**THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL
POLICY-MAKING IN CANADIAN SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

by

Eldon Stuart Critchley

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto**

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To My
Wife Mary, & Son Evan
Evan, now it is your turn.

**THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL
POLICY-MAKING IN CANADIAN SCHOOL SYSTEMS**
Eldon Stuart Critchley, Degree of Doctor of Education, 1999
Department of Theory and Policy Studies In Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

ABSTRACT OF STUDY

**THE STUDY EXAMINES THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT
IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY-MAKING IN CANADIAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN
ORDER TO FIND OUT HOW MUCH OF A ROLE STUDENTS HAVE IN HELPING TO
SHAPE THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS THAT SERVE THEM. PARTICIPANTS FOR
THIS STUDY CONSIST OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION (OR THEIR
DESIGNATES), DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION OR SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENTS AT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT LEVEL, HIGH SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM ACROSS CANADA. ALL
PARTICIPANTS CONTRIBUTED TO THE DATA COLLECTION FOR THIS STUDY
BY COMPLETING A WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE.**

**THE STUDY SHOWS THAT EDUCATION SYSTEMS ACROSS CANADA DO
INVOLVE STUDENTS IN POLICY-MAKING AT THE DEPARTMENT, SCHOOL
DISTRICT AND SCHOOL LEVELS, BUT ONLY IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY.
THE STUDY SHOWS THAT ALTHOUGH THERE IS A FAVORABLE REACTION BY
STAKEHOLDERS ACROSS CANADA TO STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL
POLICY-MAKING, STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IS RESTRICTED TO PROVIDING
POLICY-MAKERS WITH INFORMATION. STUDENTS DO NOT HAVE A FORMAL
ROLE TO PLAY IN POLICY-MAKING AT THE DEPARTMENT, SCHOOL DISTRICT,
AND SCHOOL LEVELS IN ANY OF THE JURISDICTIONS PARTICIPATING IN
THIS STUDY ACROSS CANADA.**

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Dr. Denis Hache - Directeur, Centre de recherches en
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Chapter One

THE PROBLEM

Since the mid 1900s throughout North America, a discernable trend has developed in education whereby small schools are closed and students grouped in larger consolidated schools. Edington and Martellaro (1988) assert that the total number of schools in the United States has declined from 262,000 in 1930 to 90,876 in 1972. Edington and Martellaro (1988) also indicate that the main reason for this major decline in the number of schools is because the government and the school districts have deliberately been moving away from the small rural school concept and moving towards consolidating the small schools into large schools. Similarly in Canada, school reform measures continue to follow the example of the United States. Educational bureaucracy continuously faced with declining student enrollments and budget restraints, is leading the governments and school districts towards adopting consolidation as the panacea for almost all the problems in education. For example, the number of schools in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has decreased from 1253 schools in 1960 to 472 schools in 1995.

Although these school consolidation processes have occurred throughout the United States and Canada since the mid 1900s, I find it remarkable that very little of the literature addresses the impact of such processes on students as a factor of importance to the planning stages of the consolidation process. Locally in Newfoundland, comments by students in newspapers (The

Western Star and The Georgian) suggest that students do express a desire to be a part of policy-making decisions to close schools and implement procedures for consolidation.

The recommendation that was to be put forward to the school board on Wednesday night was to close the school. However, students wanted their voices heard. "It's an issue that has to do with us. It's our future that's at stake," said Joanna White, a class representative on the student council. (The Western Star, April 10, 1997, Vol. 47(84))

During my experience as a school administrator, I have found that students have generally been left out of the entire consolidation process and unless parents or teachers have spoken on behalf of the students, the concerns of students have been ignored. During a recent survey that I conducted in 1998 with the Directors of Education in the various school districts in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, one Director of Education indicated that because educational policies fall under the responsibility of the Department of Education and School Boards, educational policies are often made to satisfy political demands and the economic needs of the province and school boards. For this reason, students are left out of the policy-making process. However, a second Director of Education, who participated in the same 1998 survey, suggested that because political and economic problems have a direct impact on students and their education, this is all the more reason why students should be involved. However, this second Director of Education indicated that even though he believes students have a lot to offer the policy-making process, in his experience students have traditionally been left out of the process.

I believe and know from experience that the crucial stakeholders, therefore, the students, are usually ignored in the process of closing schools. Students have very important and practical concerns such as busing, school facilities, programs, teachers, etc. which should be considered prior to making decisions. We cannot expect to gain the support of any stakeholder group if we cannot clearly demonstrate that students will benefit from the planned moves (Critchley, 1998, p. 20).

Out of the five Directors of Education who participated in this survey, not one of the Directors said that the concerns expressed by students about school closure or school consolidation to the school boards in the past, have led to the development of school board policies or procedures concerning school consolidation in the future. There are no policies or procedures in place within any of the five school districts to govern how schools should be closed or consolidated based on information supplied by students.

Although many theorists such as Hodgkinson (1991), Treslan (1983) and Mackin (1996), will argue that students should be part of the policy-making process in education, there is agreement that students have been traditionally left out of the policy-making process. Hodgkinson (1991) suggests that because students are the clientele and because they sit at the bottom of the educational hierarchy, their concerns, values and interests may become ignored in the shuffle. Treslan (1983) also expresses concern about the absence of students in the policy-making process because of where they are situated in the educational hierarchy. According to Beck (1990), "it is necessary for schooling to be more child-centered and democratic" (p. 31). In

recent years there has been a move around the world to decentralize education and to make educational policy-making processes more site-based management through the introduction of school improvement teams (Henry and Vilz, 1990), (Tewel, 1995), (Clarke and Clarke, 1996), curriculum planning teams (Leisey, Murphy and Temple, 1997), Mackin (1996), school councils (Sheppard and Devereaux, 1997), Young and Levin, 1998), (Rideout, 1995) and other advisory groups. According to these theorists, students now more than ever, should be involved in educational policy-making.

Given that students appear to have little or no input in the formation of policies to implement school consolidation in Newfoundland at the present time, it would be interesting to compare the nature and extent of student involvement in educational policy-making in the Canadian school systems. Such information could help us understand how students can have more of an input in the school consolidation issue in Newfoundland and Labrador.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of my study is to examine the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development at the school, school district and department of education levels in Canadian school systems.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In my study of the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development in Canadian school systems, I will concentrate on examining the following four objectives:

- 1) Policies Outlining Student Participation in Policy-making
- 2) Student Involvement in The Policy-making Process
- 3) The Solicitation of Student Participation in Policy-making
- 4) The Perceptions of Policy-Maker Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to examine each objective, I will concentrate on answering four research questions. Each research question also involves a number of more detailed sub-questions.

Question #1: To what extent are policies in place at the school, school district and the departmental levels to provide for student participation in policy development in Canadian educational systems and what is the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development at each level as outlined by the policies?

Sub-questions to help answer this research question are:

- . Who are the policy-maker participants at the school, school

district and departmental levels as outlined by the policies?

- . To what extent is student involvement in policy development provided for at the school, school district and departmental levels as outlined by the policies?
- . What is the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development as provided for by policies at the school, school district and departmental levels?
- . To what extent are copies of policies outlining student involvement in policy development at the school, school district and departmental levels made available to the public?

Question #2: In what part of the policy-making process are students involved at the school, school district and departmental levels?

Sub-questions to help answer this research question are:

- . How are students involved in identifying problem issues in education at the school, school district and departmental levels?
- . How are students involved in identifying possible courses of action that will address problem issues in education at the school, school district and departmental levels?
- . How are students involved in the approval of courses of action that may be adopted to address problem issues in education at each level?

- . How are students involved in the review and modification of courses of action adopted to address problem issues in education at the school, school district and departmental levels?

Question #3: How is student involvement in policy development processes solicited at the school, school district and departmental levels?

Sub-questions to help answer this research question are:

- . What type of policies are students solicited for developing at the school, school district and departmental levels?
- . How often are students solicited for participation in policy development at each level?
- . How is student involvement in the practice of policy-making solicited at each level?

Question #4: What degree of satisfaction is expressed by stakeholders (including students) at the school, school district and departmental levels with respect to the extent of student participation in policy development?

Sub-questions to help answer this research question are:

- . What are the perceptions, positive and negative, regarding student involvement in policy development at the school, school district and departmental levels, as experienced by

all policy-maker stakeholders (including students) at the different levels of the educational organization?

- . What concerns do students have about the nature and extent of their involvement in policy development at the school, school district and departmental levels?

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In terms of examining student involvement in educational policy-making in the Canadian school systems, this study will concentrate only on students attending high schools. In terms of actual policies, this study will concentrate only on educational policies which have been developed with high school student assistance. In setting a time limit for this study's concentration, I will base my research only on student involvement in policy development in the 1990s. In doing so, the completed study will contain very recent information but representative of a relatively narrow historical frame.

Chapter Two

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review examines how theorists define what a policy is, how policies are developed, and who should be involved in the policy-making process. During this review, theorists will raise several arguments in support of student involvement in educational policy-making. The literature review will inquire into what theorists are saying about the nature and extent of student involvement in educational policy-making and the various methods that are used around the world to include students in the policy-making process. Also during this chapter, I will examine the various constraints to student involvement in educational policy-making and the problems related to having students involved in policy-making as presented by theorists. As well, this chapter will contemplate on what theorists are saying about student attitudes towards their involvement or lack of involvement in educational policy-making as presented in several student surveys.

Policy, Educational Policy and Policy-Making

If we are going to discuss the concept of student involvement in educational policy-making, it is first necessary to gain an understanding of what a policy is and how a policy is developed. Young and Levin (1998) define the term policy as "a general guideline that shapes decisions and actions" (p. 60) and the term

policy decision as "one that has broad implications within a particular setting, whether a country, province, or school" (p. 60). According to Jackson and Jackson (1990), policy-making involves a long series of related activities and the process is far more involved than making a mere decision. The authors assert that policies are established to address a particular problem or to pursue specific goals.

A policy, whether public or private, is first and foremost a program or course of action pursued in response to a particular problem or issue. But it is also, in most cases, linked to particular goals or objectives ("the intentions of politicians"). Further, the study of public policy is concerned with the effects of policies on society ("the impact of government"), whether such results are intended or are the unintended consequences of pursuing a certain course of action. (p. 581)

Policies are much broader in scope than decisions and therefore, the authors indicate that as policies are created to pursue certain goals and objectives, decisions are made within the framework or guidelines of the policies. According to the theorists, "public policy is the broad framework within which decisions are taken and action (or inaction) is pursued by governments in relation to some problem or issue" (p. 582).

During the process of policy-making, Jackson and Jackson (1990) propose that the important social elements of culture, institutions and behavior come into the policy-making process. Cultural norms of society help shape the policies that may be established by placing demands for policies to address certain issues. Cultural norms can also restrict the type of policies that are made. Consequently, the authors assert that cultural

norms play a very important part in motivating policy-making as well as governing the type of policies that are made.

Jackson and Jackson (1990) also indicate that the institutions in our society play an important part in determining what policies will be made to address a certain issue and how these policies will address the issue. Policy-makers are restricted in the institutional structure because they are accountable to the institution and therefore, policy-making may very well be restricted by policies of a higher order within the institutional structure. Also, the institutional structure may very well dictate who the policy-makers might be.

According to the theorists, the social element of behavior includes the various interest groups that have a stake in policy-making and who will place demands on the policy-makers. Hence, policy-making is very much influenced by the various interest groups in society or in an institution.

The authors propose that the policy-making arena is influenced by many factors. Policy-making usually addresses a problem or issue but the problem is addressed in the context of objectives that are often firmly established in society or in an institution. Many factors such as the institution, culture, behavior and economics may very well enter into the course that policy-making may follow. The theorists refer to the various influences and restraints on policy-making as the "Policy Funnel of Causality" (p. 599) as illustrated in the following diagram.

Policy Funnel of Causality

According to Young and Levin (1998), educational policies "shape the structure of schools" (p. 60) by determining what is taught, how it is taught, how students will be treated and how the school will operate in general. In determining educational policies, Jackson and Jackson (1990) propose that the policies must be established in the context of the norms and wishes of society, the economics of the time, and within the guidelines of policies that may be established at a higher order.

Jackson and Jackson (1990) assert that policies can be placed on a continuum with self-serving or self-regulated policies on one end of the continuum and public owned policies on the other end of the continuum. In terms of educational policies, a continuum would resemble the following:

In terms of developing policy, the steps in the policy-making process, as expressed by Young and Levin (1998), include the following:

1. defining the educational issue or problem,
2. determining who will be involved in making the decision,
3. examining the various courses of action to address the issue,
4. adopting the best course of action to address the issue, and
5. reviewing and modifying the adopted course of action.

Jackson and Jackson (1990) write about the "rational-comprehensive model" (p. 586) of policy-making. In this model, they propose that the following steps make up the policy-making process:

1. the problem is identified,
2. the values, goals and objectives that will guide the policy-making process are identified,

3. alternative means of achieving the desired goals are identified,
4. possible consequences of each alternative means are identified,
5. all alternative means and their consequences are compared, and
6. a course of action is selected.

According to Young and Levin (1998), policies are established at different levels. However, most of the work that goes into establishing a policy is done outside the governing body itself, by committees or other groups.

Policy decisions are made formally through governing bodies, such as legislatures or school boards that pass laws or motions, or through administrators who issue directives. Often, however, the important part of the process occurs well before the formal decision is taken. (p. 76)

The authors indicate that the participants in educational policy-making can be "internal stakeholders" (p. 70) such as teachers, administrators, school trustees, secretaries, students, bus drivers and caretakers, or the participants can be "external stakeholders" (p. 71) such as various community organizations or businesses. Hence, the question of who should participate in policy development should be decided firstly by examining who will be more accepting of the decisions and secondly by examining who has a moral right to participate in the decision. If this is the case, who has more right to participate in educational policy development than students do?

Why Should Students Be Involved in Educational Policy Development?

