason and eight in successfulness.

While competition and curricular specialization are rated very high, it is important to note in Table 20 that the other successes are also ranked high and grouped close together. The percentage difference between competition (2.1) and new curriculum (3.4) is very small (1.3). The percentage difference between new curriculum (3.4) and the lowest rated success, flexible scheduling (4.4), is 1.1, almost as much as the difference between the first success and the tenth. Thus, flexible scheduling arrangements, which are often difficult for teachers and administrators to implement successfully because they require a multitude of

logistical considerations, appear to stand alone at the bottom of the successfulness ratings and ranked eighth in the rank-ordering. One conclusion that might be drawn from such a ranking and rating of flexible scheduling is that independent schools are generally not bound by defined lengths of instructional time often assigned by the district office in public schools. Since independent school administrators can be flexible in arranging classes and assigning time schedules, the respondents did not see flexible scheduling as a major reason to implement a middle school. However, innovative scheduling practices, which require significant amounts of planning and arranging, are often difficult to implement. Independent school administrators have apparently expressed their own lack of success in developing master schedules that accommodate the multiple needs of students.

In summary, the characteristics of success at the middle level in independent education are associated with competition, curricular specialization, transition, sensitive teaching, separate students and the whole child philosophy. These characteristics all received a mean score clustered together ranging from 2.1 to 2.5. The other characteristics which include enrollment patterns, separate faculty, facilities, and new curriculum received a more moderate rating of success from the respondents as these mean scores

were also closely aligned with a mean score range from 3.1 to 3.4. and it is considerably lower than all the other scores.

As Table 20 illustrates, successfulness patterns in independent middle schools are not very compatible with the reasons given for starting such programs. While the data in this survey suggest that independent middle schools have emerged for reasons based on the psycho-social needs of early adolescence, the success administrators attach to their new programs are more in line with more practical matters such as competition and curricular specialization. Flexible scheduling, facilities and enrollment patterns were low in the rank-orderings and low in the successfulness ratings. These characteristics appear to have less overall importance in the middle school reform movement in independent education.

Research Objective 4

The fourth objective of this research was to better understand the achievements that middle school administrators attribute to their middle school programs. Middle school administrators were asked to list the three most significant achievements they perceive their middle schools to have had since their inception.

The data from Part C were organized into clusters on the basis of logical relationships found in the respondents' written language on the questionnaire.

Not all respondents listed three achievements. However, more than 50% of the respondents listed three responses. The 103 respondents gave a total of 249 responses out of a possible total of 309.

The achievements are grouped together in a frequency distribution shown in Table 21. The achievements are listed in descending order with the most frequently listed achievements at the top of the table.

The achievements listed were developed using much of the same language reported by the respondents. The responses in this section of the questionnaire were very specific in nature. However, the achievements as listed are a very close description of the respondents' actual answers.

A relationship exists between the reasons middle school administrators gave for establishing a middle level program in their schools and the achievements associated with the results of such a reorganization. The first five achievements in Table 21 are clearly aligned with the highest rank-order reasons that include the whole child philosophy, sensitive teaching and having a separate middle school faculty. In this analysis, unlike the analysis of the successfulness ratings, the respondents indicated the importance of the very special nature of middle schools in meeting the unique needs of early adolescents.

Table 21

Achievements Associated with Middle Schools

Achievements	Number of	
	Times	Percentage
	Mentioned	

An advisee program emphasizing		
guidance and counseling	34	11
More elective courses	28	9
A middle school identity with a written		
statement of mission and philosophy	25	8
A faculty trained in pre and early		
adolescent issues	14	5
Teaching the whole child with a balance		
among academics, electives, activities		
and physical education	13	4
Outdoor education	12	4
Specialty courses in life skills,		
sex education, human relations and		
chemical/substance abuse	12	4
Community and school review programs	11	4
Leadership opportunities through		
student councils	11	4

Table 21

Achievements Associated with Middle Schools (continued)

Learn more material in greater depth in		
academic classes	10	3
Eased transition from middle to upper		
school	10	3
Emphasized study and critical		
thinking skills	9	3
Interscholastic and intramural sports	7	2
Curriculum designed to meet interest		
level of emerging adolescents	7	2
Better communication with parents	6	2
Individualized teaching	6	2
Better curriculum coordination among		
lower, middle and upper school teachers	5	2
Increased emphasis on basis skills	5	2
Better communication between teachers		
and students	5	2
Expanded foreign language offerings	5	2
Computer science education	4	1
Interdisciplinary team teaching	4	1
Flexible scheduling arrangements	3	1
Recognition of student achievements	3	1

N = 249

An adviser-advisee system that emphasizes guidance and counseling was listed 34 times (11%). A middle school program with expanded course offerings was listed second with 28(9%) responses, a separate middle school identity was listed third with 25 responses (8%), a specially trained faculty for the early adolescent learner was listed fourth with 14 responses (5%), and the whole child philosophy was listed fifth with 13 responses (4%). These first five achievements embrace the theory expressed by the proponents regarding the importance for having a middle school program.

The concept of transition was listed only 10 times (3%) and the teaching of study skills and critical thinking techniques was listed only 9 times (3%). The researcher believes that these two very essential aspects of middle level education were listed less frequently because both require specific and sophisticated strategies in order to determine if they are actual achievements (outcomes) of the middle school. As a result, the administrators may have focused their responses on what they were actually able to observe as achievements in their schools as opposed to those which may be achievements but were not immediately observable.

The data in Part C, therefore, suggest that independent school administrators support the ideals and basic tenets of a middle school philosophy reported in the review of the literature. This may be attributed to the fact that private school students, like their counterparts in public middle

schools, have the same special needs that require trained teachers and a specially designed program. The uniqueness of the middle level child necessitates a program that meets the physical, psychological, social and emotional needs of students in this age group. The most prevalent achievements in this analysis are the preliminary results of the efforts that independent school administrators have put into restructuring middle level education.

The other achievements the respondents gave represent some of the trends and practices associated with middle level education in the private sector. While no specific, discernible patterns are obvious, what is important to note is that these respondents and their schools have taken into account the many aspects of middle level education by supporting a wide variety of programs and activities. As pointed out in the literature review, specifically the work by Eichhorn (1966), young adolescents are best served in schools that use an integrated approach to learning. Eichhorn suggested that learning strategies and curriculum objectives encompass a wide range of activities during the middle level years. According to Eichhorn, youngsters during this period function best when the school program recognizes the important relationships in their physical, mental, emotional and cultural growth. Thus, the achievements listed, such as outdoor education (4%), human relations activities (4%), school and community service (4%), opportunities for

leadership (4%) and individualized learning (2%), address the large degree of variability in maturation during the middle level years.

Question 4 was designed to find out what specific achievements are attributable to the middle school reform movement in independent education. Clearly, the importance of providing students with regular, supportive counseling via an adviser system is the highest rated achievement. In order for middle level students to reach the maximum level of their individual ability, effective and continuous counseling for academic matriculation as well as for personal and social development must be an essential aspect of the program. Because the middle grades represent the years of transition and the formation of attitudes toward education and life-long values, young adolescents need access to adults who can help them develop a proper perspective for continued growth and success. The utilization of an adviser-advisee program is an important achievement of the independent middle school movement and represents independent school educators' awareness of the critical relationship between student and adviser.

The second major achievement of the reform movement toward middle schools was the expansion of elective courses that augment the required core subjects in the academic disciplines. The inclusion of elective courses in the master schedule for the middle grades certainly gives students the

opportunity to experience new areas of interest and pursue their special talents.

The third major achievement of independent middle schools was the development of a separate middle school identity with a statement of purpose and philosophy. Obviously, such an achievement is testimony to the fact that independent level educators see the middle school division as unique and substantively different from the purpose of the lower and upper schools.

In summary, the information from Part C suggests that middle level educators have been successful in achieving many other educational outcomes related to their original reasons to implement a middle school in their K-12 structures. However, an adviser program, elective courses and a mission statement were rated the highest. The researcher reported all the achievements separately, as opposed to grouping them, in order to highlight the large variety of programs that have been successfully utilized in independent middle schools.

The researcher was surprised to see achievements such as flexible scheduling and interdisciplinary team teaching rated so low by the respondents. Such achievements, in fact, require a great deal of program planning and scheduling alterations and, consequently, are difficult to achieve. Hopefully, future research will see such achievements rated higher as the middle level reform movement continues to grow and expand.

Research Objective 5

The fifth objective of this research is to examine the similarities and differences in philosophy and administration of independent middle school programs. The responses from the administrators were compared to the characteristics of effective middle schools as described by Merenbloom (1982). Merenbloom delineated 9 characteristics that describe the effective middle school. He based these characteristics on what he believed to be the needs of early adolescent learners.

1. (Educating the Whole Child) Features a program that responds to the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and moral needs of the early adolescent learner.

2. (Integrated Curriculum) Possesses a definite curriculum plan that includes factual information or organized knowledge, skills and personal development activities that are correlated with each other on a formal basis.

3. (Transition) Builds on the successes of elementary education and in turn prepares pupils for a successful experience in the senior high school.

4. (Effective Teaching) Employs teachers who can focus on the learning needs of pupils by using a variety of teaching techniques that actively involve students.

5. (Team Teaching) Organizes teachers into interdisciplinary and/or disciplinary teaching teams using

block-of-time and modular scheduling techniques to better implement the instructional program.

6. (Adviser/Advisee Program) Recognizes the importance of effective education by providing for a home-base or teacher/adviser program, stressing the importance of self-concept in the curricula as well as the co-curricular program, and working as a staff to provide a positive climate for learning.

7. (Flexible Scheduling) Promotes flexibility in the implementation of the daily, weekly, and monthly schedule of classes and activities to best meet the unique and varying needs of the students.

8. (Guidance and Counseling) Emphasizes the guidance and counseling function of each member of the curricular and co-curricular programs by demonstrating a genuine concern for the welfare of each student.

9. (School Evaluation) Evaluates the program on a regular basis and makes changes that enhance the learning process.

Part D of the questionnaire was developed by taking each of Merenbloom's 9 characteristics and developing a set of 4 corresponding questions for each characteristic. The respondents were asked to read each of the corresponding statements and rate the importance of each. A Likert scale was used with a range from 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest). The closed question format with a numerical rating scale of 1-5

was used to determine how closely aligned the characteristics of independent middle schools are with the model suggested by Merenbloom.

Four additional questions were added to Part D and they are numbered 18, 33, 37 and 38 on the questionnaire. The researcher added these 4 questions to find out specific information regarding current middle school practices not included in Merenbloom's model.

18. (Basic Skills) The core curriculum should place major emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills in reading, mathematics and language arts.

33. (School Counselor) Students' personal and social concerns should be handled by an on-site counselor trained in adolescent development.

37. (Graduation) Students leaving the middle school program should be invited to participate in closing ceremonies or graduation.

38. (Outdoor Education) All middle school students should participate in an off campus, overnight, outdoor education program.

The responses to the 40 questions in Part D of the questionnaire are given in Tables 22 through 31.

All percentages calculated in reporting the information obtained from this questionnaire were based on the number of respondents who actually answered each question. There were a very small number of respondents who did not answer some of

the questions. Where the total number of responses was less than 103 (100%), a note was added to the bottom of the table indicating the total number of respondents who answered the question. Also, the average mean for each of Merenbloom's characteristics was calculated in this analysis. The average mean is reported at the bottom of each table.

Table 22

Frequency Distributions For Merenbloom's Concept of Educating The Whole Child

<u>Corresponding Questions</u>									
	1		9		15		24		
Scaled	M = 1.9		M = 2.2		M = 2.5		M = 1.8		
Responses	a		a		a		a		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	36	35.0	31	30.1	28	27.2	49	64.1	
2	44	42.8	37	35.9	26	25.2	33	29.1	
3	20	19.4	24	23.3	26	25.2	19	5.8	
4	3	2.9	7	6.8	13	12.6	2	1.0	
5	0	0	3	2.9	9	8.7	0	0	

Note:

The average mean score for educating the whole child = 2.1

a
n = 102

Table 23

Frequency Distributions For Merenbloom's Concept of An
Integrated Curriculum

<u>Corresponding Questions</u>									
	4		13		14		40		
Scaled	M = 1.9		M = 1.3		M = 2.0		M = 1.7		
Responses	n	%	n	%	n	%	a		%
1	43	41.7	78	75.7	49	47.6	56		56.6
2	33	32.0	19	18.4	25	24.3	28		28.3
3	19	18.4	4	3.9	17	16.5	9		.9
4	8	7.8	2	1.9	7	6.8	2		.2
5	0	0	0	0	5	4.9	5		.5

Note:

The average mean score for an integrated curriculum = 1.7

a
n = 99

Table 24

Frequency Distributions For Merenbloom's Concept of
Transition

<u>Corresponding Questions</u>									
		7		8		12		20	
Scaled		M = 3.0		M = 2.5		M = 2.4		M = 1.6	
Responses	a								
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	15	14.9	18	17.5	28	27.7	59	57.3	
2	23	22.8	41	39.8	32	31.7	32	31.1	
3	26	27.7	29	28.2	25	24.8	7	6.8	
4	21	20.8	10	9.7	7	6.9	4	3.9	
5	16	15.8	5	4.9	9	8.9	1	1.0	

Note: The average mean score for transition = 2.4

a
 n = 101

Table 25

Frequency Distributions For Merenbloom's Concept of Effective Teaching

<u>Corresponding Questions</u>									
	2		25		28		39		
Scaled	M = 1.9		M = 1.5		M = 1.6		M = 1.8		
Responses	n	%	n	%	n	%	^a		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	52	50.5	68	66.0	57	55.3	61	61.6	
2	18	17.5	23	22.3	31	30.1	19	19.2	
3	25	24.3	10	9.7	14	13.6	7	7.1	
4	5	4.9	1	1.0	0	0	5	5.1	
5	3	2.9	1	1.0	1	1.0	7	7.1	

Note: The average mean score for effective teaching = 1.7

^a
n = 99

Table 26

Frequency Distributions For Merenbloom's Concept of Team Teaching

<u>Corresponding Questions</u>									
Scaled Responses	32		26		10		36		
	M = 2.9		M = 3.8		M = 3.1		M = 3.3		
	a		b				c		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
<hr/>									
1	12	11.7	8	8.5	11	10.7	14	14.9	
2	27	26.5	9	9.4	21	20.4	16	17.0	
3	27	26.5	21	22.1	37	36.0	20	21.3	
4	27	26.5	14	14.7	19	18.4	17	18.1	
5	9	8.8	43	45.3	15	14.6	27	28.7	

Note: The average mean score for team teaching = 3.3

a
n = 102

b
n = 95

c
n = 94

Table 27

Frequency Distributions For Merenbloom's Concept of An
Adviser/Advisee Program

	<u>Corresponding Questions</u>							
	5		22		27		29	
Scaled	M = 2.4		M = 1.4		M = 1.9		M = 1.5	
Responses	a				b		c	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	39	39.4	71	68.9	49	52.2	59	57.8
2	17	17.2	26	25.2	21	22.3	33	32.4
3	18	18.2	6	5.8	16	17.0	9	8.8
4	10	10.1	0	0	5	5.3	1	1.0
5	15	15.2	0	0	3	3.2	0	0

Note: The average mean score for adviser/advisee program = 1.8

a
n = 99

b
n = 94

c
n = 102

Table 28

Frequency Distributions For Merenbloom's Concept of Flexible Scheduling

<u>Corresponding Questions</u>									
	19		21		30		34		
Scaled	M = 2.5		M = 2.1		M = 2.8		M = 3.7		
Responses					a		b		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	35	34.0	61	59.2	23	22.8	8	8.0	
2	31	30.1	24	23.3	34	33.7	12	12.1	
3	28	27.2	12	11.7	27	26.7	22	22.2	
4	7	6.8	3	2.9	10	9.9	14	14.1	
5	2	1.9	3	2.9	7	6.9	43	43.4	

Note: The average mean score for flexible scheduling = 2.8

a
n = 101

b
n = 99

Table 29

Frequency Distributions For Merenbloom's Concept of Guidance and Counseling

<u>Corresponding Questions</u>									
	3		16		31		35		
Scaled	M = 2.8		M = 2.9		M = 2.4		M = 1.8		
Responses			a		a		b		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	16	15.5	14	13.7	29	28.4	46	45.5	
2	24	23.3	22	21.6	28	27.5	33	32.7	
3	37	35.9	39	38.2	26	25.5	17	16.8	
4	21	20.4	19	18.6	12	11.8	5	5.0	
5	5	4.9	8	7.8	7	6.9	0	0	

Note: The average mean score for guidance and counseling = 2.5

a
n = 102

b
n = 101

Table 30

Frequency Distributions For Merenbloom's Concept of School Evaluation

<u>Corresponding Questions</u>									
Scaled Responses	6		11		17		23		
	M = 3.6		M = 2.8		M = 2.7		M = 1.4		
	^a				^a				
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	9	8.8	16	15.5	16	15.7	66	64.1	
2	12	11.8	23	22.3	30	29.4	30	29.1	
3	18	17.6	37	35.9	33	32.4	6	5.8	
4	31	30.4	18	17.5	19	18.6	1	1.0	
5	32	31.4	9	8.7	4	3.9	0	0	

Note: The average mean score for school evaluation = 2.6

^a
n = 102

Table 31

Frequency Distributions For Basic Skills, School Counselor,
Graduation and Outdoor Education

	<u>Basic Skills</u>		<u>School</u>		<u>Graduation</u>		<u>Outdoor</u>	
			<u>Counselor</u>				<u>Education</u>	
Scaled	M = 1.5		M = 2.4		M = 2.2		M = 2.2	
Responses	a		b		c		b	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	66	64.7	24	23.8	51	51.5	49	48.5
2	25	24.5	25	24.8	15	15.2	15	14.9
3	9	8.8	27	26.7	14	14.1	15	14.9
4	2	2.0	16	15.8	5	5.0	10	9.9
5	0	0	9	8.9	14	14.1	12	11.9

Note: These questions are unrelated and therefore have no average mean.

a
n = 102

b
n = 101

c
n = 99

Table 31

Frequency Distributions For Basic Skills, School Counselor,
Graduation and Outdoor Education

Corresponding Questions

	Basic Skills		School Counselor		Graduation		Outdoor Education	
Scaled	M = 1.5		M = 2.4		M = 2.2		M = 2.2	
Responses	a n	%	b n	%	c n	%	b n	%
1	66	64.7	24	23.8	51	51.5	49	48.5
2	25	24.5	25	24.8	15	15.2	15	14.9
3	9	8.8	27	26.7	14	14.1	15	14.9
4	2	2.0	16	15.8	5	5.0	10	9.9
5	0	0	9	8.9	14	14.1	12	11.9

Note: These questions are unrelated and therefore have no
average mean.

a
n = 102

b
n = 101

c
n = 99

Tables 22 through 31 indicate that the respondents have given Merenbloom's nine characteristics high rankings. The range of average mean score is from 1.7 to 3.3. The mean score for all nine characteristics is 2.3 (see Table 32). Question 13, which asked respondents if middle level students should take elective courses in music and art, received the highest score of 1.3. Question 22, which asked respondents if critical thinking skills should be offered at each grade level, received a score of 1.4 as did question 23, which asked respondents about eliciting feedback from teachers annually in order to make changes in the program.

Question 26, which asked the respondents if the fifth and sixth grade schedules should rely on the self-contained classroom concept, received the lowest score of 3.8. Question 6 received a 3.6 score and question 34 received a 3.7. Question 6 asked respondents about the importance of student feedback in the evaluation process of teachers, an question 34 asked the respondents if the middle and high school schedules should be the same.

Table 32 illustrates a rank-ordering of the average mean scores of all nine characteristics. The characteristics rated the highest by the respondents were the use of an integrated curriculum and effective teaching. An integrated curriculum in the middle school represents Merenbloom's interest in having a curriculum that includes the teaching of factual information, study and thinking skills and personal

development. Effective teaching, according to Merenbloom, addresses the importance of having teachers who can focus on the developmental learning needs of middle level students.

Very close in ranking to the concept of an integrated curriculum and effective teaching were the use of an adviser/advisee system and educating the whole child. The concept of an adviser/advisee system received an average mean score of 1.8 and educating the whole child received a 2.1 score. The adviser/advisee system was, once again, rated very high among the respondents. The strong emphasis on an adviser-advisee program was the highest achievement the administrators reported earlier. Educating the whole child, which stresses the importance of having a middle level teachers who are responsive to the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and moral needs of the early adolescent, was also rated very high in successfulness of middle schools.

Team teaching and flexibility scheduling, with mean scores of 3.3 and 2.8 respectively, discuss the importance of having interdisciplinary teaching schedules for teachers and flexible class schedules for students. These two characteristics received the lowest mean scores. The respondents clearly indicate their interest in supporting a middle school that stresses an integrated curriculum, effective teaching, educating the whole child and a strong adviser-advisee program.