According to some theorists, who support student involvement in policy-making, there are several strong arguments to support their claim. An OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) report in 1989, proposes that there are several problems in society today that have a direct impact on education. The report indicates that the major expansions in education around the world that took place during the boom in the 1950s and 1960s, have been followed by governments today cutting back on expenditures in education. This means fewer school buildings and fewer teachers. Consequently, the 1989 report advises that the people and the government want more accountability in education for the dollars that are spent. More accountability is required in education today because in some countries such as the United States, Sweden, Germany, Belgium and Finland, it has been found that teaching practices inside the classroom haven't really changed a great deal over the last number of years. The report also indicates that because the compulsory age for dropping out of school has been increased to sixteen years of age, students are remaining in school longer and teachers are faced with a more diversified student body. The 1989 report also advises that businesses around the world are complaining about the quality of skills attained by students graduating from school today. Therefore, for these reasons, the report strongly recommends that education must become more accountable and one way in which to

achieve accountability is to involve students in a shared decision-making process in education. The OECD (1989) proposes that one characteristic that is common in all successful schools is collaborative planning and shared decision-making.

Greater responsibility and autonomy at the local level must be coupled with genuine participation by all concerned: teachers, parents and pupils from beyond a certain age, with a view of developing a spirit of collective endeavour. (p. 93)

Treslan (1983) and Hodgkinson (1991) advise that there is a need for more student involvement in educational decision-making primarily because students have traditionally been left out of all planning in the past. Since educational administration is arranged in a line of hierarchy, students who are on the bottom of the hierarchy are forgotten when it comes to educational planning.

Power and authority are transmitted downward in this hierarchy, with no reversal of direction apparent. While all in-school members are subject to the scrutiny of an immediate superordinate, students, in particular, become receivers of influence attempts made by numerous others in socially distant offices. Thus, management decisions appear to be far removed from students, both in time and space (Treslan, 1983, p. 126).

Hodgkinson (1991) proposes that all parts of the educational organization are important and the input from all stakeholders, including students, should be taken into consideration during educational planning since all stakeholders have their own values and concerns. If students are permitted to take part in educational planning, Treslan (1983) advises that they will learn valuable lessons about democracy and citizenship which they can use the rest of their lives. According to this theorist,

"an ideal secondary school governance structure subscribes to the concept of shared decision making to maximize member influence" (p. 127). With all stakeholders taking an active part in educational planning, Hodgkinson (1991) asserts that the common interest, which is the education of students, will not be forgotten.

Williams (1964), Mackin (1996) and Scane and Wignall (1996) concur with Treslan (1983) in terms of the valuable lessons in democracy and citizenship that students can learn by being involved in education policy development. According to Williams (1964), if students are permitted to take an active part in educational policy-making, they will learn how to participate in democratic procedures and they will learn to develop leadership skills which will be very valuable to them throughout their lives. The author also asserts that if students are permitted to take an active part in shared decision-making in education, there is less chance that the main goal in education, the education of students, will be forgotten. During a study on student participation on school councils in one high school in the Toronto area, Scane and Wignall (1996) also found that students, by participating in educational policy-making, can learn valuable lessons in the democratic process and communication skills. Mackin (1996) also concurs that a school should have a caring and personalized environment where students can learn valuable lessons in democracy. However, the author throws out a caution by suggesting that unless the administrative structure in education

changes and unless students are permitted to take an active part in educational policy development, the students will never learn how to develop democratic decision-making skills. The researcher suggests that so far the educational system has not accomplished a great job in allowing students to learn and practice democratic principles.

Perhaps the greatest hypocrisy of U.S. schools is the long standing pretence that they prepare students to be practicing democratic citizens. The truth is that high schools, next to prisons, may be the least democratic institutions in this country. Students are told where to go and when, what to do and how to do it, and have little or no voice in school-wide or classroom decisions. As a consequence, they have little opportunity to practice being thoughtful democratic decision-makers. (p. 14)

Beck (1990) proposes that schools are failing to meet the needs of students primarily because of the way students are treated. He advises that students must be allowed to pursue the things that really interest them in education. If schools are going to try to meet the needs of all children, the theorist advises that schools are going to have to become more child-centered and democratic. Consequently, the researcher recommends that there must be more input by students into the educational system.

In order to overcome many of the problems identified by school critics, it is necessary for schooling to be more child-centered and democratic. If we are to avoid stifling the curiosity and initiative of students, undermining their confidence, making them passive and conformists, cutting them off from their feelings and desires, fostering in them artificial and inappropriate values, we must allow more room for student input and control. (p. 31)

Hamilton (1975) also agrees that schools will meet the needs of all students more effectively if the students are permitted to

take an active part in the educational planning. By participating in educational planning, the author argues that students will gain a better understanding of the goals of education and they will be happier and more successful. The more successful students will also pass on the positive points of their education to others. According to Hamilton (1975), "children are the ambassadors who explain the school to the parents and the public" (p. 130).

Wood (1977) indicates that if students are going to have a positive educational experience, they need to feel respected and treated fairly. These are among several factors that he lists as being necessary in a school climate in order to have an atmosphere for shared decision-making. Therefore, if students are permitted to take part in educational policy-making, the students themselves can ensure that they are being treated with fairness.

A number of theorists therefore, concur that students should be involved in educational policy-making because they are the major stakeholders in education and because they will learn valuable lessons in democracy, leadership and citizenship. Also, by taking an active part in a shared planning approach to education, theorists assert that students will have a more positive educational experience.

The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement in Educational Policy-making and the Methods Used to Involve Students

During recent years educational policy development has progressively moved from the total control by educational administrators, to a more hands-on communitarian approach by all stakeholders in education. Theorists propose that students are becoming actively involved in helping to establish educational policies by serving on school councils, school improvement teams, curriculum planning teams, school advisory groups, educational commissions and directive boards.

School Councils

Sheppard and Devereaux (1997) suggest that in an effort to promote more effective schooling, site-based management is gaining momentum in education reform. Through site-based management, all the stakeholders in education including parents, students, teachers, community members and the administration can work together to make educational policies at the local level. The authors propose that over the last number of years countries all over the world are heading in a site-based management direction by forming school councils at the local school level.

Australia, New Zealand, all European countries (with the exception of Portugal and some areas of Germany), and over forty states in the United States have adopted a site-based approach to management. In Canada, provinces such as Saskatchewan, Alberta, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and more recently, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland have joined the

long list of believers in the power of site-based management (Caldwell, Smilanich, & Spinks, 1988; Nova Scotia Department of Education, 1994) (Sheppard & Devereaux, 1997, p. 3).

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) (1996) is concerned about creating a climate conducive to teaching and learning in the American high schools. In 1996 the NASSP issued a report recommending that students, parents, teachers and school administrators work together to establish school policies that would help to build positive school working environments. The method by which the NASSP (1996) recommends that all the stakeholders in education get together on policy development, is through the formation of local school councils. In its 1996 report, the NASSP recommended that, "each high school will establish a council to work with the principal in reaching decisions to make the school an effective organization for student learning" (p. 10).

Fletcher (1989), and Young and Levin (1998) are other theorists who support the formation of school councils in order to help bring all stakeholders in education into policy-making processes. According to Fletcher (1989), the establishment of school councils in England means more participation by students, parents and teachers in the actual running of the schools and having more say in the curriculum and how it is taught. During recent years as school districts throughout Canada began to consolidate, Young and Levin (1998) give an account of why it was necessary to put into place a mechanism that would allow all stakeholders in education to be involved in educational policy-

making. Since school district offices are becoming more distant from students, parents, communities, teachers and school administrators, local school councils are beginning to be instituted in many of the provinces and territories across Canada. Therefore, the authors assert that in many cases across Canada, students have a direct input into educational policy-making as members of the school councils.

The Royal Commission Implementation Secretariat (1992) in Newfoundland, clearly summarizes the importance of local school councils, their purpose, and the role students will play. According to the Royal Commission Implementation Secretariat (1992), "school councils, on behalf of the communities served by the school, will be responsible for working with parents, teachers, students and the community to set the future direction of the school, identify educational priorities, determine strategies for achieving goals, and assess and report progress" (p. 2).

School Improvement Teams

Furtwengler (1996), Bechtel and Reed (1998), Clark and Clark (1996), Henry and Vilz (1990) and Tewel (1995) concur that students can become directly involved in educational policy-making by participating on school improvement teams. Furtwengler (1996) describes how seventeen schools across the United States established school improvement teams involving students, parents,

teachers and school administrators. The entire process according to this author, is called "Reaching Success Through Involvement (RSI)" (p. 36). During the school improvement process, teams meet every two weeks in order to identify problems and discuss possible solutions. The mandate of each school improvement team is to develop school improvement plans, identify problems and review goals. The theorist indicates that "the contribution of student leaders was a major factor in overall school improvement, fostering discipline in less effective schools and supporting behavior in more effective schools" (p. 38).

Bechtel and Reed (1998) discuss the restructuring efforts at a racially-mixed high school with a population of 1300 students in the United States. The main focus of the restructuring at the high school is providing for student involvement in policy-making on improvement teams with teachers, administrators and other stakeholders.

A main focus of restructuring at this high school has been enhancing student leadership and involvement in decision making about their own education. In addition to student government, students have been active members of the restructuring partnership and are involved in student leadership programs in the school. (p. 90)

Since not all the students can actively serve on the school improvement teams in the school, the authors describe how students also become involved on the school improvement teams as documenters. In this capacity, the students collect, analyze, and distribute data for the improvement teams.

Tewel (1995) writes about the school improvement process that took place in Lane High School in Brooklyn. Lane high school was

a place where neither teachers nor students wanted to be since the school was racked with violence and disruption. The author describes how after he was appointed the new principal in 1976, a school improvement process was put into place and students, parents, teachers and the administration all had a role to play in the process. According to the author, the new role students played in the school made the improvement process successful.

Student roles changed from passive recipients of predetermined services to decision makers about conditions affecting learning. This was done to generate student support and to invest students more deeply in their own education. (p. 51)

The theorist argues that the only way to improve a high school educational system is for all stakeholders to adopt ownership of the problems and the system and become involved in the process for change.

For change to occur and for it to last, all constituent groups must have genuine ownership of and active involvement in the change process. In a school community, this means parents, teachers, administrators, students, and members of the business sector all have a voice and are welded into a partnership in which shared decision-making is the major method of operation. (p. 5)

While reporting on the school improvement teams established in thirteen schools in the Kenmore Town of Tonawanda School District in Buffalo, Henry and Vilz (1990) also advise that school improvement teams must include all educational stakeholders, and students have a major part to play. The authors recommend that "only by working together as a team can we benefit and promote our final product - successful students" (p. 79).

Clark and Clark (1996) assert that school improvement teams

involve all the educational stakeholders, including students, in the creation of policy development for school improvement. The authors propose that "collaboration facilitates the study of the issue and the decision-making process by involving those closest to the problem with the resources and authority to make the necessary changes" (p. 6).

Curriculum Planning Teams

Weber (1996) discusses how one high school in the United States improved teaching and learning by involving students in a collaborative curriculum planning approach. During the collaborative planning process, the teams met once every week as a group and teachers met with students on an open basis. The meetings center around students, parents and teachers collaborating on ways in which the curriculum can be integrated in order to allow students to cover the mandated curriculum as well as expand into other curriculum areas of interest. Consequently, the author asserts that the involvement of students with parents and teachers in curriculum planning is a major success.

Students had been involved in both large and small group discussions, but we viewed meetings between the teacher and each student as imperative. Students who discuss issues one-on-one with teachers do better in school than those who do not. Interaction between teachers and students helps teachers become students and students become teachers. (p. 80)

Student Advisory Groups

Mackin (1996), Leisey, Murphy and Temple (1997) and Treslan (1983) recommend that students can become very active in helping to make educational policies by participating on school advisory groups. Mackin (1996) examines how one high school, Southegan High School, serving the towns of Amherst and Mont Vernon in New Hampshire, developed a more personalized school atmosphere in 1992 by having students act on advisory groups. According to this author, the staff and students at Southegan High School began with a mindset that students must have a say in the governance of the school and in their education.

At Southegan High School a personalized school culture means a democratic one, a school where students are encouraged to voice their views; to speak out if they feel they are not respected, trusted or treated fairly; and to participate in a school governance structure that gives them formal power. (p. 14)

Leisey, Murphy and Temple (1997) report on how students and parents were used as advisory groups by the Coffee County School District during a process to consolidate three high schools in the district. During the consolidation process, students and parents were asked to present their concerns about the consolidation to the school board and they advised the school board in terms of how to implement the school consolidation in order to try and better meet the needs of all students.

Treslan (1983) argues that students should serve on advisory committees and decision-making assemblies because they must be given a chance to acquire responsibility. The researcher

also indicates that students must be able to build relationships with their fellow students and with the school staff in a policy-making capacity. In doing so, students will begin to take ownership of their education.

Local Boards of Trustees and Directive Boards

Stevens (1994) writes about how the New Zealand Education Act in 1989 removed school boards from educational management and in their place, local boards of trustees were established. Students, parents, teachers and the school principals serve on these boards. In New Zealand education still remains under the control of the central government. However decisions concerning education are produced in a shared decision-making process at the local level. The local boards of trustees report directly to the Minister of Education.

Climaco (1989) describes how the schools in Portugal have become more democratic in an attempt to develop student-centered schools in which all the needs of the students are met. At the secondary school level, under the new school organization, schools are run by three management bodies, the Administrative Board, the Directive Board and the Pedagogical Board. The Directive Board which operates under the Administrative Board, is made up of five teachers, one non-teaching staff member and one high school student. All members of the Directive Board are elected by their peers and as an administrative board, they

organize and control such matters as extra-curricular activities, teacher education, curriculum development and school services. In order for schools in Portugal to become more democratic, the author advises that students and parents have to become more involved in the actual running of the schools.

Educational Commissions

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) (1996) sponsored an education commission to examine the secondary educational system in the United States and to develop a vision for high school renewal across America. Students had an active part to play on this commission. According to the NASSP (1996) report, "the Commission that formulated these proposals included principals, other administrators, and teachers; it was one of the few panels of its kind to have students as members" (p. 5).

Recently, students have had an important part to play on commissions set up in Canadian jurisdictions such as Ontario, Newfoundland and Saskatchewan. Students in the provinces of Ontario and Newfoundland took an active part in recent Royal Commissions set up to study possible changes in the education system in each of these provinces. In Ontario, the Report of the Royal Commission on Learning (For the Love of Learning)' (1994) made several recommendations to the government to give students a greater voice in educational policy-making. Recommendation 143 of the 1994 report asked that all boards have at least one student

member who would be entitled to vote on board matters. Students in Newfoundland were asked to make public submissions to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, and Secondary Education in 1992. Students in Saskatchewan actively sit on Saskatchewan's Council on Children. This council provides a forum for discussion and direction to the government in the areas of social services, housing, health, recreation, and all issues that have an impact on children living in Saskatchewan.