Table 32

Rank-Order of Average Mean Scores for Merenbloom's Nine Characteristics

Characteristics	Rank-Ordered Means
Integrated Curriculum	1.7
Effective Teaching	1.7
Adviser/Advisee Program	1.8
Educating the Whole Child	2.1
Transition	2.4
Guidance and Counseling	2.5
School Evaluation	2.6
Flexible Scheduling	2.8
Team Teaching	3.3

Note: Mean score for all nine characteristics is 2.3

Questions 18 (basic skills), 33 (school counselors), 37 (graduation) and 38 (outdoor education) were added by the researcher and do not correspond directly to any of Merenbloom's nine characteristics. Each question assumes a different position about middle level education and is designed to elicit information that the researcher believes to be of special interest to independent school administrators.

Question 18, which asked the respondents to evaluate the importance of a core curriculum stressing basic skills, received the highest score among the four questions with a mean of 1.5. This question was ranked highest in relation to all the other questions in Part D.

The questions related to graduation and outdoor education each received mean scores of 2.2 indicating the respondents' interest in having a graduation ceremony for students at the end of their middle school experience and outdoor, overnight, education programs. Both of these activities have been the subject of much discussion at recent independent school conferences and workshops. In this study, the respondents clearly showed their support for both programs as the mean scores of 2.2 are slightly higher than the mean score of 2.3, the mean of all nine characteristics.

Question 33, which asked the respondents to indicate the importance of having an on-site counselor to handle students' personal and social issues, received a mean score of 2.4. This more moderate mean score does not reflect a strong interest among the respondents for having an experienced on-site counselor. In fact, very few independent schools have an employee with such qualifications. However, the larger independent schools with enrollments over 400 have seriously considered having a full time counselor on the staff to lend support to faculty and students.

The analysis of the four additional characteristics

included in the questionnaire by the respondents further supports the researcher's assumption that the respondents viewed Part D of the questionnaire in a more practical and less theoretical manner. The results from these questions indicate that the core curriculum must include the teaching of basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics. Emphasis on core curriculum was considered very important by the respondents as they ranked that characteristic the highest in the Merenbloom model. Therefore, a more inclusive core curriculum for early adolescents, one that includes the teaching of rudimentary skills and factual information was generally supported by the respondents. A synthesis of the data from the questionnaire reveals the importance that the respondents place on providing middle level students with a well-balanced, multidimensional curriculum.

Summary

The data collected in this survey yielded information from 103 independent middle school administrators. The respondents completed a four part questionnaire that provided demographic information as well as descriptive information about the characteristics of middle schools in the private sector.

The information in Part A of the questionnaire provided definition to the evolution of the independent middle school. The respondents were able to complete all sections in this part, but the information regarding full-time, male and

female faculty could not be tabulated due to the crossover factor where middle school teachers had teaching assignments in two divisions of the school.

The data reported in Part B of the questionnaire yielded information about the reasons why independent middle schools began and the successes associated with those reasons.

Parts C and D yielded important information about the specific nature of independent middle schools, but both sections together were too long. The researcher believes that a more efficient method of isolating middle school achievements, such as having the respondents select the three achievements from an existing list, would be a better questionnaire design. This approach would allow for an analysis of specific achievements drawn from the literature that have universal application to middle schools. Perhaps further research on independent middle schools can draw on those salient achievements identified in this study as a list for respondents to consider and rank-order. This recommendation will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

The results of this analysis strongly support current research that suggests middle level students experience a number of conflicting influences that necessitate a specialized system of education. The key theme prevalent in the literature and the analysis is that middle level programs must remain intensely sensitive to the students' overall growth and development. An integrated approach to learning,

one that combines intellectual, physical and psycho-social development, is not only desirable at the middle level, but essential if schools want to positively influence the students' learning capacity during a significant developmental period.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was an investigation of independent middle schools. Such a study has not been done in any comprehensive manner in the past. Amid the growing number of middle schools in the private sector, this study was not only timely, but represented the first major study of the growth and development of independent middle schools.

Many educational theorists and practitioners saw the middle school movement as a direct attempt to improve the quality of learning for pre and early adolescent learners. The review of the literature describes the middle school movement as an attempt by educators to refine the system of middle level education, specifically as it relates to students' personal, social, and intellectual growth and development. Much of the research on middle schools centered on the fact that educators are changing their future agendas to accommodate the varying needs of students in transition between elementary and secondary education. In the review of the literature, the researcher found very little information about the emergence of independent middle schools. Most

of the literature about middle schools was centered on the public middle schools.

This study is a broad investigation of the middle school in independent education. The researcher is interested in developing additional perspective about middle schools in the private sector. As such, this study was designed to gather information from independent school administrators regarding the evolution and current practices of the schools in which they work.

The procedure used to gather information in this study was the survey research method. Independent school administrators across the nation responded to a four part questionnaire. The administrators were from K-12 schools that had a middle school division. One hundred and three administrators responded to the questionnaire representing, in large part, coeducational and day schools. While the researcher found that more than half of the school administrators responding to the questionnaire indicated that their middle school began in the years subsequent to 1960, it was interesting to find a small number of schools had a middle school dating back to the 1930s and 1940s.

The researcher analyzed the data in this study utilizing frequency distributions with numerical counts and percentages. Mean scores were reported where applicable.

Out of the 182 questionnaires mailed, 103 (52%) administrators responded. These 103 respondents represented

the eight regions of the United States with the largest percentage of respondents being in the New England and Middle Atlantic regions. Eighty-nine percent of the K-12 schools in this study were day schools and 11% were day and boarding schools. The student enrollment of the middle schools in this study ranged from 0 to 450 with 50% of the schools having enrollment between 0 to 150 and 42% between 151 to 300 students.

Eighty percent of the respondents in this study have been middle school administrators between 1 and 10 years. Fifty-eight percent have been administrators between 1 and 6 years. Therefore, many of the respondents in this study are relatively new in their positions and were not in administrative roles when their middle schools began. As a result, some of the respondents' answers on the questionnaire were probably based on what they heard about the reasons why their middle school began as opposed to knowing such information from direct experience at the time of change. Conversely, these respondents were in the best position to answer both the questions about the successes of their middle schools and to describe the characteristics that are currently in practice.

Most of the middle school administrators in this study advanced to their positions after having had teaching experience at the middle or upper levels. Very few respondents were lower school teachers. The researcher

believes that these data may suggest that more middle school teachers have their roots in secondary rather than elementary education.

The researcher found that there was an almost even gender distribution among the respondents; 54 were male and 42 were females. This is important to note since most administrative positions are generally held by males. As a result of the balance of females and males, the information is less apt to be distorted by gender biases on the part of the respondents.

The review of the literature, in both the public and private sector, pointed to the teachers more than the administrators as the most significant people in the success of the middle school program. The important function of the middle school teacher was mentioned by the respondents in all four parts of the questionnaire.

The following analyses represent the results of the study as they relate to the research objectives.

1. The first objective of this study is to trace the evolution of independent middle schools so that information could be provided about organizational changes in K-12 schools. This information explains how these schools changed their grade level structures to include a middle school division.

The most common grade configuration was the 6-8 pattern as it was selected by 40% of the respondents. The 5-8

pattern was the next most frequent grade level arrangement with 34% of the respondents reporting this pattern. Eighteen percent of the school administrators reported a 7-8 pattern and no respondents reported a 7-9 pattern.

There is little evidence from the results of this study that a junior high school concept or movement existed in independent education. In fact, out of the 24% of the schools that always had a middle school, 50% of these schools reported a three tier divisional structure consisting of a lower school (K-4), middle school (5-8), and an upper school (9-12). The other 50% also had a three tier structure, but none of these schools had a division consisting of grades 7-8-9 which is the typical structure of the public junior high.

The middle school movement in independent education is relatively new and follows the same substantive growth patterns of public middle schools.

2. The second objective of this research is to determine the reasons independent middle schools administrators gave for having implemented the middle school concept in their K-12 structures.

The respondents reported that the most important reason for establishing a middle school was to utilize an educational approach that was specially designed to meet the physical, psychological, social and emotional needs of the students in this age group. This reason was selected as the

most important by 58% of the respondents. The second most important reason for establishing a middle school was to establish a program with a separate faculty who was well-versed and trained in middle level education. Such results imply that middle schools should employ people and use methodologies that nurture the diversity of students' abilities and achievements during the pre and early adolescent years. Middle schools are more effective when they are more student centered and less content centered. The peaks and valleys often seen in the physical and mental growth patterns of early adolescents require middle school educators to design a program that is a distinct entity, with personnel who are clearly appreciative and understanding of students passing through tumultuous years. Middle level educators must be sensitive to the fact the students in this age group are more different from each other than they are alike. The effectiveness of independent middle schools, therefore, is largely dependent upon the degree to which teachers create an environment for students to better understand their unique growth patterns so they matriculate successfully through the school years wherein they have undergone complex changes.

3. The third purpose of this research is to measure how successful independent middle schools have been since their inception. The respondents reported that their greatest successes were related to remaining competitive with

other K-12 schools that established a middle school division and providing fifth and sixth graders with less of a self-contained environment and more curricular specialization. The least successful aspects of the middle school were related to providing seventh and eighth graders with a flexible scheduling arrangement, utilizing new curriculum and instructional designs, establishing a separate middle school faculty and adjusting to a better usage of school facilities. As such, the least important reasons given for establishing a middle school are the very ones that are ranked very high as being successfully implemented.

Respondents reported only moderate success with those reasons that are reported in the literature as being most significant and compelling in establishing a middle school. Those reasons are: employ a program that meets the physical, psychological, social and emotional needs of the students; establish a program where teaching is highly personal; and provide a smoother transition from the elementary grades to high school.

4. The fourth objective of this research is to better understand the achievements middle school administrators attributed to their middle schools since the inception of the program. Each respondent listed three different achievements associated with the middle school. The most frequently listed achievement was the utilization of an adviser-advisee program for students that emphasized the important function

of guidance and counseling. The respondents reported that the middle school curriculum was broad-based and inclusive of elective classes. Moreover, the respondents reported they had achieved success by developing a philosophy of education in their divisions that embraced the teaching of the whole child, integrating intellectual and psycho-social development opportunities for students. Many other achievements were reported, but less frequently than the ones already discussed. The achievements reported suggest a definite relationship between the reasons the respondents gave for establishing a middle school and the results of such a grade reorganization.

5. The fifth objective of this research is to examine the similarities and differences in philosophy among independent middle schools. The respondents' answers were compared to the characteristics of effective middle schools described by Merenbloom (1982). The results indicate that an integrated curriculum which emphasized basic skills and personal growth activities was the most important characteristic of effective middle schools. Moreover, effective middle schools employ teachers who are appropriately trained to meet the varying abilities and maturation levels of the students in this age group. The emphasis on specially trained faculty for middle level teaching assignments was a recurring theme throughout the analysis.

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, the researcher drew the following conclusions.

1. The middle schools in this survey were all part of a K-12 school, sharing divisional partnerships with the lower and upper divisions. In the review of the literature about the development of the middle school in the public sector, substantial evidence supported the fact that middle level teachers and administrators were disenchanted with the junior high as it did not adequately address the unique needs and characteristics of the emerging adolescent. Thus, the public middle school evolved out of dissatisfaction with the existing junior high school, which for the most part included grades seven, eight and nine. The review of the literature about the emergence of the independent middle school suggests that these schools emerged, not in reaction to an existing junior high structure as evident in public schools, but because their lower and upper school structures did not adequately address middle level students in transition from childhood to young adulthood. There were very few junior high schools in independent education. Educators in independent schools implemented the middle school division because their schools did not adequately address the needs of students at the middle level. Many of the K-12 schools in this study operated originally with lower and upper schools

with the middle grades in the upper half of the lower school or in the lower portion of the upper school. The emergence of the middle school created a three divisional arrangement in K-12 schools with a separately defined middle division.

Independent education at the middle level has changed as teachers and administrators recognize the special needs of students passing from childhood to young adulthood.

Independent school administrators reacted to the fact that a two tier system of a lower and upper school has not been effective in addressing the needs of middle level students. The middle grades have a culture and climate that is different from the lower and upper divisions. The climate of the middle school is most effective when students feel their contributions are valued and that teachers are deeply committed to helping them achieve personal and academic success. Some independent school educators believe that private school programs for the middle level student are adequate given the erroneous assumption that private schools are already more oriented toward personal and social development.

Because pre and early adolescents experience dramatic changes in self-concept as a result of developmental surges in cognitive and physical growth, their educational environment must make them feel confident, valued and respected. The middle school environment must acknowledge students' fears and apprehensions and try to convert such

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feelings into positive attitudes toward healthy living. As such, independent middle school educators must continue to upgrade their middle level programs with structured and substantive reforms that will facilitate the success of students. The rank-orderings strongly suggest the importance of teaching the whole personality of the child. While such a suggestion can certainly be applied to the teaching practices in the lower and upper schools, the emerging adolescent years are the most dramatic in terms of maturation. Therefore, the middle years in a K-12 school require a specialized program that is delivered by specially trained teachers and understood and supported by teachers in the lower and upper divisions. Such an arrangement has the potential for developing positive attitudes and sustained academic growth in each child as he or she matriculates through all grades in the K-12 system.

The conventional curriculum in the K-12 school with emphasis on elementary and secondary level programs is giving way to a new plan that includes middle level teaching practices and learning strategies.

The rank-orderings point to the fact that a new set of assumptions about the special nature of the middle grades has already taken hold among independent school educators. The successes and achievements associated with K-12 independent schools suggest that reforms are well underway to promote a separate middle level program.

2. Since the public middle school concept is largely associated with school reforms in the 1950s and 1960s, it is interesting to note that independent schools, albeit very few, emerged at approximately the same time as did the public middle schools. Also, twenty percent of the independent middle schools in this survey began between 1950 and 1970 compared to 58% between 1971 and 1986. Therefore, a tremendous increase in the number of independent middle schools occurred in a span of 36 years, 1950 through 1986. While the number of independent middle schools grew substantially from 1950 to 1980, the percentage of new middle schools between 1981-1986 (20%) is smaller than the growth reported between 1971-1980 (38%). Thus, the independent middle school movement may, in fact, be in a plateau period at the present time.

Both sectors, public and private, witnessed a surge of growth in the number of middle schools during the thirty year period of 1950 through 1980. The period of time between 1950 and 1986 was the most prolific period of growth for both sectors.

Not only did public and private middle schools experience similar growth patterns between 1950 and 1986, the grade level formation of public and private middle schools were also following similar patterns. While opinions about the ideal grade level formation of a middle school still remains unresolved, the 6-7-8 grade level arrangement has

emerged as the most preferred in public and private middle schools, with the 5-6-7-8 arrangement representing a strong second option in the private sector. In fact, several of the schools in this survey that started with one kind of middle school grade arrangement switched to encompass the 6-7-8 plan. What may be the most salient characteristic of the survey is not whether the 6-7-8 plan is better than 5-6-7-8 plan, but rather that the ninth grade has been systematically excluded from the new middle school arrangement in both the private and public sector.

3. The reasons given by the respondents for the implementation of a middle school program are closely aligned with the literature supporting the need to teach early adolescents in a separate school division. The emphasis on teaching the whole child with trained faculty, separating early adolescents from high school students, and creating an educational climate that is highly personal and supportive, follows the basic philosophical tenets of Alexander (1968), George (1975), Johnston (1982) and other notable middle school proponents. Also, these reasons are very closely aligned with the major research study by Valentine (1981). More importantly, the reforms aimed at improving middle level education in the private sector have provided a forum for educators and parents to challenge old notions that often implied a faculty assumption that private school education automatically denoted a whole child perspective.

4. Teachers who wish to work with the early adolescent learners must develop specific teaching strategies geared for this age group and must have knowledge of adolescent growth and development. Middle school programs will not be effective if they employ teachers who do not possess professional skills that enhance the learning of pre-adolescents.

5. In a study by Johnston (1982) a group of middle school administrators had difficulty exalting the virtues of their public middle school programs when asked to rate subjective characteristics such as philosophy and curriculum. Johnston concluded that respondents were inclined to attach success to those aspects of their programs that were easily observable and objective in nature. This researcher found similar patterns among the respondents' answers in this study. Many of the respondents attributed success to those aspects of their middle schools that were perhaps more observable and measurable, such as remaining competitive with other schools, providing more curricular specialization, easing the transition from middle to upper school and separating middle school students from students in the lower and upper divisions. Therefore, it seems that public and private school administrators appear more predisposed to espouse the important theoretical assumptions of middle level education, yet assume a less strident posture when asked to evaluate such constructs on a questionnaire. Clearly, such a position has implications for further research which will be

addressed in the next section of this chapter.

6. While the review of the literature appears to provide very little evidence documenting a history of a junior high concept in the private sector, the data from the study indicate that independent middle schools have emerged for many of the same reasons as did the public middle schools. Public middle schools emerged in large part due to the dissatisfaction of many educators and parents with the practices of the junior high school.

Prior to the inclusion of middle school, K-12 schools assumed educational responsibility for middle level students in the lower and upper divisions. However, these two divisions neglected to adequately meet the varied personal and social needs of these students. Thus, pre and early adolescents in K-12 schools without a middle school division apparently experienced similar program deficiencies as their counterparts in public junior high schools. The convergence of these educational reforms in both the public and private sectors evolved from dissatisfactions with prior organizational structures that were different. These findings indicate that early adolescence, as a socio-cultural phenomena with physiological effects, has as much impact on students in private schools as it does on students in public schools. As such, the need to provide a special educational environment for students in this age group transcends socio-economic status lines. Students at the middle level, public

or private, require special programs and educational environments.

7. The variability in student growth and maturation during the early adolescent years is being addressed in the development of independent middle level programs. The number one reason for establishing independent middle schools was to accommodate the varying needs of students during early adolescent years. Effective independent middle schools encourage an integrated approach to learning, combining cognitive and personal development, taking into account different rates of development. The respondents selected Merenbloom's characteristic of an integrated program as their first choice. The integrated teaching approach was strongly supported in the literature as a practice that addresses the variations in development during the transition years. The literature indicated that a functional middle school program is one that is sensitive to the different levels of student maturity and integrates learning with the teaching of personal and social development. Independent middle school administrators appear to be giving considerable attention to this important aspect of middle school education. However, the aim of middle school reforms must also include teaching students how to learn and how to become more efficient thinkers and analyzers of information. The most significant aspect of the integrated teaching approach is that it encourages middle school teachers to help students

synthesize new material, thus expanding their capacity to make deeper connections among the many bits of information in the curriculum. Teaching methods at the middle level should continuously strive to help students become more self-reliant learners.

8. Among the reasons chosen for the implementation of a middle school program, the respondents rated very high the need to establish a separate middle school faculty with special knowledge and skills for dealing with early adolescent learners. Also, the respondents indicated that the development of a specially trained faculty was one of their more prominent achievements. These findings clearly indicate that the teacher has a major role in facilitating success at the middle level. The results of the study strongly point to the fact that middle level teachers must possess certain teaching competencies and specific attributes in order to qualify for teaching in a middle school environment. The researcher also believes that the teaching function in middle schools, public or private, is a critical aspect for success. The teacher-student relationship is often the highest priority in developing effective early adolescent programs. According to the respondents, teaching must be personal and promote an atmosphere that fosters social development and positive self-esteem through meaningful interactions--teaching the whole child is essential.

The respondents' emphasis on the important role of the teacher and the unique traits that middle school teachers must have is further evidence that the teacher, and not necessarily the grade level arrangement or schedule, is one of the most important elements in the middle school program. This conclusion certainly can be extended to elementary and secondary education. The process of education, at any level, is as strong as the people responsible for guiding and directing the development of students. Indeed, teachers at the middle level have a very special function as they witness the growth and development of young people during a critical aspect of their lives.

Implications

The major purpose of this study is to better understand the middle school in independent education. The researcher hopes that the results of this study provide a base of information for independent middle school administrators and teachers that will assist in the future planning of middle level programs. Further, the researcher hopes the conclusions reached in this study provide middle level planners with a sense of direction in setting future educational agendas for early adolescent learners. The following implications should be of value to those educators who see middle schools as a separate unit in a K-12 system with unique goals and objectives serving an important bridging function between the elementary and secondary levels.

1. Education at the middle level can no longer be addressed casually or be contained as an appendage in the lower or upper school divisions. The middle school has emerged with a unique set of characteristics that address the special nature of the young adolescent. In this light, the middle school program must be a clearly defined unit or division with short and long term planning procedures that address the special nature of children in this age group. Middle school administrators will have to exert their influence and establish an equal status among their colleagues at the lower and upper levels.

2. With an emerging emphasis on middle schools in American education, more research about the theoretical and practical aspects of independent middle level education is required. This study was a broad analysis of the emerging trends regarding the independent middle school. Hopefully, more specific research about independent middle schools will be prompted by this study into areas of teaching competencies, curriculum renovations, leadership, early adolescent psychology and sociology. Extended research into such areas will provide more direction for middle level teachers and administrators.