**The Government Legislation in the Canadian Provinces and
Territories That Provide for Student Involvement in Educational
Policy-Making**

During the 1990s there has been a movement throughout the various provinces and territories in Canada to have more educational planning and decision-making occur at the local school level. This movement as reported by Young and Levin (1998) and Rideout (1995), came about as a result of the consolidation of school districts across Canada. Young and Levin (1998) propose that since the number of school districts are decreasing across Canada, they are also getting much larger geographically speaking, and as a result, the school district offices have become very remote from many of the communities they serve. Therefore, all the provinces and territories across Canada have

passed legislation for the establishment of school councils or school advisory councils and for the most part, students have a direct part to play on these councils. The table on page 31 summarizes the various councils formed across Canada and in which provinces and territories students have a role to play on the school councils.

Table 2.1 Local School Councils Across Canada

Canadian Jurisdiction	Type of Council Formed	Year Adopted	Are Students On Council
British Columbia	Local Parent Advisory Council	1989	No
	District Parent Advisory Council	1989	No
Saskatchewan	School Advisory Council	1996	Yes
Manitoba	School Advisory Council	1995	Yes
Nova Scotia	School Advisory Councils	1996	Yes
Alberta	School Council	1990	Yes
Ontario	Provincial Parent Council	1993	No
	School Council	1995	Yes
Prince Edward Island	School Council	1995	No
Newfoundland	School Council	1996	Yes
Yukon	School Council	1990	No
Quebec	School Committee	1988	No
	Orientation Committee	1988	Yes
New Brunswick	Provincial Board	1984	No
	District Parent Advisory	1997	Yes
	School Parent Committee	1997	Yes

Rideout (1995) argues that the degree of responsibility legislated to the various school councils formed across Canada varies from an advisory role to a very specific power decision-making role. While in most provinces and territories the school councils have been assigned an advisory role, the school councils in the Yukon, New Brunswick and Newfoundland have been legislated a more specific role in educational policy-making. According to Young and Levin (1998), the 1990 Education Act in the Yukon allows local committees to evolve into school councils or school boards with very specific powers over education. The school councils in the Yukon have authority over such matters as the development of local curriculum, the hiring of the school principal, the formation of school rules and the evaluation and dismissal of teachers. In New Brunswick, the District Parent Advisory Council and the School Parent Advisory Committees have been legislated as advisory groups, but they have substantially more power than most school councils across Canada since school boards have been removed from the educational administrative hierarchy in New Brunswick. In Newfoundland, the school councils are very much advisory groups to the school district offices. However, the councils in this province have been legislated authority over such matters as supervising the school improvement plans and the educational progress of students in schools.

In spite of the variations in authority legislated to the school councils across Canada, the school council concept will continue to evolve and grow as time progresses. More importantly,

students, parents and the communities have now been legislated a say in what goes on in education. Because of the move to create school councils across Canada, students, parents and the communities can now begin to take some ownership in the education of students. Creating local ownership in education is exactly what the creation of school councils is expected to do, according to the Royal Commission Implementation Secretariat (1995) in Newfoundland.

School-based decision making does not mean independent school governance. School boards are and will remain, the primary authority within the local education system. This does not mean however, that responsibilities and authorities cannot be transferred to the school, and hence to the school council. In fact, school-based decision-making is a way of organizing school leadership and management so that those closest to the situation are given more of the management and decision-making responsibility. Such responsibilities are generally exercised within Board policies and guidelines. (p. 6)

In spite of the variations in authority legislated to the school councils across Canada, Rideout (1995) advises that school councils are seen as the mechanism to involve students, parents and the community in educational decision-making. The author argues that "school councils, with both advisory and direct responsibilities, were specifically identified as the vehicle to allow all stakeholders a real voice in the decisions that affect the school" (p. 13).

Constraints to Involving Students in Educational Policy-making

Theorists suggest that there are several constraints to student involvement in educational policy-making. According to some theorists, if students are going to have a place in the policy-making process, the constraints to student involvement must be first identified and dealt with. During his study on "Student Influence In Decision-making In Secondary Schools", Wood (1977) examined the participation of students in decision-making in two Ontario schools. Throughout his study, the author paid particular attention to the manner in which students described their decision-making role and their concerns about their role. The students participating in the study pointed out several obstacles that must be addressed if students are to take an active part in the educational decision-making processes. It was found that the greatest obstacle to student participation in decision-making is the perception by many adults, including teachers and administrators, that students are simply not capable of making educational decisions; the author disagrees with this perception. Treslan (1983) also disagrees with this perception and he stresses that students can contribute to educational policy-making and indeed, have a lot to offer. Consequently, he proposes that students, teachers and administrators all have something to contribute to the policy-making process.

During a study of students on school councils in the Toronto area, Scane and Wignall (1996) also found that students are very

much prepared to take part in policy-making groups such as school councils. As a result of their study, the authors assert that "councils that exclude students risk losing a valuable resource for the improvement of their schools and of their educational process" (p. 14).

Wood (1997) found that the second most significant obstacle to student involvement in educational policy-making, is the fact that many teachers and administrators simply do not know how to include students in a policy-making process. The inclusion of students is a whole new area for them and one for which they are not prepared. Treslan (1983) advises that all individuals in any educational organization must learn to work together in a "rational approach" (p. 127) to educational decision-making. In terms of a rational approach, he suggests that all stakeholders must learn to cooperate in such a way that they will strive to achieve the common goal, which in this case, is the education of students.

A third obstacle as identified by Wood (1977), is the lack of leadership necessary to provide opportunities for student involvement in educational policy-making. The author found that the students who participated in his study, identified educational leadership as a critical element for involving students in policy-making. Treslan (1983) suggests that leadership in education must stress democratic principles in order to ensure participation in policy-making by all stakeholders including students. Therefore, he proposes that "an

ideal secondary school governance structure adheres to and practices the fundamental principles underlying the democratic way of life" (p. 127).

During his study, Wood (1977) recognized time as another obstacle to student involvement in policy-making. Because of the teaching load of teachers, the extremely tight school schedules, overworked administrators and the heavy demands placed on students, there simply is not enough time to devote to policy development processes which always include students. Beck (1990) also addresses the problem of time and work load as an obstacle to student input into educational decision-making. According to this author, because of cutbacks in finance and personnel, and because of changes that have taken place in our society today, teachers and administrators are trying to be all things to all people. Hence, the author indicates that teachers and administrators are often left out of the policy-making process and if this is the case, he wonders where this leaves students in terms of policy-making. In order to overcome this problem, Treslan (1983) recommends that the decision-making process must remain flexible in terms of maintaining a capability of modifying plans to suit all external conditions.

Another obstacle to student involvement in educational policy-making, as identified by Wood (1977), is the lack of confidence students have in themselves. Stevens (1994) also recognized this problem after the Education Act (1989) removed school boards from the educational hierarchy in New Zealand and

replaced the school boards with local boards of trustees. Stevens (1994) asserts that as members of the local boards of trustees, students displayed a lack of confidence in themselves to serve in a decision-making capacity. According this author, "some students reported that they felt overwhelmed by being the only young person on the school boards" (p. 5).

Since students do not remain in secondary school for long, Wood (1977) found that the continuous turnover of students in high school presents another obstacle to student participation in educational policy-making. He suggests that since students are only in high school for a very short time, they can not gain the necessary experience in policy-making.

These factors are exacerbated by the rapid turnover in student population which, considering the annual exodus of graduates and influx of first-year students, account for close to one-third of the entire student body every year. Experienced student leaders are lost and uninitiated innocents are collected at a dismaying rate. (p. 363)

Stevens (1994) also found the turnover of students in secondary school to be a problem with student participation in decision-making in New Zealand schools. In the case of the New Zealand schools, he indicates that "student representatives were usually selected in their last year at school and there was therefore, a lack of continuity in this aspect of a school's management structure" (p. 5).

Another obstacle to student participation in policy development, as found by Wood (1977), is the conflict between students and teachers in terms of what is the proper place of students in education and whether or not students should be

serving in a policy-making capacity. Stevens (1994) advises that in New Zealand, students are permitted to serve on policy-making committees as long as student issues are being discussed. However, students are not permitted to attend on issues involving personnel or disciplinary matters. Treslan (1983) recommends that all people involved with a school (parents, students, teachers and administrators) must be considered equal in a policy-making process and they must have an equal say in all matters.

During a study to find out how much participation students have in educational policy-making in one school district in Newfoundland, Critchley (1998) found that the participants in the study (two students, two principals and the Director of Education) agreed that there are major obstacles that must be overcome in order to allow students to fully participate in educational policy-making. The obstacles identified during this study are as follows:

1. All study subjects agreed that there are no policies in place at the school level or at the school board level, within this particular school district, that ensure student participation in policy development.
2. Students are often included on various committees as mere tokens and therefore, their input is not taken seriously.
3. Teachers and administrators must learn to share power with students. This point was made very clear in an interview with one principal.

A lot of what I pick up through the grape vine is that I hear people say, "I have been a principal for twenty-five

years and I haven't had parents or students tell me what to do. I will go through with setting up a school council but it will be only as a token" (Critchley, 1998, p. 49).

4. The study subjects all agreed that time was a major factor in terms of involving students in policy-making. This point was made clear while interviewing one of the administrators during the study.

It makes sense to try and include student input when we are considering policy. However, it is not nearly as effective as it should be because the time factor just kills you when you are trying to do good policy development (Critchley, 1998, p. 50).

5. The present mindset that adults have in terms of how they do things for students rather than do things with them, was also identified as a problem that must change. This point was made clear during the interview with the Director of Education.

We are too busy doing the things for them, that we probably haven't oriented ourselves to doing things with them (Critchley, 1998, p. 51).

According to Wood (1977), if students are going to be successful participants in educational policy-making, the obstacles to student participation must be addressed. Treslan (1983) advises that any educational planning group should contain six elements that are extremely important to the success of the group. These six elements are respect, freedom, rationality, flexibility, equality and involvement. Putting this in terms of student participation in educational policy-making, students must be respected; they must be free to speak; all participants in policy development must learn to cooperate;

planning must be flexible; all planning members must be considered equal; and all stakeholders must be permitted to be involved.

Problems Related to Having Students Assist in Educational Policy-Making

Barrow (1981) argues that there are problems with having students involved in educational policy-making. However, other theorists do not necessarily agree with the author's claim. The author raises questions about what part students should play if any, in the educational policy-making process.

Should the children, for whose benefit the whole structure is primarily designed, have more say, either as individuals or as part of a democratic whole formed with the staff?
(p. 90)

He asserts that before we can automatically assume that everyone should have an equal say in educational policy-making, it is first necessary for all potential participants to know something about the issues being discussed. The author recommends that there are nine criteria that must be possessed by people who wish to engage in policy development. According to this author, the nine criteria include such factors as having a knowledge of the problem, knowing what resources are available in order to address the problem, and having a degree of competence in being able to address the problem. He argues that students can not and should not participate in policy development for the simple fact that

they do not have the knowledge necessary to address the problem. Since the author firmly believes that students are not competent in educational policy-making, such matters as curriculum planning and teaching methodology should be left up to the professionals, that is, the teachers and the educational administrators. As previously pointed out, the argument that students do not have the knowledge necessary to become involved in educational planning and policy-making, was pointed out by Wood (1977) as one of the obstacles to student involvement in educational planning. Barrow (1981) writes the following passage about where he places students in the policy-making forum.

I have been concerned to show that there is no good reason to accept the inherent value of a democratic school (in the strong sense). If instead one looked at the different issues on their merits, one might conceivably come to different decisions about different ones. How to teach subjects, it might be said, really is and might remain a matter for teachers to determine, likewise whether and what other things to teach besides the core curriculum. But questions about uniforms, it might be argued, or social rules of the institution, could be decided by democratic vote of staff and students, because here there is no clear relevant superiority of knowledge or expertise possessed by staff. (p. 94)

Dembowski, O'Connell and Osborne (1996), Short and Greer (1997) and Mackin (1996) disagree with Barrow's (1981) suggestions that students should not be involved in policy development because they lack competence and knowledge. Demobowski, O'Connell and Osborne (1996) argue that all the stakeholders in educational decision-making come from a variety of backgrounds and therefore, an educational and information process must be established in order to keep them up-to-date with

the latest information necessary to make decisions. Short and Greer (1997) advise that it is one of the responsibilities of the school principal to take on the task of ensuring that all stakeholders are kept well informed and that the teams working on policy development remain focused.

The principal's primary task is to focus effort on where the organization wants to go - what it wants to be and what it wants to do for students. These principals cautioned that you must be clear about goals and have a common agreement about them (Short & Greer, 1997, p. 9).

Mackin (1996) also indicates that the role of the school principal must change in terms of policy development. He recommends that the principal's role must change from that of an administrator to a vision-keeper. Therefore, the principal must be the person who is persistent and uncompromising in holding to the mission of the school.

Student Attitudes Towards Their Involvement in Educational Planning - Findings From Various Surveys of Students

Several theorists argue that students are not satisfied with the amount of student involvement in educational policy-making and in fact, it is argued that the students generally feel left out of the entire policy-making process in schools. Newton (1986) writes about a survey of student attitudes regarding school which was conducted in Trinidad. Students participating in this survey were selected from schools across the nation. Students were

asked to write comments about their school under five headings which included school organization, school administration, staff/pupil relationships, curriculum and the school plant. The findings from the survey suggest that students across Trinidad thought their schools were too bureaucratic. The findings also suggest that the students were concerned that their voices were not taken into consideration during educational policy-making. According the author, the students thought the schools were only concerned about producing a final product and the humanistic side of education was entirely left out.

The educational system is geared to produce intellectual robots for a bureaucratic society. In fact, from early, children are fitted into slots like Junior Secondary, Prestige School, five-year school and so on. (p. 71)

Throughout Newton's (1986) study, the Trinidadian students demonstrated very clearly in the survey that they desired to have more say in all school matters that affect them and their education. The author reported that, "the student body should have a say in the matters concerning the school and should not be there only to help raise funds" (p. 74). Hence, because of their lack of input into school matters, the Trinidadian students felt that the school climate was deeply affected by the strict hierarchy and the lack of cooperation in decision-making between the students and the teachers and administrators. During the survey, the students made reference to their school climate as similar to that of a jail.