The unique qualities of the middle school program and the students they serve necessitates a different kind of leadership. The new functions of the middle school administrator will need to encompass a vision that not only

promotes the goals at the middle level, but also promotes a system of collaboration with administrators in other schools. During times of change, an open system of communication among administrators and a pooling of professional resources provide all educators with the opportunity to develop shared insights and common strategies. Such an approach enhances the educational opportunities for a greater number of students and encourages stronger alliances among teachers. Middle school administrators will be more successful if they bring together and utilize expertise that exists in local, state and national associations focused on middle schools and early adolescence.

Leaders at the middle level in independent education will need to develop and articulate a clear and direct sense of purpose and mission. A common belief that the characteristics of effective middle schools will serve to enhance the needs of early adolescent learners must be heard by middle level teachers in independent schools. Effective schools require effective communication. Successful principals have a clear vision of the mission for their schools and help people move in a direction that makes the vision a reality.

With the tremendous growth of the independent middle school movement since 1960, many changes have occurred regarding the educational practices employed in middle schools. Consequently, leadership at the middle level

remains different from the lower and upper schools.

Effective middle school principals must not only develop a vision for their own schools, they must possess a vision that is open to continuous change and supportive of continued research and study. Effective middle school administrators will help teachers understand their role in educating the early adolescent is different from teachers at other levels, and that their significance and contributions will be different but equally as important.

3. The results of the study indicate that independent school administrators attribute a wide variety of achievements to their middle school programs. In fact, the different degrees of importance assigned to the practices employed in independent middle schools suggest a uniqueness among the school programs. While middle schools are different in practice, they do have a common philosophical vision about the special tasks and responsibilities for educating the child during the early adolescent years. Given the special nature of the middle school program, especially in K-12 schools, administrators must employ a system of shared divisional alliances among the lower and upper schools. In essence, the middle level receives students from the lower school and prepares them for the upper school. This system of matriculation from elementary to secondary education requires the middle school to provide a system of transition for students when they enter the middle school and

then again when they prepare for high school.

The researcher believes that strong communication and articulation between and among the lower, middle and upper school divisions are essential. A planned set of strategies is required in order for students to make a smooth and effective transition into and out of the middle level. The researcher believes that a shared divisional alliances model acknowledges the unique qualities of each division, and also recognizes the important connectedness each division has with each other.

The concept of shared divisional alliances implies that independent middle schools have the major responsibility for promoting a smooth transition for students who are advancing through a K-12 system. Most independent schools with a K-12 program have the advantage of housing three divisions of the school in close proximity of each other. Such an environment is most effective when the lower, middle and upper school administrators coordinate activities in such a way as to integrate the school's common vision through all the grades as well as promote the unique nature of education at each division level. The shared divisional alliances model is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Shared Divisional Alliances in Independent Schools

While each division of the three tier structure must have autonomy with regard to practices and programs, much of the uniqueness of the K-12 school can be lost if school administrators do not establish and promote a common vision. The common vision, resting primarily in the school's statement of philosophy, is the glue that bonds together the thirteen grade levels in a K-12 system. While the middle school division provides students with a course of study that builds on the basic skills learned during the lower school years, students at the seventh and eighth grade begin preparation for learning advanced subject matter that is more closely aligned with upper school. Students at the upper level in a K-12 program have the unique position of being able to connect with their roots in the middle and lower divisions. Upper school students and teachers can serve as role models by engaging themselves in the learning environments of younger children. These divisional connections can both assist students as they matriculate through the K-12 system and mitigate against unnecessary interruptions and awkward periods of adjustment. K-12 schools that develop a vision designed to meet both individual differences and unique group characteristics will have the greatest capacity for success. Since most independent schools have all three divisions on one campus, the opportunity to oversee a student's progress from early childhood through adolescence emerges as a distinct advantage over public schools.

4. The evaluation process of the middle school program received a moderately low rating from the respondents. This characteristic of effective middle schools needs to have a more prominent place on the future agendas of independent school administrators. The evaluation process of middle level programs is most effective when it includes ideas and recommendations from students, parents and teachers. While the researcher is aware of the enormous amount of time program evaluation takes, the process is essential for optimal growth and efficient development. Periodic program evaluation provides a framework in which administrators can assess progress and initiate recommendations for change. Middle level administrators must take an active role in creating the climate for meaningful program evaluation.

5. A summary of the results of this study was presented to the National Association of Independent Schools in March, 1988. The results of this research may be included in a monograph being prepared by NAIS dealing with effective practices of independent middle schools.

Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendations for further study of the emergence of middle level education in independent schools are as follows:

1. The respondents in this study included administrators from independent middle schools that were part of a K-12 school. Additional data from administrators in independent middle schools that are part of a K-8, 5-12 or

7-12 program would yield even more information about shared practices and common trends at the middle level.

2. The results of the study indicated that the role of the middle school teacher was very important in the success of the program. As a matter of practice, independent schools generally do not require their teachers to be certified by the state in which they teach. A study designed to find out how current and prospective independent school teachers will receive specialized training to ensure quality programs at the middle level will be of interest to school administrators.

3. This study was limited to middle school administrators. The study might be expanded to include teachers in order to find out if their perceptions of the theory and practice of middle schools are the same or different from administrators. In fact, the study might be expanded to include input from students--the direct recipients of the educational process.

4. The study might be expanded to gather information from ninth grade students who attended a K-12 independent school with a middle school division and from those students who attended a K-12 independent school without such a division. The comparative analysis could yield interesting insights into those characteristics of middle level education that are especially important to students. Also, the comparison could identify and underscore those middle level practices that make a difference in the preparation of

students for their high school years.

5. The respondents in this study indicated that a student advisement program is a critical factor for success during the middle level years. An expanded study of advisement programs that identifies those practices currently in use among independent middle schools could yield sufficient data to develop a new effective adviser-advisee model. Such a model could help teachers and administrators currently in the process of developing or expanding advisement programs in their schools.

6. The respondents in this study indicated that the primary reasons for starting a middle school were to address the multidimensional needs of students through activities that foster a positive self-concept. A study designed to compare levels of self-esteem and self-concept between early adolescents in independent middle schools with those who are in independent schools without a middle level program could provide additional data about the success independent schools are having in developing positive self-concepts. The researcher believes that such research is an essential aspect of evaluating the progress of independent middle schools, especially in an area that is considered one of the major reasons for implementing such a program.

7. This study focused on the independent middle school. Expanded research comparing the characteristics and practices of independent middle schools with public middle

school could serve to highlight additional similarities and differences, as well as provide the ground work for a dialogue between educational leaders in both sectors of education.

8. With expanded knowledge and information we now impart to students in academic subjects, a downward extension of advanced concepts has been seen in many curriculum designs for the middle and elementary grades. As a result, the content of current middle level curricula has to be routinely evaluated, updated and discussed with elementary and high school teachers and administrators in order to provide a sequential program for continuous learning. An expansion of this research to address the curriculum goals in K-12 independent schools could provide independent school educators with useful insights into how well current curricula addresses the unique learning capacities that exist within students as they matriculate through the educational system.

Concluding Remarks

A unique feature of the K-12 independent school is that it provides the opportunity for students to matriculate through lower, middle and upper divisions while remaining on one campus in basically the same environment. The transitional years between childhood and adolescence are facilitated in a K-12 school when it provides for continuous learning via a sequential curriculum with teachers who

collaborate regularly regarding student growth and development. The emergence of the middle school concept in the K-12 school has provided independent school educators with the opportunity to more effectively bridge childhood and adolescence by providing a separate middle level program that reflects understanding of the special needs of students during the pre and early adolescent years. In addition to the bridging function, the middle school has evolved as a separate entity with a specific purpose very distinct from the lower and upper school. Middle level educators in K-12 independent schools have readjusted their educational agendas in order to integrate the intellectual, psycho-social and physical needs of students in this age group. The uniqueness of the K-12 independent school has been refined as the middle grades have become focused on early adolescent issues. The critical element in the evolution of the middle school in independent education is that the marked changes in the overall maturation of adolescents have been systematically identified and integrated into a multidivisional (K-12) structure.

As the middle school movement in independent education continues to grow, middle level educators need to become more assertive about promoting those practices which serve to enhance the individual learning needs of early adolescents. Teachers, administrators and parents will need to coordinate efforts and establish strong partnerships for the purpose of

improving the quality of education in the middle grades. The stronger the alliances between school and home, along with an increased dialogue between teachers and parents, the more effective the middle school will become in making the learning experience personal, relevant, positive and rewarding. Successful middle schools will develop a strategic plan for continuous growth and renewal. Short and long range planning for middle school programs will need to be done in coordination and collaboration with lower and upper school educators to ensure that the middle grades are firmly focused on meeting the unique needs of adolescents. With increased awareness to the special nature of early adolescent maturation, middle level programs will emerge with purpose and integrity, and students in these grades will feel inspired and successful.

Finally, middle school educators must resist the urge to join a reform movement solely for the purpose of remaining competitive with other independent schools. Middle level reforms must not be viewed as a fad, but instead as an opportunity to improve school-wide effectiveness and promote an enthusiastic attitude toward learning among students. Independent school educators have the responsibility for incorporating change that further promotes independence and not conformity. Middle level reforms in this context must be carefully examined and appropriately applied.

This research identified some of the trends and

practices that have evolved in independent middle schools. While independent middle school educators have adjusted curriculum, teaching strategies, extra-curricular activities and advisory systems to provide young adolescents with an educational environment that promotes personal development and reasoned thought, there is still much to be accomplished. Rather than a mere reorganization of grades and school divisions, the emerging middle school in independent education has as its greatest challenge the need to establish a new philosophical approach to the middle years. This new way of thinking must see early adolescence as a period of considerable transition where individual differences are the norm and homogeneity the exception. In this context, middle level education is firmly routed in meeting individual needs in an ever-changing society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

July 15, 1986

John Esty
c/o National Association of Independent Schools
18 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Mr. Esty,

I'm writing to thank you and your staff for orchestrating an exhilarating week of "administrative renewal" at the recent Advanced Administrative Seminar at Wellesley College in Boston. The program was outstanding.

If you may recall, we had an opportunity during one of the lunch breaks at Wellesley to chat, albeit briefly, about the progress of middle level education in independent schools. I mentioned to you that I was completing at the University of San Diego my doctoral thesis which examines the emergence of Middle Schools (grade: 5-8, 6-8, 7-8, 6,7,8, 7-8, etc.) in independent schools throughout the country. We briefly discussed the fact that the Middle School reform movement in independent schools is unique in that it parallels a very similar movement in public education where the proliferation of Middle Schools, in most cases, is the result of some disappointment with the traditional Junior High School. Many public and private school teachers and administrators feel the Middle School, with its emphasis on psychosocial development as well as academic rigor, will more appropriately address the unique needs of young teenagers making the often difficult transition from childhood to young adulthood.

At the seminar in Boston, I spoke with other school administrators about the Middle School movement. I was very interested to learn that in recent years many independent schools (day and boarding) have reorganized their grade and division (Lower, Middle, Upper) structure to include a Middle School component. In fact, I spoke with Gene Krause at NAIS who told me that the Middle School movement has been quite significant in recent years, and NAIS is just at the point where statistical data is being collected to show such a trend. As a Middle School Head, I am, of course, thrilled by this movement and hope that my doctoral research will provide NAIS with some qualitative data about the emergence of Middle School in the independent school network.

9490 Genesee Avenue • La Jolla, California 92037 • (619) 453-3440

My doctoral committee has asked me to write to you to obtain some of the thinking going on at NAIS about the emergence of Middle Schools in the private sector. A letter from you addressing the position of NAIS toward the Middle School movement and the need for further research in this area would be extremely valuable to me in presenting my proposal to the doctoral committee.

Again, thank you for an extremely informative and refreshing conference at Wellesley. Jim McManus and his staff are to be commended for their effort and enthusiasm.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Lawrence S. Sykoff
Director, Middle School

APPENDIX B

LETTER FROM STATISTICIAN, AT NAIS

NAIS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
18 Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108 (617) 723-6900

January 13, 1986

Barbara Eddingfield
Middle School Secretary
La Jolla Country Day School
9490 Genesee Avenue
La Jolla, California 92037

Dear Ms. Eddingfield:

Our office of academic services has passed along to me your request for a list of member K-12 schools with middle school divisions. As I explained to you last week by telephone, we are not able to identify these schools directly since we do not ask schools to report divisional structure. The enclosed printout, however, does list schools with grades PS-12 or K-12 that reported salaries for middle school heads in our 1985-86 salary survey of administrators. I hope it adequately meets your needs.

Also enclosed is an invoice for \$30 to cover the cost of staff and computer time in obtaining this special report. Please call me if you need any further data or have any questions about this report.

Sincerely yours,

Gene Krause
Statistician

gk/
Enclosures

APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT OF NAIS

NAIS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
18 Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108 (617) 723-6900

August 27, 1986

Mr. Lawrence S. Sykoff
Director, Middle School
La Jolla Country Day School
9490 Genesee Avenue
La Jolla, California 92037

Dear Mr. Sykoff:

You were most thoughtful to follow up the brief chat we had at the Administrative Seminar with your letter of July 15. Sorry it has taken me so long to get back to you, but, as my secretary said, I have been out of the country.

Your understanding about increased interest and activity at NAIS with respect to middle schools is correct. Perhaps it is best symbolized by the fact that our former Elementary Schools Committee has now been renamed the Elementary and Middle Schools Committee. You may also know that roughly at the same time as the Administrative Seminar you attended, we were conducting a special summer leadership program for middle school division heads, which will be offered again next year. We also will be doing a workshop for middle school science and one for middle school writing and reading, as well as working with several of our associations on workshops for middle school teachers.

We are also hoping to publish a Middle School Handbook sometime in the next year or two. The author is Harry Finks, whose address I am putting at the bottom of this letter, in case you might like to correspond with him.

In any case, thanks so much for your interest.

Sincerely,

John C. Esty, Jr.
President

JCE:cp

Harry Finks, Director
LAKESIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL
13510 First Avenue, N.E.
Seattle, Washington 98125

APPENDIX D

Middle School Survey
Administrator's Questionnaire

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your input will be a valuable contribution to the research about independent school education. All responses are confidential and no individuals will be identified when the results are compiled and reported.

Part A - General Information

Name (Please Print) - Head of Middle School - OPTIONAL

Date

Name of School (Please Print)

1. What grades constitute your middle school program? Please choose one by placing a check (✓) in the column to the left:

----- 5 - 6 - 7 - 8

----- 6 - 7 - 8

----- 7 - 8

----- 7 - 8 - 9

----- other, please specify

2. Before your school implemented a separate middle school division, what was the divisional structure by grades (i.e., lower school K-6 and upper school 7-12; lower school K-8 and upper school 9-12, etc.)?

Please list the divisional structure _____

3. In what year did your middle school begin operation? _____

4. How many full-time teachers are employed in your middle school with teaching assignments specifically in middle school?

Total _____ Males _____ Females _____

5. How many students are in your middle school? _____ (as of January, 1987).

6. How long have you been the head of the middle school? _____ years.

7. Were you a middle school teacher before you became an administrator? Yes _____

No _____. How many years were you a middle school teacher? _____ years. A lower school (PK-4) teacher? _____ years. An upper school (9-12) teacher? _____ years.

Part B - Reasons For Moving To A Middle School Plan and Success In Fulfilling Such Purposes

Much has been written about the reasons for establishing a middle school program. Please rank the eleven statements below as to their relative importance in your school's decision to implement a middle school program. Assign a rank of "1" to the statement you considered to be the most important, a rank of "2" to the next most important, until you assign a rank of "11" to the statement you considered to be the least important. Please rank each statement and leave no blank spaces. If an item does not apply to your school, please put N/A in the blank space.

In the column labeled "successfulness," please rate your school in terms of its successfulness in addressing the reasons for creating a middle school. Please rank each statement and place N/A next to any item that does not apply. Leave no blank spaces. You will find it easier to first rank order the 11 items on the left and then rate the successfulness of each statement on the right.

Rate the successfulness using the following scale:

Very Successful			Successful		Unsuccessful	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Rank	Reason	Successfulness Scale (1-7)
-----	Separate pre and early adolescents from upper school (9-12) students.	_____
-----	Establish a separate middle school faculty with special knowledge and skills for dealing with pre and early adolescent learners.	_____
-----	Provide 7th and 8th graders with a flexible scheduling arrangement that is different from the departmentalized structure typically found in the upper school (9-12).	_____
-----	Employ new curriculum designs and/or instructional innovations.	_____
-----	Provide a smoother transition from the elementary grades to the upper school.	_____
-----	Remain competitive with other schools that have developed a middle school program.	_____
-----	Establish a program where teaching is highly personal and sensitive to this special age group.	_____
-----	Adjust to or better utilize the school facilities and buildings.	_____
-----	Provide 5th and/or 6th graders with more curricular specialization moving away from the self-contained classroom concept of the elementary grades.	_____
-----	Employ a program specially designed to meet the physical, psychological, social and emotional needs of the student in this age group.	_____
-----	Adjust to enrollment patterns by <u>distributing</u> the school's total student population over three divisions (lower, middle, upper) instead of two (lower and upper).	_____

**Middle School Survey
Administrator's Questionnaire**

Part C - The Success of The Independent Middle School

In order to better understand the success middle schools have had with the education of pre and early adolescent learners, please list below the three significant achievements your middle school is most proud of in terms of its overall progress. Please list the achievements that are directly a result of the implementation of a middle school program.

	Achievements	Brief Explanation
1.		
2.		
3.		

Part D - Characteristics of The Independent Middle School

The following forty statements are designed to elicit information that will highlight similarities and differences among independent middle schools across the United States.

Please read each carefully and indicate the degree of importance each characteristic has in your middle school program. Please rate the degree of importance using the following scale:

High degree of importance in my school	Average degree of importance in my school	Very little degree of importance in my school
1	2	3
4	5	

Characteristic	Degrees of Importance 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
1. Our middle school philosophy gives equal amounts of importance and recognition to students for outstanding performance in academic, athletics and fine arts.	_____
2. Each student in our middle school receives regular and supportive counsel in an adviser/advisee program.	_____
3. Periodic in-service programs throughout the school year are used to help teachers learn more about the special physical, psychological and social needs of the middle school student.	_____
4. Study skills are taught at all grade levels as part of the regular course of study.	_____
5. Middle school students participate in a daily homeroom program.	_____
6. A student opinion survey can be utilized to evaluate teacher effectiveness in promoting a positive school climate.	_____

Degrees of Importance
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

7. Students in their last year of the middle school should participate in a series of articulation activities with students in the first year of the upper school in order to develop a smooth transition from one division to the next. _____
8. Lower and middle school teachers should meet during the school year to coordinate curriculum objectives. _____
9. Curriculum goals and practices should promote awareness and sensitivity to cultural and ethnic differences. _____
10. Middle school teachers should learn the techniques and strategies associated with team teaching. _____
11. Academic achievement is measured through the use of standardized tests. _____
12. Middle and Upper school teachers should meet during the year to discuss the transition from one division to the next. _____
13. Middle school students should be required to take courses in music and fine arts. _____
14. The middle school curriculum should be reviewed annually by the faculty in collaboration with the administration. _____
15. In order to accommodate individual learning differences, students should be assigned to regular and accelerated courses. _____
16. Teacher in-service programs should emphasize how teachers can help students deal with stress. _____
17. The annual review of the middle school program should include feedback from parents. _____
18. The core curriculum should place major emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills in reading, mathematics and language arts. _____
19. Teachers and administrators should collaborate on the formation of the daily schedule of classes. _____
20. Information programs that address the philosophy and curriculum of the middle school should be given to all parents who will have a child entering the program. _____

Degrees of Importance
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

21. Classes at the seventh and eighth grade levels should be departmentalized. _____
22. The curriculum should emphasize critical thinking skills at each grade level. _____
23. Teacher feedback should be elicited annually in order to make changes in the program. _____
24. The middle school philosophy should include the teaching of moral education. _____
25. Middle school teachers must be knowledgeable about the varying degrees of maturity exhibited by early adolescents. _____
26. The fifth and/or sixth grade schedule should rely on the self-contained classroom concept. _____
27. Meetings between the homeroom teacher and/or the adviser should include discussions about personal and social development. _____
28. The most important quality to consider in the hiring of a middle school teacher should be the ability to work with the emerging adolescent. _____
29. Advisers and/or homeroom teachers should discuss peer relationships with the students they counsel. _____
30. The middle school schedule should be flexible and accommodate a large variety of required and elective courses. _____
31. Faculty professional growth money should be used to help teachers take graduate level courses in adolescent development. _____
32. The middle school schedule should provide for interdisciplinary teaching teams. _____
33. Students' personal and social concerns should be handled by an on-site counselor trained in adolescent development. _____
34. The middle and the upper school schedules should be the same. _____

Degrees of Importance
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

35. Teachers should receive periodic information about chemical and substance abuse education for students. _____
36. Teachers in the middle school should not teach in the upper school. _____
37. Students leaving the middle school program should be invited to participate in closing exercises or graduation. _____
38. All middle school students should participate in an off campus (overnight) outdoor education program. _____
39. The middle school should have a student council with elected officers. _____
40. Student effort as well as academic performance (grades) should be acknowledged at the end of designated grading periods. _____