One of the main reasons for the lack of student involvement in educational policy-making, as identified by the students in

the Trinidadian survey, is that the administrators and teachers simply did not take student participation in policy-making seriously. Therefore, the theorist indicates that the teachers and administrators were simply not willing to take the concerns of students into consideration.

Often even when students have an opportunity to express themselves, nothing results. For example, a students' council may be proposed by the students; the administration receives the proposal and nothing happens. The staff fail to realize that if students are not involved in matters which concern them, they cannot be expected to cooperate. (p. 74)

The author argues that the Trinidadian students felt that they were being ignored in helping to make educational decisions because the teachers and administrators did not respect them and their abilities to make decisions.

Teachers believe that teacher-teacher relationships are different from teacher-pupil relationships. In fact very often, there is no relationship between pupil and teachers at all. When there is, it is a matter of the teacher above looking down at the student below, instead of an "eye to eye" relationship as it ought to be. (p. 75)

Overall, Newton's (1986) findings suggest that the Trinidadian students, involved in the survey, were very discontented with the amount of participation they had in helping to make educational decisions. As a result, the students suggested that their lack of involvement because of the non-democratic way in which the schools were being run, deeply affected the school climate and the relationships between students and their teachers and administrators.

Brown, Ching, Yau and Ziegler (1992) report on the "Every Second Student Survey" (1991) conducted in the secondary schools

under the Toronto Board of Education. During this survey, the students were asked to what extent they agreed with a list of prepared statements about school climate. According to these authors, the results of the survey demonstrated that only half the number of students surveyed, agreed that students have enough say in educational decisions.

Two thirds to four fifths of students agree with all of these statements, but one. Over 80% agree that extra help is available at school when they need it; only half the students agree that they have enough say over things that are important to them. (p. 13)

The findings from the study in Newfoundland conducted by Critchley (1998), suggest that students attending school in one school district, do feel that they have a part in helping to make educational policies, especially since school councils have been established for every school in Newfoundland. However, the students, who participated in this study, have acknowledged that they are only involved in educational policy-making at the school level and even at this level, the involvement of students is very basic. The students indicated that they are only permitted to be involved in the everyday running of the school type policies such as discipline, course selection and graduation procedure decisions. The administrators who were interviewed during this study, agreed that students are only involved in educational decision-making at a very limited level. The students who participated in the Newfoundland study, indicated that they want to be involved in educational policy-making and they want to be involved at all levels in the educational system. Hence, the

students feel that they should have an input into everything that goes on in school. The students also feel that they should have an input in helping to make educational policies at the school board and departmental levels because the students and their education will be affected by any decisions made. The author asserts that the school principals, who were interviewed during the study, agree that student involvement in educational policy-making should not be restricted to the school level. However, the principals suggest that this is often very much the case. Also as pointed out in Critchley's (1998) study, the Director of Education, who was involved in the study, agreed that student input in educational decision-making should be recruited at all levels in the educational system. However the Director of Education suggested that the amount of student input in policy-making at the board level (in this particular district) is presently zero.

The results from Wood's (1977) study on "Student Influence In Decision-making In Secondary Schools", showed that students had a moderately small amount of participation in such matters as school rules and smoking, but they had even less input into decisions involving such matters as student discipline, student evaluation, new courses and teacher evaluation. The theorist also found during this study, which involved two schools, that the students in one school wanted more say in educational decision-making than students in the other school. He advises that the school climate in one school was more acceptable to student

participation in decision-making than in the other school.

The "Leaving School Survey" conducted by Statistics Canada (1993), found that close to half of all students (41%) who drop out of school, do so because of school related reasons. According to Statistics Canada (1993), some of the reasons why students drop out of school are because the students are having problems in courses, students and teachers do not get along, classes are not interesting, rules are too strict, and students simply do not like school. Perhaps if students had more input into all school matters, some of the reasons for students dropping out of school could be eliminated. Deborah Stern (1992) asserts that at-risk students will be more acceptable to education if they are included in the planning process.

Many at-risk students feel that high school course offerings are totally irrelevant to the true business of life: survival. The key to success with these students is to expand the scope and the extent of actual, active student participation in planning, implementation, and evaluating their courses of study. (p. 45)

Dynneson (1992) writes about a study completed by Dynneson, Gross and Nickel in 1987, involving more than seven hundred high school students in the United States. The purpose of the study was to find out what the perceptions of students are in terms of what makes good citizenship. The team made a list of ten different characteristics of good citizenship and the students were asked to rank them. According to the 1987 study completed by Dynneson, Gross and Nickel, the top five characteristics of good citizenship as selected by the students during the study, are as

follows:

1. A person must possess the ability to make decisions;
2. A person must be concerned about the welfare of others;
3. A person must possess a willingness to accept an assigned responsibility;
4. A person must have the ability and freedom to question ideas; and
5. A person must maintain a moral and ethical behaviour.

Therefore, the researcher advises that students are fully aware of what is expected of them in terms of becoming productive citizens. The question that remains is, "How can students develop these skills if they are never allowed to practice them in a democratic process of educational policy-making in school, in terms of their own education?"

All of the studies examined above, have demonstrated that students want more input into educational policy-making at all levels of the educational system. Students want more input because all educational decisions have a direct impact on the students themselves and on their education.

Summary of the Review of the Literature

Young and Levin (1998) and Jackson and Jackson (1990) define an educational policy as a broad framework which governs education in our society. According to these theorists,

educational policies are founded in the context of the objectives that are firmly established in society and the cultural norms of society help shape educational policies. The theorists argue that various interest groups, including students, have an impact on establishing policies and on determining what policies will be established. According to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) (1989), education around the world is becoming more and more accountable to the public and therefore, students must have a role to play in policy-making as one of the major stakeholder groups. Treslan (1983) and Hodgkinson (1991) indicate that students have been traditionally left out of the policy-making process and this should not be since students are indeed one of the major stakeholder groups. Other theorists argue that students should be involved in educational policy-making because they will learn valuable lessons in democracy and citizenship, policies will become more child centered, and student involvement will help create a more caring and personalized atmosphere in schools. Although theorists argue that students should be involved in helping to make educational policies, some theorists such as Beck (1990), Hamilton (1975) and Mackin (1996) concur that the educational system has not done a very good job in providing for student involvement in educational policy-making. In fact, it is very unclear from the literature exactly what part students do play in helping to establish educational policies.

During the review of the literature, theorists suggest that

there are several different mechanisms that are being used around the world to recruit student involvement in policy-making. Some of these mechanisms, as described by the theorists, include school councils, school improvement teams, curriculum planning teams, student advisory groups, and student participation on local boards of trustees. However, since theorists such as Rideout (1995) argue that these mechanisms are only used to involve students in an advisory capacity, one must wonder if the actual move to allow student involvement in policy-making is indeed serious or are students only given a token involvement? Although theorists have discussed several different mechanisms used for recruiting student involvement in policy-making, the theorists do not provide very much detail in terms of how students are actually involved in the policy-making process. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature between the theory that suggests that students should be involved in educational policy-making and how students are actually involved in the educational policy-making process. This study will examine how students are actually involved in policy-making in Canadian education systems and therefore attempt to bridge this gap.

Theorists such as Wood (1997) and Scane and Wignall (1998) have indicated that there are several obstacles to student involvement in educational policy-making. While examining the actual role of students in educational policy-making in education systems across Canada, this study will also identify some of the obstacles preventing students from becoming

more involved in the educational policy-making process. The study will also examine the perceptions of all policy-maker stakeholders concerning student involvement in policy-making.

Wragg and Jarvis (1993) advise that preparing students for the 21st century will mean that students not only must learn subject matter, but more importantly, they must learn how to apply it in real life. According to these theorists, students must learn to be able to make decisions, not only as individuals, but as members of a team.

In the 21st century the ability to work collaboratively as a member of a team will be even more vital. Problems are solved and significant discoveries are increasingly made by teams of people.(p. 9)

Mackin (1996) proposes that students must learn collaborative decision-making skills as part of their education, but he throws a caution to people in administrative roles.

How can we expect students to become true stakeholders in schools when the only decisions they make are of a perfunctory nature? (p. 14)

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

In order to address the research questions in this study and to gain an understanding of the actual role of students in educational policy-making in Canadian school systems, it was necessary to collect data at the departmental, school district and school levels in the school systems across Canada. Merriam (1988) describes qualitative research as interpreting what is going on in the actual area of interest.

Research is exploratory, inductive, and emphasizes processes rather than ends. In this paradigm, there are no predetermined hypothesis, no treatments, and no restrictions on the end product. One does not manipulate variables or administer a treatment. What one does is observe, intuit, sense what is occurring in a natural setting - hence the term naturalistic inquiry. (p. 17)

Therefore, the task of collecting the necessary data for this study was best served by using a qualitative research approach. In terms of deciding who could best provide me with the data I required for this study, I chose to seek the participants at the departmental, school district, and school levels in the school systems across Canada who could provide me with this information. Merriam (1988) refers to this as purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most. (p. 48)

Therefore, in determining the participants for this study, I chose to make contact with the Ministers of Education at the departmental level, Directors of Education at the school district

level, and principals and students at the school level since these people could best provide me with the data I required. The participants would represent various school systems across Canada.

The data for this study were collected during a six month period from August, 1998, to February, 1999. This chapter will discuss the participants from which data were collected and the various techniques and procedures used to collect the data.

Participants for Data Collection

In order to collect sufficient data to address the research questions in this study, I sought to collect data from the following participants:

1. the Minister of Education or his or her designate at the departmental level in each Canadian province and territory, asking for information about the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level;
2. two Directors of Education or Superintendents at the school district level in each Canadian province or territory, asking for information about the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making at the school district level;
3. two principals at the high school level in each Canadian

province or territory, asking for information about the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making at the school level; and

4. two senior high school students, who are school council representatives or student council representatives, attending the two schools participating in this study, asking for information about what students perceive the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making to be.

Therefore in each Canadian province and territory, I concentrated on collecting data from the Minister of Education at the departmental level, two Directors of Education at the school district level, two principals at the school level, and four students (two students from each participating school). During my data collection, I wanted to collect information regarding the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level, the school district level, and the school level.

Data Collection Procedures

Since the data collection for this study was to take place in all the Canadian provinces and territories, I used the techniques of questionnaires, document analysis and informal interviews to gather the information I needed to address the research questions in this study.

Questionnaires

Information was collected from each participant by administering a questionnaire. Each questionnaire contained questions that specifically addressed the sub-questions under each of the four research questions in this proposal. The questionnaires were sent to each potential participant by mail and included a stamped envelope with my return address. In each questionnaire package that I sent out, I included the following materials:

Package to Ministers of Education

- one introductory letter (Appendix A, p. 215)
- a one page abstract of my study (Appendix B, p. 217)
- one questionnaire (Appendix C, p. 218)
- one informed consent form (Appendix D, p. 223)
- one administrative consent form (Appendix E, p. 224)
- one stamped return envelope

Package to Directors of Education

- one introductory letter (Appendix F, p. 225)
- a one page abstract of my study (Appendix B, p. 217)
- one questionnaire (Appendix G, p. 227)
- one informed consent form (Appendix H, p. 232)
- one administrative consent form (Appendix I, p. 233)
- one stamped return envelope

Package to High School Principals

- one introductory letter (Appendix J, p. 234)

- a one page abstract of my study (Appendix B, p. 217)
- one questionnaire (Appendix K, p. 236)
- one informed consent form (Appendix L, p. 241)
- one administrative consent form (Appendix M, p. 242)
- one stamped return envelope

Package to High School Students

- one introductory letter (Appendix N, p. 243)
- a one page abstract of my study (Appendix B, p. 217)
- one questionnaire (Appendix O, p. 245)
- one informed consent form (Appendix P, p. 249)
- one stamped return envelope

Examination of Documents

In my introductory letter to the Ministers of Education, Directors of Education and high school principals in each province and territory, I asked if documents demonstrating student involvement in policy-making could be made available to me for my examination. The documents that were received were examined in terms of the information that was relevant to the sub-questions under each of my four research questions. A list of the documents I received can be found in Appendix Q, p. 250.

Informal Interviews

I conducted informal interviews with five participants in this study in order to clarify some of their questionnaire responses.

Each of these informal interviews was conducted by telephone (with the permission of the participant) and during each interview I wrote notes. Immediately after each interview, I wrote my notes in detail. In the case of each informal interview, two or three questions were asked for the purpose of clarifying the responses on questionnaires. The informal interviews that were conducted are as follows:

1. Department of Education Level - Yukon
(Senior Analyst, Dept. of Educ., Whitehorse)
(Appendix R, p. 252)
2. Department of Education Level - New Brunswick
(Corporate Policy and Planning Consultant, Dept. of Educ., Fredericton)
(Appendix S, p. 254)
3. Department of Education Level - Ontario
(Director of Policy Branch, Dept. of Education, Toronto)
(Appendix T, p. 256)
4. Department of Education Level - Saskatchewan
(Junior Ministerial Assistant, Dept. of Educ., Regina)
(Appendix U, p. 257)
5. High School Level (Principal) - Newfoundland
(Stephenville Crossing, District #4)
(Appendix V, p. 259)

Each of the above appendices contains the questions asked and the responses obtained during each of the informal interviews.

The Process of Acquiring the Participation of Ministers of Education at the Department of Education Level

In order to collect the necessary data at the departmental level in each Canadian province and territory, I wrote an introductory letter (Appendix A, p. 215) to the Minister of Education in each province and territory. In this letter, I wrote a brief description of who I am and the purpose of my study. I asked each Minister of Education if he or she would provide me with copies of any policies or memorandums that provide for student participation in policy-making at the departmental level. I also asked each Minister of Education if he or she (or a designate) would be willing to complete a questionnaire (Appendix C, p. 218) on the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level. I also included in the questionnaire package sent to each Minister of Education a one page abstract of my study (Appendix B, p. 217), an informed consent form (Appendix D, p. 223) and an administrative consent form (Appendix E, p. 224). The purpose of the informed consent form was to provide me with the permission of each participating Minister of Education to involve him/her in my study. The administrative consent form was for the purpose of gaining permission from each Minister of Education to collect data at the school district and school level. I also provided space on the administrative consent form for each Minister of Education to recommend the name of two school districts under his/her jurisdiction with students actively involved in policy-making at the district level.