APPENDIX F
COMPUTER SEARCH

DATE: 01/13/86 12:01 pm STA:M-S LG:PS-K HG:12 MSHEAD#:<1 (MG1)
SEARCH - FS1

SCHOOL	CITY	ST	TY	STU	LG	HG	ENR
Academy of the Sacred Heart	Bloomfield Hills	MI	d	G	PS	12	425
Adelphi Academy	Brooklyn	NY	d	C	K	12	272
Albany Academy	Albany	NY	d	B	PS	12	513
Albany Academy for Girls	Albany	NY	d	G	K	12	258
Allendale Columbia School	Rochester	NY	d	C	PS	12	462
The Anglo-American School	New York	NY	d	C	K	12	291
Ashley Hall School	Charleston	SC	d	G	PS	12	459
Athens Academy	Athens	GA	d	C	PS	12	575
The Baldwin School	Bryn Mawr	PA	d	G	K	12	489
Bancroft School	Worcester	MA	d	C	K	12	435
The Barstow School	Kansas City	MO	d	C	PS	12	438
The Berkeley-Carroll Str. Sch.	Brooklyn	NY	d	C	PS	12	500
Berkeley Preparatory School	Tampa	FL	d	C	K	12	738
Birch Wathen School	New York	NY	d	C	K	12	304
The Blake Schools	Minneapolis	MN	d	C	K	12	1,088
The Bolles School	Jacksonville	FL	db	C	K	12	983
Boys' Latin School	Baltimore	MD	d	B	K	12	461
The Brearley School	New York	NY	d	G	K	12	623
Breck School	Minneapolis	MN	d	C	PS	12	1,085
Brookstone School	Columbus	GA	d	C	PS	12	729
The Browning School	New York	NY	d	B	K	12	303
Brunswick School	Greenwich	CT	d	B	PS	12	532
The Bryn Mawr School	Baltimore	MD	d	G	PS	12	745
The Bush School	Seattle	WA	d	C	K	12	527
The Calhoun School	New York	NY	d	C	PS	12	439
The Calverton School	Huntingtown	MD	d	C	K	12	203
Cambridge Academy	Greenwood	SC	d	C	PS	12	310
Campbell Hall	North Hollywood	CA	d	C	K	12	709
Casady School	Oklahoma City	OK	d	C	PS	12	1,037
The Catlin Gabel School	Portland	OR	d	C	PS	12	574
Chadwick School	Palos Verdes Pnsia	CA	d	C	K	12	619
The Chapin School	New York	NY	d	G	K	12	608
Charles Wright Academy	Tacoma	WA	d	C	PS	12	563
The Charlotte C. D. Schools	Charlotte	NC	d	C	K	12	1,427
Charlotte Latin School	Charlotte	NC	d	C	K	12	966
Chestnut Hill Academy	Philadelphia	PA	d	B	PS	12	440
Christ Church Episcopal School	Greenville	SC	d	C	PS	12	541
Cincinnati Country Day School	Cincinnati	OH	d	C	PS	12	707
The Collegiate Schools	Richmond	VA	d	C	K	12	1,345
Colorado Academy	Denver	CO	d	C	K	12	623
The Colorado Springs School	Colorado Springs	CO	db	C	K	12	271
The Columbus Academy	Gahanna	OH	d	B	K	12	629
Columbus School for Girls	Columbus	OH	d	C	PS	12	607
Convent of the Sacred Heart	Greenwich	CT	d	G	K	12	338
Convent of the Sacred Heart	New York	NY	d	G	PS	12	452
The Cranbrook Schools	Bloomfield Hills	MI	db	C	PS	12	1,380
The Crossroads School	Santa Monica	CA	d	C	K	12	786
The Dalton School	New York	NY	d	C	PS	12	1,250
Darlington School	Rome	GA	db	C	K	12	930
Detroit Country Day School	Birmingham	MI	d	C	PS	12	1,191
The Donoho School	Anniston	AL	d	C	K	12	465
Durham Academy	Durham	NC	d	C	PS	12	915
The Elgin Academy	Elgin	IL	d	C	K	12	317
The Ellis School	Pittsburgh	PA	d	G	K	12	419

SCHOOL	CITY	ST	TY	STU	LG	MG	ENR
The Episcopal Academy	Merion	PA	d	C	PS	12	977
Forsyth Country Day School	Lewisville	NC	d	C	K	12	617
Fort Worth Country Day School	Fort Worth	TX	d	C	K	12	897
Friends Academy	Locust Valley	NY	d	C	PS	12	699
Friends' Central School	Philadelphia	PA	d	C	K	12	636
Friends School	Baltimore	MD	d	C	PS	12	855
Friends Select School	Philadelphia	PA	d	C	K	12	609
Friends Seminary	New York	NY	d	C	PS	12	556
The Garrison Forest School	Garrison	MD	db	G	PS	12	481
Georgetown Day School, Inc.	Washington	DC	d	C	PS	12	839
Germantown Academy	Fort Washington	PA	d	C	PS	12	1,034
The Greenhill School	Dallas	TX	d	C	PS	12	1,069
Greensboro Day School	Greensboro	NC	d	C	K	12	632
Greens Farms Academy	Green Farms	CT	d	C	K	12	436
Greenwich Academy	Greenwich	CT	d	G	PS	12	494
Hackley School	Tarrytown	NY	d	C	K	12	785
Hamden Hall Country Day School	New Haven	CT	d	C	PS	12	548
The Haverford School	Haverford	PA	d	B	K	12	858
Hawken School	Gates Mills	OH	d	C	K	12	812
The Head-Royce School	Oakland	CA	d	C	K	12	560
Heathwood Hall Epris. School	Columbia	SC	d	C	PS	12	771
The Heritage School	Newman	GA	d	C	K	12	217
The Hewitt School	New York	NY	d	G	K	12	330
The Hockaday School	Dallas	TX	db	G	PS	12	871
Holland Hall School	Tulsa	OK	d	C	PS	12	995
Horace Mann-Barnard School	Bronx	NY	d	C	PS	12	1,632
The Hutchison School	Memphis	TN	d	G	PS	12	706
Isidore Neuman School	New Orleans	LA	d	C	K	12	1,195
Joseph T. Walker School	Marietta,	GA	d	C	PS	12	502
The Julius T. Wright School	Mobile	AL	d	G	PS	12	650
Keith Country Day School	Rockford	IL	d	C	PS	12	286
Kent Place School	Summit	NJ	d	G	PS	12	484
Kentucky Country Day School	Louisville	KY	d	C	K	12	727
The Key School	Annapolis	MD	d	C	PS	12	410
The Kinkaid School	Houston	TX	d	C	PS	12	1,229
Laguna Blanca School	Santa Barbara	CA	d	C	K	12	260
La Jolla Country Day School	La Jolla	CA	d	C	PS	12	735
Lake Ridge Academy	North Ridgeville	OH	d	C	K	12	408
Landmark School	Pelides Crossing	MA	bd	C	PS	12	505
The Latin School of Chicago	Chicago	IL	d	C	PS	12	917
Laurel School	Cleveland	OH	d	G	PS	12	513
The Lenox School	New York	NY	d	C	K	12	380
Lincoln School	Providence	RI	d	C	PS	12	434
Louise S. McGehee School	New Orleans	LA	d	G	PS	12	409
The Louisville Collegiate Sch.	Louisville	KY	d	C	K	12	513
The Lovett School	Atlanta	GA	d	C	PS	12	1,459
McDonough School	McDonough	MD	db	C	PS	12	1,154
The MacLay School	Tallahassee	FL	d	C	K	12	703
The Maret School	Washington	DC	d	C	K	12	501
Mary Institute	St. Louis	MO	d	C	K	12	610
Metairie Park C. D. School	Metairie	LA	d	C	K	12	708
Miami Country Day School	Miami	FL	d	C	K	12	629
Milton Academy	Milton	MA	db	C	K	12	903
The Montclair Kimberley Acad.	Montclair	NJ	d	C	K	12	1,050

SCHOOL	CITY	ST	TY	STU	LG	HC	ENR
Moravian Academy	Bethlehem	PA	db	C	PS	12	575
Morgan Park Academy	Chicago	IL	d	C	K	12	466
Moses Brown School	Providence	RI	d	C	PS	12	714
The Nightingale-Bamford School	New York	NY	d	G	K	12	472
The North Shore C. D. School	Winnetka	IL	d	C	K	12	392
North Cross School	Roanoke	VA	d	C	K	12	545
The Oakridge School	Ft. Worth	TX	d	C	PS	12	473
The Packer Collegiate Inst.	Brooklyn	NY	d	C	K	12	614
The Park School (Buffalo)	Snyder	NY	d	C	PS	12	338
The Park School	Brooklandville	MD	d	C	PS	12	656
Park-Tudor School	Indianapolis	IN	d	C	PS	12	693
The Pembroke Hill School	Kansas City	MO	d	C	PS	12	1,006
Phoenix Country Day School	Phoenix	AZ	d	C	K	12	563
The Pingry School	Martinsville	NJ	d	C	K	12	935
Polytechnic School	Pasadena	CA	d	C	PS	12	757
The Prairie School	Racine	WI	d	C	PS	12	446
Princeton Day School	Princeton	NJ	d	C	K	12	868
The Principia	St. Louis	MO	db	C	PS	12	708
Providence Day School	Charlotte	NC	d	C	K	12	751
Ravenscroft School	Raleigh	NC	d	C	PS	12	878
The Rockland C. D. School	Congers	NY	d	C	K	12	156
Roland Park Country School	Baltimore	MD	d	G	K	12	591
Roycemore School	Evanston	IL	d	C	PS	12	224
Rutgers Preparatory School	Somerset	NJ	d	C	K	12	551
Sacramento Country Day School	Sacramento	CA	d	C	K	12	420
St. Andrew's Episcopal School	Jackson	MS	d	C	PS	12	772
Saint Ann's School	Brooklyn Heights	NY	d	C	PS	12	763
St. Anne's-Belfield School	Charlottesville	VA	d	C	PS	12	602
St. Catherine's School	Richmond	VA	db	G	K	12	726
St. Christopher's School	Richmond	VA	d	H	K	12	860
Saint Edward's School	Vero Beach	FL	d	C	PS	12	500
St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's Sch.	New York	NY	d	C	PS	12	421
St. John's School	Houston	TX	d	C	K	12	1,096
Saint Margaret's McTernan Sch.	Waterbury	CT	d	C	K	12	445
St. Martin's Episcopal School	McAlester	LA	d	C	PS	12	927
St. Mary's Episcopal School	Memphis	TN	d	G	PS	12	600
Saint Mary's Hall	San Antonio	TX	db	G	PS	12	719
St. Paul's Episcopal School	Mobile	AL	d	C	PS	12	1,121
Saint Paul's School	Brooklandville	MD	d	D	K	12	718
Sanford School	Hockessin	DE	d	C	PS	12	465
The Savannah C. D. School	Savannah	GA	d	C	PS	12	864
Bayre School	Lexington	KY	d	C	PS	12	568
Schools of the Sacred Heart	San Francisco	CA	d	C	PS	12	840
The Selwyn School	Denton	TX	db	C	PS	12	278
The Seven Hills Schools	Cincinnati	OH	d	C	PS	12	852
Gewickley Academy	Newark	PA	d	C	PS	12	637
Shady Side Academy	Pittsburgh	PA	db	C	K	12	897
Shorecrest Preparatory School	St. Petersburg	FL	d	C	K	12	855
The Sidwell Friends School	Washington	DC	d	C	PS	12	1,007
Southfield School	Shreveport	LA	d	C	PS	12	400
The Spartanburg Day School	Spartanburg	SC	d	C	PS	12	376
The Spence School	New York	NY	d	G	K	12	541
Staten Island Academy	Staten Island	NY	d	C	PS	12	472
Stone Ridge-C. D. S. of S. H.	Bethesda	MD	d	C	PS	12	545