After sending my questionnaire package to the Minister of Education in each Canadian province and territory, I received a completed questionnaire from each province and territory with the exception of Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Nunavut. The Minister of Education for Prince Edward Island sent me a letter (Appendix W, p. 261) stating that Prince Edward Island would not be involved in my study. I also received a letter (Appendix X, p. 262) from the Director of School Services and Early Childhood for Nunavut, stating that since Nunavut is a new territory, they would not be involved. Also, I never received a response from the province of Quebec. As a result, I did not include Prince Edward Island, Quebec, nor Nunavut in any part of my study. Therefore, the Ministers of Education (or designates) that did respond to my questionnaire are as follows:

- Minister of Education Office - Yukon
- Minister of Education Office - Northwest Territories
- Minister of Education Office - British Columbia
- Minister of Education Office - Alberta
- Minister of Education Office - Saskatchewan
- Minister of Education Office - Manitoba
- Minister of Education Office - Ontario
- Minister of Education Office - New Brunswick
- Minister of Education Office - Nova Scotia
- Minister of Education Office - Newfoundland

A list of documents I received from the Ministers of Education can be found in Appendix Q, p. 250.

The Process of Acquiring the Participation of Directors of Education at the School District Level

In order to obtain the participation of the Directors of Education at the school district level required for this study, I asked the participating Minister of Education in each province and territory to recommend two school districts with students actively involved in policy-making. This was done by way of my introductory letter (Appendix A, p. 215) and the administrative consent form (Appendix E, p. 224) which I included in each package that I sent to each Minister of Education. Out of all the Minister of Education offices contacted, only the Minister of Education for Saskatchewan recommended a school district that I could approach. Therefore, I obtained a copy of the Canadian Resource Book and from this text I was able to find the name and addresses of the various school districts in each Canadian province and territory.

I made up a package, to be sent to the Directors of Education in various school districts across Canada, consisting of an introductory letter (Appendix F, p. 225), a one page abstract of my study (Appendix B, p. 217), a questionnaire (Appendix G, p. 227), an informed consent form (Appendix H, p. 232) and an administrative consent form (Appendix I, p. 233). In my introductory letter I presented each Director of Education with a brief explanation of who I am and what my study is about. I asked each Director of Education if he or she could provide me with any policies or memorandums that provide for student involvement in

policy-making at the district level. I also asked each Director of Education to complete a questionnaire concerning the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making at the district level.

In order to contact the Directors of Education in various school districts across Canada, a number of school districts in each province and territory were chosen at random. In doing so, I simply selected the names of school districts in the order in which they are printed under each province and territory in the Canadian Resource Book. After selecting a number of school districts, I mailed a package to each Director of Education. The following table (table 3.1, page 62) summarizes the number of questionnaires sent out to Directors of Education across Canada and the number of completed questionnaires returned from school districts in each Canadian province and territory.

Table 3.1

**The Number of Directors of Education Participating
in this Study from School Districts Across Canada**

Canadian Jurisdiction	Number of School Districts Contacted	Number of Completed Questionnaires Returned
Yukon	N/A	N/A
Northwest Territories	2	0
British Columbia	19	2
Alberta	16	4
Saskatchewan	10	2
Manitoba	15	2
Quebec	N/A	N/A
Ontario	22	2
New Brunswick	2	1
Nova Scotia	5	1
Prince Edward Island	N/A	N/A
Newfoundland	4	4
		Total = 18

It should be noted that the province of New Brunswick only has two school districts; one French speaking district and one English speaking district. It should also be noted that in the Yukon Territory, there is only one school district and this school district has one school. The other schools in the Yukon are governed directly by the Yukon Department of Education. Therefore, I did not contact the school district in the Yukon. A total of ninety-five school districts across Canada were sent

a questionnaire package and out of this number, 18 school districts replied. Therefore, 19% of the school districts contacted across Canada, agreed to participate in this study by completing a questionnaire. Any documents sent to me by the participating Directors of Education are listed in Appendix Q, p. 250.

The Process of Acquiring the Participation of Principals at the School Level

In order to obtain high school principals from across Canada for my study, I asked each of the participating Directors of Education to recommend two high schools with students actively involved in policy-making. This was done by way of an introductory letter (Appendix F, p. 225) and an administrative consent form (Appendix I, p. 233) which I sent in the questionnaire package to each Director of Education. Since very few of the participating Directors of Education recommended two schools in their district for my contact purposes, I obtained a copy of the high school listings and addresses from the Department of Education for each province and territory. Using the high school listings, I randomly selected a number of high schools to contact. In doing so, I selected the names of high schools in the order in which they are printed in the listings under each school district participating in this study.

I made up a principal's package consisting of an introductory

letter (Appendix J, p. 234), a one page abstract of my study (Appendix B, p. 217), a questionnaire (Appendix K, p. 236), an informed consent form (Appendix L, p. 241) and an administrative consent form (Appendix M, p. 242). In my introductory letter to the principals, I presented each principal with an explanation of who I am and what my study is about. I asked each principal if he or she would be willing to provide me with copies of any policies or memorandums that provide for student involvement in policy-making at the school level. I also asked each principal if he or she would be willing to complete a questionnaire on the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making at the school level.

After selecting a number of high schools in each province and territory to contact, I mailed a principal's package to the principal of each school. If the responding principals required that I have school district approval before their participation, I would have obtained district approval by letter. However, this did not appear to be an issue with the principals of the participating schools. In the case of the schools that were recommended by Directors of Education, I had the permission of the Directors of Education to contact the schools that were recommended in their district. Table 3.2 on page 65 illustrates the number of questionnaires sent out to high school principals and the number of questionnaires returned from principals in each Canadian province and territory.

Table 3.2

**The Number of High School Principals Participating
in this Study from Schools Across Canada**

Canadian Jurisdiction	Number of High School Principals Contacted	Number of Completed Questionnaires Returned by Principals
Yukon	3	0
Northwest Territories	2	0
British Columbia	14	3
Alberta	18	2
Saskatchewan	12	4
Manitoba	12	2
Quebec	N/A	N/A
Ontario	20	1
New Brunswick	12	1
Nova Scotia	17	1
Prince Edward Island	N/A	N/A
Newfoundland	12	3
		Total = 17

A total of one hundred and twenty-two schools across Canada were sent questionnaire packages and out of this number, seventeen principals participated in this study. Therefore, 14% of all the principals contacted across Canada participated in this study by completing and returning a questionnaire.

The Process of Acquiring the Participation of Students at the High School Level

In order to obtain students for my study, I asked each of the participating principals to recommend two senior high students who are serving on the student council or school council in their school. This was done by way of an introductory letter (Appendix J, p. 234) and an administrative consent form (Appendix M, p. 242) sent to each participating principal.

I made up a student package consisting of an introductory letter (Appendix N, p. 243), a one page abstract of my study (Appendix B, p. 217), a questionnaire (Appendix O, p. 245) and an informed consent form (Appendix P, p. 249). In my introductory letter, I presented each student with a brief explanation of who I am and what my study is about. I asked each student to complete a questionnaire concerning the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making in their high school. Each participating student had to obtain the permission of their school principal and parents in order to take part in this study. This was accomplished by having each student complete an informed consent form and by having the form signed by the student's parents and school principal.

The student questionnaire that was used in this study was designed to address the sub-questions under each of my research questions. After putting together the questionnaire in August, 1998, I piloted the questionnaire with four students in two high schools in my local area. The purpose of the pilot was to

determine whether or not the questionnaire was worded in such a way that students could understand exactly what was being asked.

Table 3.3 summarizes the number of students that were recommended to me by principals and the number of students who responded to the student questionnaire in each Canadian province and territory.

Table 3.3

**The Number of High School Students Participating
in this Study from Schools Across Canada**

Canadian Jurisdiction	Number of Students Recommended By the Principals	Number of Students Responding to the Questionnaire
Yukon	0	0
Northwest Territories	0	0
British Columbia	4	2
Alberta	2	1
Saskatchewan	6	5
Manitoba	4	3
Ontario	2	0
New Brunswick	2	1
Nova Scotia	2	1
Prince Edward Island	0	0
Newfoundland	8	7
		Total = 20

It should be noted that no students were contacted in the Northwest Territories or the Yukon since I did not get a response from any of the high school principals in the two territories. A total of thirty student questionnaires were sent to high school students recommended to me by principals across Canada and out of this number, twenty students participated in the study by completing and returning a questionnaire. Therefore, 66% of the students who were sent questionnaires participated in this study. It is very interesting to note that 66% of the students who were contacted participated in this study and only 14% of the principals who were approached and 19% of the directors of education who were contacted participated by completing a questionnaire.

Data Analysis Method

In order to keep track of the completed questionnaires that were returned to me from each Minister of Education from across Canada, I photocopied each completed survey and placed the original in a cardboard file. Each file was marked for future identification by labelling it with the term "Departmental Level" and the name of the province or territory. Then taking the photocopy of each returned survey, I labelled each answer with the name of the province and territory. I then used the cut and paste method of organizing the data as outlined by Merriam (1988). I cut each survey into its individual answers. I then

made up master sheets and I placed all the answers to question one on one master sheet; all the answers to question two on another master sheet and so on. The origin of each answer on the master sheet was identified by the name of the province. Therefore, after organizing all my data from the departmental level, I have retained a complete cardboard file system with all the original completed surveys and a master sheet containing the answers for each survey question.

In terms of the completed surveys from the Directors of Education, high school principals and students, I first photocopied each completed survey and I maintained the original data in the same type of file system as described above. I also used Merriam's (1988) cut and paste method to make master sheets with the photocopied surveys for each survey question. In order to identify the origin of each survey answer on the master sheets, I labelled each responding Director of Education, high school principal and student in each province with a number. Therefore, the answers on the master sheet were labelled with "Director of Education #1, Name of Province or Territory", "Principal #1, Name of Province or Territory", "Student #1, Name of province or Territory".

I filed each of the documents which I received from the various survey participants, in the cardboard file with the original completed surveys. These documents were examined in order to find out what information contained therein, would help me address each of the sub-questions under each of my research

questions. I also placed the notes that I made during the informal interviews in the same cardboard files with the original materials. The interview data was obtained for the purpose of helping me understand a particular answer on a completed survey.

Ethical Issues

Written ethical clearance was obtained from each person participating in this study at the departmental level, school district level and school level before questionnaires were completed. This task was accomplished through the use of the informed consent forms. Also, in my introductory letter and in the informed consent forms, all participants were informed that they could withdraw their involvement from this study at any time.

Internal and External Validity

According to Slavin (1992), "internal validity refers to the degree to which a research design rules out explanation for a study's findings other than the variables involved appear to related because they are in fact related" (p. 103). In order to maintain the internal validity of this study, all participants in this study were subjected to the same questions. Therefore, the

instrument for collecting data did not vary from province to province, nor from the departmental level to the school level. All participants were asked to reflect on the nature and extent of actual student involvement in policy development and therefore subjectivity should have remained minimal.

According to Slavin (1992), "in research in schools, reactivity is a particular problem because teachers, principals and other staff members often have a substantial interest in looking good to outsiders and may have a strong stake in one or another outcome of a research project" (p. 111). In order to prevent this, I asked all participants to provide me with copies of policies or memorandums that reflect student involvement in policy-making. The obtaining of copies of policies and memorandums was for the purpose of backing up what the subject participants were actually saying about the involvement of students in policy-making at a particular level in the educational system.

Slavin (1992) indicates that "external validity, or generalizability, refers to the degree to which findings of a particular study using a particular sample, have meaning for other settings or samples, particularly settings or samples in which we have some practical interest" (p. 103). In order to protect the external validity of this study during the data collection, I made sure that all participants were fully aware of what my study is about and how each participant could be of assistance to me. However, the generalizability of the results of

this study will be rather limited since I collected data from a very small group at the departmental, school district, and school levels across Canada. Therefore, the findings from this study will reflect only what is happening in terms of student involvement in educational policy-making in the Departments of Education, school districts and schools participating in this study. Also during my data collection, by not demonstrating that I am or I am not an advocate for student participation in policy-making, I avoided what Slavin (1992) refers to as the "Hawthorne Effect" (p. 112) and the "John Henry Effect" (p. 112). According to Slavin (1992), the "Hawthorne Effect" (p. 112) refers to the study subjects trying to prove my ideas correct during my data collection and the "John Henry Effect" (p. 112) refers to the study subjects trying to prove my ideas wrong.

Chapter Four

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS FROM THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION SURVEY CONDUCTED AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LEVEL IN EACH PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

Survey Participants at the Departmental Level Across Canada

The Ministers of Education or their designates in eight provinces and two territories participated in this study at the departmental level. The list of the Ministers of Education or their designates who participated in this study was previously presented on page 59. The survey responses from the Minister of Education or his or her designate in each province or territory can be found in Appendix Y on page 263.

Policies That Provide for Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the Departmental Level

The Policy-Maker Participants at the Departmental Level

Policy development in the provinces and territories of Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Yukon, Manitoba, Newfoundland, British Columbia, Alberta, the Northwest Territories, Ontario, and New Brunswick is the responsibility of the Department of Education in each province and territory. There is no provision for the

involvement of students in policy development at the departmental level in terms of established policy in any of the provinces or territories. In the Yukon, the schools look to the Department of Education to set policy and students are not involved. In the other provinces and territories, students may be invited to present their opinions through a consultation process or through the executive of student associations. However student involvement in policy development at the departmental level is by invitation only and not specified by policy.

Policies Outlining Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the Departmental Level

Students are only involved in policy development at the departmental level in the provinces and territories in an advisory capacity and this is by invitation only. None of the provinces or territories have policies specifying student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level.

Across Canada at the departmental level, student participation in policy-making, in an advisory capacity, may take several different forms. In Saskatchewan, students have representatives on the Saskatchewan Council on Children, or the Department of Education may collect feedback from students on such educational matters as new curriculum or courses. In Nova Scotia, students may be asked to participate in focus groups for the purpose of presenting information to the Department of Education before certain policies are established. In Newfoundland, students may

participate in pilot programs or they may make individual submissions to the Minister of Education concerning certain policies to be established. Students in British Columbia have representatives on the BC Student Voice. The BC Student Voice sends student representatives to various provincial and regional meetings. Student representatives are also on various Ministry of Education committees. In Ontario, students are represented by two student associations - the Ontario Secondary School Students (OSSSA) and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS). The executive of these associations will meet with the Minister of Education throughout the year in order to advise him or her on specific policy matters. Students in Alberta and in the Northwest Territories may provide information and concerns to the Department of Education through a consultation process established for the purpose of collecting information before a policy is established. Only in Manitoba and in the Yukon Territory are students totally left out of the policy development process at the departmental level. High school students in New Brunswick may serve as members of the School Parent Advisory Committees and the Dept. of Education will send policies, that impact directly on students, to the School Parent Advisory Committees for their input. Students serving on student associations such as the Youth Council of New Brunswick, serve on advisory committees and task forces which are set up by the Dept. of Education. Students can also have input into policies at the departmental level by taking part in focus groups and provincial

forums. In New Brunswick, students are also encouraged to present submissions to the Provincial Curriculum Advisory Committees concerning new curriculum and instructional methods.

The Availability of Departmental Policies to the Public

Since none of the provinces and territories have policies that specifically provide for student involvement in policy development at the departmental level, there are no policies to be made available to the public. Student involvement in policy development at this level, in an advisory capacity, is a matter of practice and not policy. The provinces of Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Alberta, Ontario, and New Brunswick and the Northwest Territories have established policies that provide for student involvement in policy-making at the local community and school level through school advisory councils or a school accreditation programme. These policies are made available to the public in the Education Act for each province and territory.

The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the Departmental Level

Identifying Problem Issues at the Departmental Level

Students in the different provinces and territories are involved in identifying problem issues in education at the departmental

level in an advisory fashion and the students may use a variety of methods to do so. In Saskatchewan, students are involved in advisory committee structures such as the Saskatchewan Council on Children. Recommendations from this council are made to the Ministry. In Nova Scotia, students may be involved through various focus groups organized to gather information. In Newfoundland, students may participate in piloting new programs or curriculum and they may write individual submissions to the Minister of Education. In British Columbia, the BC Student Voice has representatives on Ministry of Education committees and representatives also attend provincial and regional meetings. Students in Alberta may provide information during a consultation process set up to gather information on an issue. In Ontario, the executive of the various student associations will consult with the Minister of Education. Students in the Northwest Territories may be asked to attend information gathering sessions and in New Brunswick, students are asked to present or send submissions to the Provincial Curriculum Advisory Committees concerning new curriculum and instruction. Also in New Brunswick, students serving as members of the School Parent Advisory Committees, can give their input on all departmental policies that impact directly on students. The Department of Education sends all policies impacting on students to the School Parent Advisory Committees for their input. Students in New Brunswick can also identify problem issues through their representatives on student associations such as the Youth Council of New Brunswick. This

association has representatives on provincial task forces and advisory committees. Students are also encouraged to present submissions at focus groups or provincial forums.

The students in all the provinces and territories discussed in these survey results, participate in identifying problem issues at the departmental level in an advisory capacity only. Students in the province of Manitoba and in the Yukon Territory are not involved in identifying problem issues at the departmental level in any form.

Identifying Courses of Action to Address Problem Issues at the Departmental Level

Students in the various provinces and territories may be involved in identifying possible courses of action that will address problem issues in education at the departmental level in an advisory capacity through a number of techniques. In Saskatchewan, students participate in advisory committee structures such as the Saskatchewan Council on Children. Students in Nova Scotia can suggest possible courses of action by participating in focus groups. British Columbia students have representation on the BC Student Voice and representatives of the BC Student Voice serve on various Ministry Committees. In Alberta, consultation processes may be set up by the Department of Education in which students can submit proposals. Students in Ontario have student representation on student associations and the executive of these student associations meets directly

with the Minister of Education. New Brunswick high school students can also help to identify courses of action by presenting submissions to the Department of Education during focus groups and provincial forums. The Department of Education also sends all policies impacting on students to the local School Parent Advisory Committees for their input and high school students serve on these committees. Students associations such as the Youth Council of New Brunswick can help to recommend courses of action through their representation on advisory committees and task forces.

In the provinces of Manitoba and Newfoundland, and in the Yukon Territory, students are not involved in identifying courses of action that will address problem issues in education at the departmental level.

The Approval of Policies at the Departmental Level

Policy approval, for the most part, falls under the domain of the Minister of Education and the provincial Cabinet. However, students in some provinces and territories may influence the final decision. In Saskatchewan, recommendations made through advisory committee structures such as the Council on Children can influence the departmental decision on policy. In Newfoundland, recommendations made by students at provincial conferences can help the Department of Education in its final decisions on policy. British Columbia students can influence decisions on policy through recommendations made by the BC Student Voice when

the executive of the Voice meets with the Minister of Education. In Alberta, recommendations made by high school students through consultation processes with the Department of Education can influence the decision on policy. Students in the Northwest Territories can make recommendations during information gathering sessions and students in Ontario, through their executive on student associations, can make recommendations about policy directly to the Minister of Education. Students in New Brunswick can influence policy decisions through the members of student associations such as the Young Council of New Brunswick who serve on provincial task forces and advisory committees. Students in New Brunswick can also send submissions to the Department of Education through such committees as the Provincial Curriculum Advisory Committee. Also, students in New Brunswick can influence policy decision on courses of action to take, through their participation on departmentally organized focus groups and provincial forums.

Students in the provinces of Nova Scotia and Manitoba, and in the Yukon Territory are not involved in influencing policy approval.

The Review and Modification of Policies at the Departmental Level

Students in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario, and New Brunswick may, through the student associations in these provinces, advise the Department of Education in terms of the

review and modification of courses of action adopted to address problem issues in education at the departmental level. The Department of Education in the provinces of Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Newfoundland, and Alberta, and in the territories of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, does not involve students in the review and modification of courses of action taken to address issues in education at the departmental level.

Recruiting Students for Policy-Making at the Departmental Level

The Type of Policies That Students Are Involved in Developing at the Departmental Level

Only in four provinces was the Department of Education specific about the type of policies students may be involved in developing at the departmental level in an advisory capacity. In Saskatchewan students are involved in helping to develop policies in relationship to the implementation of goals for the well-being of children, youth, and families as outlined in the Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children. Students in Saskatchewan may also be asked to give advice on policies that address the community school framework, curriculum and instruction, and high school reviews. In Alberta, students may become involved in such initiatives as the health program for kindergarten to grade nine, the Career and Life Management 20 course for seniors and projects

that deal with safe and caring schools. In New Brunswick, students have been asked to become involved in such policy issues as the Effective Use of Schools Policy (dealing with shared use of schools and school closures) and the Positive Learning Environment Policy (setting best practices for discipline and standards for conduct in schools). Other initiatives in New Brunswick that students have been involved in are issues which come under the headings of focus on the learner, educational transitions, and literacy/numeracy. In the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario and in the Northwest Territories, students are invited to give advice on issues that directly impact on students.

The Frequency of Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the Departmental Level

The Saskatchewan Council On Children meets quarterly and at least once annually with the Ministers responsible for the Action Plan for Children. Other advisory structures are activated and disbanded as necessary. In British Columbia, the BC Student Voice places student representatives on Ministry of Education committees when they are established and student representatives attend regional and provincial meetings when they are held. Information gathering sessions and other consultation processes are held in Alberta and the Northwest Territories whenever the Department of Education finds it necessary to consult with students. In Ontario, the executive of the student associations

meet with the Minister of Education throughout the year and student representatives from the student associations are on advisory committees set up by the Department of Education. In New Brunswick, the Youth Council of New Brunswick conducts a bi-annual survey of its members focusing on various issues. This information is provided to the Interdepartmental Committee and through this vehicle, the information reaches the departments and ministers responsible for the identified areas. Students in New Brunswick may also participate in provincial forums and focus groups when the Department of Education wishes to consult with them.

The Perceptions of Policy-Maker Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the Departmental Level

Students in the provinces and territories who participated in this study (Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Yukon, Manitoba, Newfoundland, British Columbia, Alberta, Northwest Territories, Ontario, and New Brunswick) are involved in policy development at the Department of Education level in an advisory capacity. This advisory role is strictly by invitation and there are no policies at the departmental level in any of the provinces and territories that provide for student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level. However, the departmental participants in this study in the provinces of Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Ontario, and Alberta expressed that student

involvement in policy development at the departmental level in terms of policies that impact directly upon students is very useful. According to the Department of Education in the Northwest Territories, "sometimes when we need information we forget to ask the right people" (quote from survey, 1998).

In terms of what concerns students may have (as expressed to the Department of Education) about the nature and extent of their involvement in policy-making at the departmental level, no student concerns were identified by the Department of Education in any of the provinces and territories surveyed.

SUMMARY

The analysis of the data collected during this survey demonstrates that the Department of Education in each of the provinces and territories surveyed, does attempt to gather advice from students during the course of policy development, especially when the policies impact directly upon students. Each of the Departments of Education across Canada has its own means of collecting data from students. Only the province of Manitoba and the Yukon Territory totally eliminate students from participating in policy development at the departmental level in an advisory capacity. However it must be noted that the involvement of students in policy development at the departmental level is only advisory and there are no policies in place in any of the

provinces and territories that ensure direct student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level. The student involvement is by invitation only. Mechanisms used to gather information from students by the Department of Education in each Canadian province and territory is summarized in the following table (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

**Summary of Student Involvement
In Policy-Making At the Departmental Level**

Province or Territory	Type of Student Involvement	Mechanisms Used to Involve Students
Yukon	No Involvement	
Northwest Territories	Advisory By Invitation and Not Established Policy	The Department of Education may establish a consultation process in order to gather concerns from students.
British Columbia	Advisory By Invitation and Not Established Policy	Student representatives on the BC Student Voice attend provincial and regional meetings.
Alberta	Advisory By Invitation and Not Established Policy	The Department of Education may establish a consultation process in order to gather concerns from students.
Saskatchewan	Advisory By Invitation and Not Established Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have representation on the Saskatchewan Council On Children. 2. Students may provide feedback to the Department of Education on curriculum and courses.

Table 4.1

**Summary of Student Involvement
In Policy-Making At the Departmental Level
(con't)**

Province or Territory	Type of Student Involvement	Mechanisms Used To Involve Students
Manitoba	No Involvement	
Ontario	Advisory By Invitation and Not Established Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student representatives on the executive of two student associations meet regularly with the Minister of Education and they serve on committees. 2. Students serve as trustees on district boards. However they do not have voting power.
New Brunswick	Advisory By Invitation and Not Established Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students may be members of the School Parent Advisory Committees. Policies may be sent to the advisory committees by the Dept. of Education for their input. 2. Student representatives on the Youth Council of New Brunswick may serve on advisory committees. 3. Students can have input by participating in focus groups and provincial forums. 4. Students are encouraged to send in individual submissions to the Department of Education.

Table 4.1

**Summary of Student Involvement
In Policy-Making at the Departmental Level
(con't)**

Province or Territory	Type of Student Involvement	Mechanisms Used to Involve Students
Nova Scotia	Advisory By Invitation and Not Established Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students may participate in focus groups. 2. Students may send in individual submissions.
Newfoundland	Advisory By Invitation and Not Established Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students may pilot new courses and give feedback. 2. Students may write their MHA or Minister of Education

Chapter Five

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SURVEY CONDUCTED AT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT LEVEL IN EACH PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

Survey Participants at the School District Level Across Canada

A total of eighteen Directors of Education participated in this study representing eighteen school districts across Canada. The number of Directors of Education in each Canadian jurisdiction who participated in this study is summarized in Table 3.1 on page 62. The survey responses from the Directors of Education can be found in Appendix Z on page 309.

Policies That Provide for Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School District Level

The Policy-Maker Participants at the School District Level

In identifying the policy-maker participants at the school district level, only three of the seventeen participating school districts identified students as active participants at the district level. One of these school districts (located in Nova Scotia) considers students to be active policy-maker participants because of the advice that is obtained from the students

concerning policies that should be formed.

The policy-maker participants at the district level are the senior administration with input from the field including principals, teachers, parents students, Board members and the community (Director of Education, Nova Scotia).

The second school district (located in British Columbia) to indicate that students are active policy-maker participants, includes students on the standing committee for the district.

Students are members of the School Board's standing committee. The committee role is advisory and the Board approves policy. The committee membership includes unions, management staff, administration, parents, community representation and student representation (Director of Education #1, British Columbia).

In Ontario, students can actively serve on district school boards. According to Section #55 of the Ontario Education Quality Improvement Act, secondary students are elected or appointed to district school boards but they do not sit as members and they do not have voting powers. However, according to Regulation #461/97 students sitting on district school boards have the same opportunity to present issues and concerns at board meetings as the regular members have.

The remaining fifteen Directors of Education from across Canada did not indicate students as policy-maker participants at the district level. In these districts, the policy-maker participants are the senior administration, school district trustees and school principals.

Policies Outlining Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School District Level

Ontario is the only Canadian jurisdiction where policies must be in place to provide for student involvement in policy-making at the district level. According to Regulation 461/97 of the Ontario Education Quality Improvement Act, 1997, "every board shall develop and implement a policy providing for the representation of the interests of pupils on the board" (p. 504). Regulation 461/97 also states every school district must outline in policy the "type and extent of participation by pupil representatives" (p. 504). None of the school districts participating in this study in the other provinces and territories have policies providing for student involvement in policy-making at the district level.

Therefore, with the exception of Ontario, student involvement in policy-making at the district level in the participating districts across Canada is totally by invitation and not by policy.

There has not been any formal role for students in the policy-making process in the past, nor is one planned in the foreseeable future (Director of Education #2, Alberta).

There is no provision made in existing policy to involve students in policy development at the district level (Director of Education #2, Manitoba).

In terms of the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making at the district level, seven of the participating school districts acknowledged that students are not involved in

policy-making at the district level. The nine school districts in various parts of Canada (including Ontario) that do acknowledge student involvement in policy-making at the district level, indicated that students are involved in an advisory capacity only.

Students are consulted on the need for revising policies and the creation of new ones when and where these policies impact on their lives
(Director of Education #1, Newfoundland).

The Availability of School District Policies to the Public

One of the participating school districts in Ontario stated that district policies are very rarely made public and this would include district policies providing for the type and extent of student representation on district boards. Since all other participating school districts from across Canada indicated that there are no policies providing for student involvement in policy-making at the district level, no such policies can be made available.

There are no policies outlining student involvement in policy development. Therefore, no such policies are made available to the public (Director of Education #1, Saskatchewan).