SCHOOL	CITY	ST	TY	STU	LG	HC	ENR
Stuart Cntry Day Sch. of S. H.	Princeton	NJ	d	C	PS	12	456
The Tatnall School	Wilmington	DE	d	C	PS	12	762
Tower Hill School	Wilmington	DE	d	C	PS	12	665
Trinity School	New York	NY	d	C	K	12	860
UMS Preparatory School	Mobile	AL	d	B	PS	12	701
University Liggett School	Grosse Pointe Woods	MI	d	C	PS	12	879
The Univ. of Chicago Lab. Schs	Chicago	IL	d	C	PS	12	1,439
University School of Milwaukee	Milwaukee	WI	d	C	PS	12	774
University School of Nashville	Nashville	TN	d	C	K	12	617
The Univ. Sch. of Nova Univ.	Ft. Lauderdale	FL	d	C	PS	12	1,424
The Vail-Deane School	Mountainside	NJ	d	C	K	12	188
Waynflete School	Portland	ME	d	C	PS	12	431
Westtown School	Westtown	PA	db	C	PS	12	622
The Wheeler School	Providence	RI	d	C	PS	12	582
Wichita Collegiate School	Wichita	KS	d	C	PS	12	636
William Penn Charter School	Philadelphia	PA	d	B	K	12	760
Wilmington Friends School	Wilmington	DE	d	C	PS	12	641
Woodmere Academy	Woodmere	NY	d	C	PS	12	457
Woodward Academy	College Park	GA	db	C	PS	12	1,774

APPENDIX F
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL TO ADMINISTRATORS IN FIELD TEST

La Jolla Country Day School

February 25, 1987

Dear

I hope that all is going well for you in the whirlwind of the second semester of the school year. It always seems to me that the months of February, March and April have a way of becoming filled with never-ending details and an enormous amount of paperwork. Thank goodness for the upcoming Spring vacation and a chance to take a deep breath before the final race for "home" (more formally regarded as the end of the school year).

As I prepare to complete another major step in my doctoral thesis dealing with the emergence of the middle school in independent education, I'd like to ask you for a favor. I need some feedback on a set of questionnaires I intend to use to collect data from approximately 182 middle schools throughout the United States. Before I start this project, my doctoral committee has asked me to elicit some feedback from colleagues about the questionnaires.

I would appreciate it if you could take a moment to look over the enclosed instruments and comment about the following (on the questionnaire):

- clarity of the questions
- relevance of the questions
- general style and format

Of course, any additional feedback will be most appreciated. I have enclosed a self-addressed envelope so you can return the questionnaires directly to me. If you could return these to me in the next ten days it would be most helpful.

Thanks for your help and support. I'll keep you posted as to my progress. In fact, I'm sure you'll be included in the official mailing that will go out in April.

Thanks for your help. I'm eagerly awaiting the responses.

Best regards,

Lawrence S. Sykoff

9490 Genesee Avenue • La Jolla, California 92037 • (619) 453-3440

APPENDIX G

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL TO ADMINISTRATORS IN PILOT STUDY

La Jolla Country Day School

April 23, 1987

Fellow Middle School Administrator,

The enclosed surveys are designed to elicit feedback from middle school administrators. As part of a doctoral dissertation I am completing at the University of San Diego, this research will be the first of its kind to explore the emergence of the middle school in independent education.

Before the survey can be utilized, it needs to be piloted (field-tested) with middle school administrators in independent schools. This is where I would like to have your help.

I would appreciate it if you could set aside about 30 minutes to take the survey - all four parts. The information you give will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be analyzed to see if the questions elicit substantive data which can be used to draw general conclusions about middle schools in the private sector.

After you have completed the survey, please place it in the self-addressed envelope that has been provided. I would be most appreciative if you can return the survey to me in 5 days. I realize this is a big favor to ask during the busy spring months, however, your part in this research is most important in developing research data about middle schools. I anticipate that the results of this research will be utilized by NAIS in an upcoming monograph they are developing about the middle school movement.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you would like to have a copy of the final research findings, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Lawrence S. Sykoff
Director, Middle School

9490 Genesee Avenue • La Jolla, California 92037 • (619) 453-3440

APPENDIX H

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL WITH QUESTIONNAIRE

La Jolla Country Day School

May 28, 1987

Dear Independent School Head:

As the Director of the Middle School at La Jolla Country Day School, I am conducting a comprehensive research study about middle schools in independent education. This research is the first of its kind. It not only traces the history of the middle school, but also examines the unique characteristics of middle level education in the private sector. Only PK - 12 member schools of the National Association of Independent Schools are requested to participate. The results of this study will provide private school administrators with important qualitative and quantitative data about the emergence and proliferation of middle schools in independent education.

Your assistance in completing the enclosed survey is critical. I realize that this request comes at a very busy time of the academic year. However, it is precisely at this time when reflection about your middle school program can be meaningful and valuable--to us both!

The enclosed survey should be completed by the person who is directly responsible for running the middle school. The pilot study participants found that 30 minutes was plenty of time to complete the questionnaire. The survey must be returned by June 10th.

Please forward this letter, and the packet, to the person in charge of the middle school at your earliest convenience. The information received will be held strictly confidential. The analysis of the data will identify significant patterns and trends in independent middle schools across the United States. The final research findings will be completed by October, 1987.

Because this is an extensive research project about independent middle schools, a 100% response rate will ensure that your concerns are accurately reflected in the analysis.

Please let me take this opportunity to thank you, and your middle school director, in advance, for your cooperation. I look forward to receiving your packet on or before June 10th.

Sincerely,

Lawrence S. Sykoff
Director, Middle School

9490 Genesee Avenue • La Jolla, California 92037 • (619) 453-3440

APPENDIX I
THANK YOU LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

Date:

Dear

Thank you for returning the administrator's survey about middle schools. I realize how precious time is at this particular point in the school year, and I appreciate your timely response. Please be advised that your responses to the survey questions are most important and will contribute to a growing body of literature about middle level education in independent schools.

I look forward to presenting the results of the survey at the NAIS annual conference in New York in February, 1988.

Thanks again for your help. Best regards for a pleasant summer season.

Sincerely,

Lawrence S. Sykoff
Director, Middle School

9490 Genesee Avenue • La Jolla, California 92037-1399 • (619) 453-3440

APPENDIX J
FOLLOW UP LETTER TO NON RESPONDENTS
La Jolla Country Day School

July 7, 1987

Dear Independent School Head:

Approximately one month ago, I sent to you a questionnaire about middle schools in independent education. The questionnaire was sent as part of a national survey I am conducting about the characteristics of private middle schools.

The response to the first mailing,, which was sent to headmasters of K-12 schools with a middle school division, was truly outstanding. Since this is an extensive research project about independent middle schools across the nation, I would very much like to have your opinions and concerns accurately reflected in the final analysis. Because the original questionnaire was sent out in the beginning of June, I understand that it may not have been a major priority with all the very busy end of the year activities. Therefore, I am enclosing another copy of the questionnaire.

As I indicated in my original mailing, the enclosed survey should be filled out by the person who is directly responsible for running your middle school. The questionnaire takes about thirty minutes to complete. I would appreciate it if you would forward the questionnaire to the head of your middle school, and tell him/her that it needs to be returned to me no later than July 20th. The information received will be held strictly confidential. The questionnaire can be mailed to me in the envelope that has been provided.

I look forward to receiving the completed questionnaire by July 20th, and thank you and your middle school director, in advance, for your cooperation.

Best regards for a pleasant summer.

Sincerely,

Lawrence S. Sykoff
Director, Middle School

9490 Genesee Avenue • La Jolla, California 92037 • (619) 453-3440

APPENDIX K

Number of Years Respondent Was
Head of The Middle School

<u>Number of Years As</u> <u>Head of Middle School</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Percentage of</u> <u>Respondents</u>
1 - 2	20	19
2 - 3	11	11
3 - 4	19	18
4 - 5	10	9
5 - 6	10	9
6 - 7	4	4
7 - 8	5	5
8 - 9	9	9
9 - 10	2	2
10 - 11	3	3
11 - 12	1	1
12 - 13	0	0
13 - 14	3	3
14 - 15	0	0
15 - 16	0	0
16 - 17	0	0
17 - 18	1	1
18 - 19	1	1
19 - 20	2	2
20 - 21	1	1
21 - 22	0	0
22 - 23	0	0
23 - 24	0	0
24 - 25	0	0
25 - 26	1	1
Unreported	2	0

N = 103

APPENDIX L

Number of Respondents Who Were Middle
School Teachers Before Becoming Administrators

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	90	87
No	11	11
No Response	2	2
Total	103	100

APPENDIX M

Teaching Experience of Respondents

Number of Years	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
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Middle School Teaching

1 - 3	12	12
4 - 7	31	30
8 - 10	25	24
more than 10	19	18
none	11	11
no response	5	5
Total	103	100

Lower School Teaching

1 - 3	4	4
4 - 7	5	5
8 - 10	3	3
more than 10	1	1
none	86	84
no response	4	4
Total	103	100

Upper School Teaching

1 - 3	13	13
4 - 7	21	20
8 - 10	13	13
more than 10	10	10
none	41	40
no response	5	5
Total	103	100