The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School District Level

Identifying Problem Issues at the School District Level

Although the Directors of Education, who participated in this study, indicated that students are not formally involved in policy-making at the school district level, students are involved in helping school district zero in on problem issues. According to the Directors of Education, who indicated that students are involved in policy-making in an advisory capacity at the district level, there are several mechanisms used to collect input from students on problem issues. Some of these mechanisms are as follows:

1. students may participate on standing committees for school districts;
2. students may participate in focus groups organized by the school district;
3. students may sit on various school district committees;
4. students in Ontario may serve as non-voting district board trustees;
5. students may have formal and informal discussions with senior school board administrators;
6. students may bring issues to their parents, who in turn, may bring the issues to the attention of the school district administrators;
7. students may discuss problem issues with their school

- principal, who in turn, may bring the issue to the attention of the district senior administrators;
8. students may bring problem issues to the attention of their student representatives on the local school council;
 9. students may make rare appointments with district senior administrators;
 10. students may be involved in providing information for district and school growth plans;
 11. students may make their concerns known to their student associations; and
 12. students in Ontario may sit on a student-trustee committee which is made up of student representatives from each secondary school within a district and the trustees and a superintendent.

One Director of Education in Manitoba suggested that students can always make their concerns and ideas known to the district board through their school principal.

Students are involved in identifying problem issues in education at the school district level through discussions with their principal by way of the student council (Director of Education #1, Manitoba).

Identifying Courses of Action to Address Problem Issues at the School District Level

According to the Directors of Education participating in this study, who indicated that students are involved in policy-making

at the district level in an advisory capacity, students can help the school district find solutions that will address problem issues. Some of the ways in which students can assist the school districts in finding solutions to address problem issues have been listed previously in this study on page 92.

One Director of Education in Nova Scotia suggested that the newly formed school advisory councils play an important role in providing a forum for students to voice their concerns and ideas.

The school advisory council is good here. Students on these have decision sharing input (Director of Education, Nova Scotia).

Another Director of Education in Ontario suggested that students may be very active in voicing their concerns and ideas to the district board by way of the student-trustees committee.

We have a student-trustees committee with a mandate for students to raise their concerns and discuss possible recommendations for Trustees and other decision makers to follow (Director of Education #2, Ontario).

Seven of the sixteen Directors of Education, who participated in this study, indicated that students are not involved in helping to advise school districts on finding solutions to problem issues in education.

Students are not involved in policy development at the school district level (Director of Education #4, Newfoundland).

The Approval of Policies at the School District Level

According to the Directors of Education participating in this study, students generally are not involved in the

approval of policies or solutions to address problem issues at the district level. This falls under the responsibility of the school board trustees and the senior administrative staff.

Students are not involved in the approval of courses of action to address problem issues in education at the division level (Director of Education #1, Manitoba).

Students are not generally involved (Director of Education #2, Saskatchewan).

However, six of the seventeen Directors of Education participating in this study have indicated several mechanisms that are used to involve students in the approval of policies in an advisory capacity. These mechanisms have been listed previously in this study on page 92.

One school district in Manitoba has a very detailed plan concerning how stakeholders can provide feedback to the district on proposed policies, and the stakeholders can include students.

The draft policy is forwarded to the Board for authority to distribute for feedback to schools, parent councils, advisory committees, and employee groups. Usually these groups are provided approximately three months to review the draft and provide suggested changes. Input from schools or parent and advisory councils could and from time to time does include students. The suggested changes are collected and received by a member of the senior administration. The draft policy and procedures are revised based on the feedback received (Director of Education #2, Manitoba).

The Review and Modification of Policies at the School District Level

Eight of the Directors of Education participating in this study from across Canada have indicated that students are not involved in the review and modification of policies at the school district

level. However, they have indicated that students are involved in helping to review and modify policies at the district level by providing feedback to the district. According to the Directors of Education, the students can provide and are providing feedback to district school boards through the mechanisms listed previously in this study on page 92.

One Director of Education in Newfoundland suggested that the school council and student council play a very important role in providing feedback to the district board about policy review and modification.

Review and modification are conducted through the school council and student union. Feedback to the Board is welcomed and encouraged (Director of Education #1, Newfoundland).

In Nova Scotia, one district sets up a district wide planning team (consisting of students) to monitor and review district policies.

The committee mandate is to monitor and review goals yearly (Director of Education, Nova Scotia).

Recruiting Students for Policy-Making at the School District Level

The Type of Policies That Students Are Involved in Developing at the School District Level

According to the Directors of Education participating in this study, who have students involved in policy-making in an advisory capacity at the district level, students are involved in helping

to develop the following type of policies:

- . policies concerning technology,
- . policies about adapting the curriculum,
- . policies about parental involvement,
- . policies about student behavior and discipline,
- . policies about drug education,
- . policies about safe grads (high school graduation exercises and activities without alcohol),
- . policies about extra-curricular activities,
- . policies about scholarships,
- . policies about school safety,
- . policies that impact on the life of a student,
- . policies on learner assessment,
- . policies on learner evaluation, and
- . policies dealing with antidiscrimination education.

One Director of Education in British Columbia indicated that students are "involved in developing all policies that come before standing committees" (Director of Education #1, British Columbia). Students attending school in this district may serve on standing committees for the Board.

The Frequency of Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School District Level

The frequency of student involvement in policy-making at the school district level ranges from no involvement to involvement in regular monthly meetings of standing committees.

Most of the participating Directors of Education indicated that students are not involved in policy-making at the district level. Three of the participating Directors of Education indicated that students are seldom or rarely involved in policy-making at the district level. One Director of Education indicated that students are involved in regular monthly meetings. The answers to this question seem to vary according to how the students are involved. Students involved mainly as a source for information, seem to be involved at the district level when a new policy is being considered or changed. Students who participate on standing committees as in the case of one district in British Columbia, are involved on a monthly basis. One Ontario district reported that students are more involved now in the last three to five years and that the students have had a voice in approximately seventy percent of the policies that have been revised in that district. One district in Nova Scotia indicated that students are involved "when needed" (Director of Education, Nova Scotia).

The Perceptions of Policy-Maker Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School District Level

Most Directors of Education participating in this study indicated that students are not involved in policy development in a formal manner at the district level. However a number of different districts across Canada indicated that students are involved in

an advisory capacity by serving on committees and by making recommendations. Therefore, the students who are involved in policy-making at the district level (with the participating school districts in this study) are involved in an advisory capacity.

Students are involved in the practice of policy-making at the school district level by sitting on committees and councils that make recommendations and reviewing items for renewal (Director of Education #1, Newfoundland).

Students are involved in the practice of policy-making at the district level by serving on standing committees which meet on a monthly basis (Director of Education #1, Newfoundland).

The Directors of Education with students involved in policy-making at the district level, indicated a positive experience with student participation. Some of the positive perceptions that the participating Directors of Education have concerning student involvement in policy-making at the district level are as follows:

- . students bring a positive point of view to policy-making;
- . students bring a practical point of view to policy-making;
- . participation in policy-making at the district level helps to establish the students as stakeholders in the policies;
- . students begin to develop ownership;
- . students appreciate being consulted on issues that affect them;
- . policies will be more enforceable; and
- . students will build leadership skills by participating in

policy development at the district level.

One Director of Education in Saskatchewan had nothing but positive comments to say about student involvement in policy-making.

Students bring a positive, practical point of view to policy development discussions. I have nothing but positive comments about their participation (Director of Education #2, Saskatchewan).

In terms of negative perceptions, one Director of Education indicated that policies would take a long time to develop with student participation and friction between the trustees and the students may develop since the trustees are all adults.

Policies would take a long time to research, develop and put into practice. Conflict would result since elected trustees think they know what is best for students (Director of Education #1, Saskatchewan).

One Director of Education in Newfoundland suggests that we have approached a period in time when students, parents and all stakeholders must become involved in policy-making at the district level.

I would like to have more student involvement. I think more involvement will be positive and ensure that our policies are more student sensitive. I suspect that we will have to remove any barriers which may have prevented their involvement in the past. We are approaching an age of involvement, if we are not already there (Director of Education #2, Newfoundland).

Another Director of Education in Ontario, indicated that student involvement in policy-making is an area which can be improved since there appears to be a lack of consistency.

This is an area we could improve on since student involvement (system/school level) is fragmented or on a hit or miss basis (Director of Education #2, Ontario).

In terms of what concerns students have (as made known to the school district) about their involvement in policy-making at the school district level, all of the Directors of Education participating in this study indicated that no student concerns have been made known to them.

They haven't really voiced concerns. They are there and willing when you need them (Director of Education, Nova Scotia).

One Director of Education in Newfoundland indicated that the students would like more say in educational policy-making at the district level.

SUMMARY

According to the Directors of Education participating in this study, students can be, and are, involved in policy-making at the school district level in various school districts across Canada. Since none of the participating districts have policies in place to provide for student involvement in policy-making, students that are involved, are involved in an advisory capacity. The mechanisms that are used to involve students in policy-making at the district level include students serving on committees and councils, and students providing feedback to the district board about policy issues. Students are also involved in policy-making at the district level through the school councils and through student organizations such as the student council. One director

of Education in Ontario indicated that student involvement in policy-making has only increased in the last three to five years with the introduction of school councils.

Limited to moderate extent of student involvement in the last 5 years. School councils and amalgamation have triggered more student involvement (Director of Education #2, Ontario).

Students are involved in the practice of policy-making at the school district level by sitting on committees and councils that make recommendations and by reviewing items for renewal (Director of Education #1, Newfoundland).

In the districts that do have student involvement, the Directors of Education have indicated that the experience has been positive and students do bring a positive point of view to the policy-making table. Some of the positive perceptions concerning student involvement in policy-making at the district level include the following:

1. students establish ownership;
2. students build leadership skills;
3. policies become more student sensitive; and
4. policies become more enforceable.

One director of Education in Newfoundland indicated that more student involvement in policy-making would be welcomed at the district level.

I would like to have more student involvement. I think more involvement would be positive and ensure that our policies are more student sensitive (Director of Education #2, Newfoundland).

Another Director of Education in Ontario indicated that there is room for improvement in terms of providing for student involvement in policy-making since there is a lack of consistency

concerning student involvement at the district/school level.

My findings concerning student involvement in policy-making at the school district level are summarized in the following table (table 5.1).

Table 5.1

Summary of Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School District Level			
Province or Territory	Policies Providing For Student Involvement	Type of Student Involvement	Mechanisms Used To Involve Students
British Columbia	No Policies In Place	Advisory	Students Serve On Standing Committees
Alberta	No Policies In Place	Advisory	1. Consultation By School Board 2. Student Organization Membership
Saskatchewan	No Policies In Place	No Involvement	1. Students Provide Advice Through Parents 2. Students Serve On Committees
Manitoba	No Policies In Place	Advisory	1. Students Provide Feedback At School Level 2. Students Advise Through Parent Advisory Committee

Table 5.1

**Summary of Student Involvement
in Policy-Making at the School District Level
(con't)**

Province or Territory	Policies Providing For Student Involvement	Type of Student Involvement	Mechanisms Used To Involve Students
Ontario	No Policies In Place	Advisory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students May Sit On Student/Trustee Committee 2. Student Presentations 3. Written Proposals
Nova Scotia	No Policies In Place	Advisory	Students Serve On District Committees
Newfoundland	No Policies In Place	Advisory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participation In Forums, Round Tables & Surveys 2. Students Advise Through School Councils 3. Students Serve On Committees

Chapter Six

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS FROM THE PRINCIPALS' SURVEY CONDUCTED AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL IN EACH PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

Survey Participants at the School Level -

High School Principals

A total of seventeen principals participated in this study from various jurisdictions across Canada. The number of participating principals from each Canadian province and territory is summarized in Table 3.2 on page 65. The survey responses from the high school principals across Canada can be found in Appendix A1 on page 352.

Policies That Provide for Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School Level

The Policy-Maker Participants at the School Level

The policy-maker participants at the school level, as identified by the participating principals in various jurisdictions across Canada, include the following:

- . the school administration,
- . the school staff,
- . parent advisory councils and school councils, and
- . students.

Students are policy-maker participants through their participation on the student council, school advisory councils, school improvement teams and various committees. At the school level, there appears to be a greater tendency to bring the school administration, teaching staff, support staff, parents and students into the policy-making process since virtually all of these people are seen as the stakeholders in the educational process at the school level.

We do not have a policy stating that participants should or must be involved in policy-making. The group or individuals affected by the policy are involved in the development of policies. They might include teachers, students, the school council and the student council (Principal #3, Newfoundland).

Policies Outlining Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School Level

In Ontario, student participation in policy-making is provided for by district policy since students can serve as non-voting trustees at the district board level. According to one principal in Manitoba, school policy dictates that students must be consulted on matters affecting them. However, the fifteen other participating principals in various jurisdictions across Canada have suggested that student involvement in policy-making at the school level is by invitation only. In these fifteen schools across Canada, there are no policies providing for student involvement at the school level in these jurisdictions.

Student involvement in policy-making at the school level is informal and it is not provided for in Policy (Principal #2, British Columbia).

Since student involvement in policy-making at the school level appears to be based on invitation rather than policy in the majority of schools that participated in this study, the role of student involvement in policy-making is an advisory position.

Student involvement in policy development at the school level is not outlined in policy but students are involved in an advisory capacity (Principal #1, Newfoundland).

Students are involved in policy development by invitation only. Students are invited to be on committees. Students are invited to submit recommendations (Principal #3, Newfoundland).

Even though there are no formal descriptions outlining the involvement of students in policy-making at the school level, several methods of bringing students into the policy-making process have been listed by the principals participating in this study. According to these principals, students are active stakeholder participants in the policy-making process by participating in the following:

- . student council,
- . school council,
- . student and teacher advisory committees,
- . school improvement teams,
- . student leadership programs,
- . round table discussions with staff,
- . non-voting trustees at district level (Ontario),
- . information collection surveys, and

. discussions with the school administration.

One principal in Nova Scotia indicated that student government, such as the student council and students participating on school councils, is providing students with a very important voice in policy-making at the school level.

Although students are not involved in policy development in a formal manner, student government and students on the school advisory council have input on extra-curricular activities such as dances, policies for sports, Octoberfest, and school budgets for clubs and sport teams (Principal, Nova Scotia).

The Availability of School Policies to the Public

Since there are no policies outlining student involvement in policy-making at the school level in the majority of schools that participated in this study, such policies can not be made available to the public.

Copies of policies outlining student involvement in policy development are not made available to the public because there are no such policies (Principal #2, Saskatchewan).

However the participating principals in this study suggested that the public is made aware of school policies through the following means:

- . annual school reports,
- . student handbooks,
- . letter from the school,
- . school newsletter,
- . school board reports,
- . school council reports, and

. copies upon request from the public.

The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School Level

Identifying Problem Issues at the School Level

According to the participating principals in this study, students are actively involved in helping to identify problem issues in schools. The students have an advisory role in identifying problem issues at the school level and according to the principals who participated in this study, the students are doing so through the following means:

- . student participation in grade group discussions with the school administration and/or teaching staff;
- . informal discussions between students and the school administration and/or teaching staff;
- . student participation in school advisory councils;
- . student participation in student government through the student council;
- . student participation in round table discussions facilitated by student leader;
- . student participation on school improvement committees;
- . student participation in student, teacher advisory groups;
- . student sitting as non-voting trustees at the school district level (in Ontario);

- . students responding to information surveys; and
- . appeal procedures for students.

From the responses to this question, the two most common means by which students can help identify problems at the school level and make these problems known to the school administration are through student participation on school advisory councils and student government (school councils) in schools.

Students are involved in identifying problem issues in education at the school level through the student members on the school council and through the student council (Principal #2, Newfoundland).

Identifying Courses of Action to Address Problem Issues at the School Level

According to the principals from across Canada who participated in this study, students are actively involved in helping to identify solutions to problems issues in education at the school level. Students have an advisory role in identifying solutions to problems at the school level. The principals suggested that the students are involved in finding solutions to school issues through the mechanisms listed previously in this study on page 109.

Student participation in student government through the student council and student participation on school advisory councils are commonly listed as very influential means by which students can help identify solutions to problem issues in education at the school level.

Students come up with suggestions through their representation on the student council, student advisory body and the school council (Principal #1, Alberta).

The Approval of Policies at the School Level

According to the principals who participated in this study, students do not have a formal role in the approval of policies or the approval of courses of action to address problem issues at the school level. However, the principals indicated that students do have an important advisory role in policy approval at the school level. According to the principals surveyed, students carry out their advisory role in policy approval through the mechanisms listed previously in this study on page 109.

According to the principals who participated in this study, student involvement in student government and student representation on school advisory councils appear to be common influential methods for students to become involved in providing advice in the approval of policies at the school level.

Students play an advisory role in the approval of courses of action that may be adopted to address problem issues in education at the school level. Their advice is obtained through representation on three groups:

- 1) student council,
- 2) student advisory body, and
- 3) school council

(Principal #3, Alberta).

The Review and Modification of Policies at the School Level

Although some of the principals from across Canada who participated in this study, indicated that students do not have a

formal role in the review and modification of policy, other principals suggested that students are involved in an advisory capacity. The principals indicated that students are influential in providing advice that will lead to policy review and modification. According to the participating principals in this study, students can provide advice through the mechanisms listed previously in this study on page 109.

According to one principal in Manitoba, students are active in the review and modification of policies through round table discussions that are facilitated by students and assisted by the school principal.

Students are involved in the review and modification of policy through round table discussions. Students identify areas of concern; facilitators, under the guidance of the principal compile information; students make suggestions for improvements to the school. Student facilitators form sub-committees to assist in policy writing (Principal #2, Alberta).

One principal in Nova Scotia indicated that when it comes to students giving advice in policy review and modification, "students usually voice their concern through their student government" (Principal, Nova Scotia).

Recruiting Students for Policy-Making at the School Level

The Type of Policies That Students Are Involved in Developing at the School Level

Principals participating in this study from across Canada,

indicated that students are involved in an advisory capacity in terms of helping to make the policies at the school level that deal with the following issues:

- . attendance/tardiness,
- . student behavior,
- . student dress code,
- . extra-curricular activities,
- . fund raising,
- . tobacco use,
- . school beautification,
- . students achieving academic excellence,
- . timetable concerns,
- . locally developed courses,
- . school improvement,
- . school dances and other social functions,
- . team sports,
- . school budgets for student clubs and sports,
- . school safety,
- . school support services,
- . graduation exercises, ceremonies and parties, and
- . school council issues.

A number of the participating principals in this study suggested that students in their school should be, and are involved in helping to develop all policies that impact on students.

Students at the school level are involved in helping to

develop policies that have an impact on them (Principal #2, Newfoundland).

One principal in Alberta indicated that students should be involved in helping to develop all policies at the local school level since all policies have an impact on students.

Students are involved in developing any and all policies at the school level (Principal #1, Alberta).

The Frequency of Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School Level

In terms of how often students are involved in policy-making in the schools which participated in this study, the answer varies depending upon the mechanisms that are used by the school to involve students in an advisory capacity. Students that are elected to school advisory councils and student councils by their peers, are involved in policy-making in an advisory capacity on a regular basis. School councils usually meet once every month and student councils usually meet once a week. Students serving on school improvement teams, school committees and in other advisory capacities, meet when it is necessary for the policy-maker stakeholders in the school to discuss a certain issue. One principal in British Columbia indicated that students are involved when necessary.

Students are involved in policy development at the school level as required (Principal #1, British Columbia).

One principal in Manitoba indicated that students are involved in policy-making in an advisory capacity on a regular basis.

Students are involved in policy development at the school level in two ways:

- . the school improvement committee which meets twice a month, and
- . the Parent Council which meets once a month (Principal #1, Manitoba).

The Perceptions of Policy-Maker Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School Level

According to the principals participating in this study from across Canada, although there is no provision for students to have input into policy-making in a formal manner, students have an opportunity to participate in policy-making at the school level in an advisory capacity. At the school level, students can have input in policy-making through the mechanisms listed previously on page 109.

The experience of having student involvement in policy-making in an advisory capacity at the school level, has been very positive for the principals participating in this study. The principals have indicated that student involvement in policy-making is extremely important in terms of building student ownership of school policies and in terms of building a healthier learning environment. Given the chance, students can offer new ideas to the problems faced at school.

Most students at this level are very responsible about positive change and we are able to work things through as a team (Principal #1, Newfoundland).

Some principals in this study expressed the desire to increase student involvement in policy-making at the school level.

We need much more formal student involvement in policy-making (Principal #2, British Columbia).

One principal in Ontario felt very strongly that student participation in policy-making is not only a must, it is a right.

Students feel that it is their right to participate and I couldn't agree more (Principal #1, Ontario).

SUMMARY

The principals participating in this study from the various jurisdictions across Canada indicated that although there are no policies providing for student involvement in policy-making at the school level, students are very much involved in policy-making. In the schools under the administration of these principals, students are involved in policy-making in an advisory capacity. The principals have pointed out several mechanisms that are used to collect information from students and to involve students in the policy-making process. Even though students serve as advisors at the school level in terms of policy-making, the principals participating in this study indicated that the involvement of students is extremely important to the policy-making process in schools and that the student contribution in policy-making process has been a positive experience. One principal in Manitoba sums up the importance of student involvement in the policy-making process.

I feel that it is important to consult students in order

to build a stronger learning community (for example, ownership, better insights) (Principal #1, Manitoba).

Some of the principals also suggested that they would like to see more student involvement in policy-making at the school level.

I would like to increase student involvement in policy-making at the school level (Principal #2, Saskatchewan).

Although some of the principals indicated that they are unaware of any concerns students have about their role in the policy-making process at the school level, some of the principals indicated that students would like to have more input into policy-making at the school level.

Students have expressed a need to become involved. Students have requested to give their response and input. Students have also expressed the concern that they have not been involved in as much as they should be. The students feel that they should be consulted on issues that affect students. Basically, the students feel that they should be consulted more (Principal #2, Newfoundland).

The following table (Table 6.1) summarizes the involvement of high school students in policy-making at the school level as reported by the participating principals in this study.

Table 6.1

**Summary of Student Involvement in Policy-Making
at the School Level as Reported by Principals**

Province or Territory	Policies Providing Student Involvement	Type of Student Involvement In Policy-Making	Mechanisms Used To Involve Students
British Columbia	No Policies In Place	Advisory	Student participation in: 1. grade group meetings, 2. informal discussions, 3. Student Advisory Council 4. student council 5. school council
Alberta	No Policies In Place	Advisory	Student participation in: 1. student council 2. student council 3. round table discussions 4. student leadership workshops 5. student/teacher advisory groups
Saskatchewan	No Policies In Place	Advisory	Student participation in: 1. school committees 2. Student Representative Council 3. school council
Manitoba	No Policies In Place	Advisory	Student participation in: 1. school improvement teams 2. parent council 3. focus groups 4. parent committees

Table 6.1

**Summary of Student Involvement in Policy-Making
at the School Level as Reported by Principals
(con't)**

Province or Territory	Policies Providing Student	Type of Student Involvement In Policy-making	Mechanisms Used To Involve Students
Ontario	Policies Providing for Student Trustees	Advisory	1. Student Trustees 2. Student Surveys 3. School Councils 4. Student participation on decision-making bodies.
New Brunswick	No Policies In Place	None	Students voice concerns through their parents.
Nova Scotia	No Policies In Place	Advisory	Student involvement in: 1. student council 2. school advisory council 3. school committees
Newfoundland	No Policies In Place	Advisory	Student participation in: 1. surveys 2. school improvement teams 3. school committees 4. student council 5. school council

Chapter Seven

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS FROM THE STUDENT SURVEY CONDUCTED AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL IN EACH PROVINCE AND TERRITORY ACROSS CANADA

Survey Participants at the School Level - High School Students

A total of twenty high school students agreed to participate in this study from different jurisdictions across Canada. The number of participating high school students from each province or territory is summarized in Table 3.3 on page 67. The responses to the student survey conducted at the high school level across Canada can be found in Appendix A2 on page 400.

Policies That Provide for Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School Level

The Policy-Maker Participants at the School Level

All of the students participating in this study agree that school policies are made by the district board, the school administration and the teachers. However, most of the students indicated that the school council and student council have an informal role in policy-making in an advisory capacity. Student representatives sit on both the student council or school council

in many of the jurisdictions across Canada and therefore, the students feel that they do have a small role to play in policy-making.

Generally, the administration makes the policies. However, my school is currently organizing a student advisory committee (SAC). My school is in its 3rd year since opening and I have participated in late/truancy policies which the leadership class was given to evaluate and improve (Student #1, British Columbia).

Policies Outlining Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School Level

The students participating in this study indicated that their schools do not have written policies that ensure student involvement in helping to make policies for the school. One student in British Columbia indicated that the lack of school policies (ensuring student involvement in policy-making) leaves students uneducated or uninformed about how they can make a contribution to the development of policies that certainly impact on their education. The lack of such policies also leaves students in doubt about whether or not they are permitted to make a contribution.

Student-involved policies are uncommon in my school. It seems that students are uninformed in how they can influence policy within the school (Student #1, British Columbia).

The participating students in this study indicated that the only type of school policies that do exist, are rules and regulations that govern student behavior. Also, school policies exist in the schools to govern how students are to be elected to the school

council or student council. These policies are often found in the student agendas or handbooks which are distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year.

Our school does have a few policies which are contained in our handbook. These are available to all students. It contains such things as elections for school councils and student appeal procedures (Student #3, Newfoundland).

The policies in one school in Saskatchewan restrict student participation and influence in policy-making to discussion of school policies only. This discussion of policies takes place during student council meetings.

As I have stated previously, our duties state discussion of school policies. When we question the way our school works, often our principal says it is not our concern. In some cases, we are able to pass policies that don't really matter to anyone but us (Student #5, Saskatchewan).

The Availability of School Policies to the Public

The participating students in this study indicated that school policies are available to students by way of the student agendas handed out to each student at the beginning of each school year. However, the students indicated that the school policies that do exist are for governing student behavior rather than for ensuring student participation in policy-making.

Yes, these policies are printed in our student handbook or agendas. Every student is given one of these at the beginning of each school year, so they are readily available to everybody (Student #3, Newfoundland).

The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School Level

Identifying Problem Issues at the School Level

All of the students participating in this study agree that students do have a role to play in helping to identify problem issues that must be addressed at the school level. The role of the students is in an advisory capacity; the students provide advice or feedback to the policy-makers. The mechanisms that are used to involve students in this advisory capacity are as follows:

1. students sit on school improvement teams;
2. students sit on school councils;
3. students sit on student councils;
4. students can provide information to student services;
5. students can consult with teachers;
6. students can consult with the administration;
7. students are asked to complete surveys;
8. students can join clubs such as peer support groups;
9. students participate in round table discussions;
10. students participate in an advisory program; and
11. students produce their own weekly television program in order to discuss student issues.

According to the students participating in this study, the two most common ways in which students become involved in

presenting their thoughts and concerns to school administrators are through student representation on student councils and school councils.

Yes, students are involved in helping to identify problem issues in school. There are two student members on the school council and these students can identify problems. Other students can ask these students to identify their problems. Students can also talk to the student representative council. Although the student representative council will probably not be able to deal with the problem themselves, they can pass it on to the administration. Also, the administration occasionally does student surveys in which students can identify problem issues (Student #3, Newfoundland).

In British Columbia, student concerns about problem issues at the school level and the district level are presented and discussed through a province-wide network of teacher advisors, students and principals, known as the B.C. Student Voice. This organization was started by the Ministry of Education and the British Columbia Principals and Vice-principals Association.

The Student Voice is currently being organized in my area; a province-wide network of advisor, administrators, and students which deals with educational and social issues at provincial, regional, and district levels. It was organized in 1990 by the B.C. Ministry of Education and the B.C. Principals and Vice-principals Association (BCPVP) (Student #1, British Columbia).

Students in one school in Alberta, produce their own television show in order to discuss student issues and make these issues known around the district. Students in this same school are also involved in round table discussions with student facilitators. During these discussions, all the students discuss problem issues and search for possible solutions.

I think things like student council and round table discussions encourage student involvement and it makes

students feel like they are part of a large process. Our school is unique due to round table discussions. (Student #1, Alberta, 1998 Survey)

Identifying Courses of Action to Address Problem Issues at the School Level

Some of the students participating in this study feel that students are not involved in helping to identify solutions to problems in their schools since students are not involved in a formal manner. However, most of the participating students feel that they do contribute to problem solving at the school level, even though it is in an advisory capacity. The mechanisms that are used to gather advice from students about solutions to problems at the school level have been listed previously in this chapter on page 123.

According to the students participating in this study, students are most commonly involved in helping to find solutions to problems at the school level through their representation on the school council and student council.

Yes, students are involved in helping to identify solutions to problem issues in my school. The student council members are involved in helping to find solutions to some problem issues in our school (Student #2, Newfoundland).

The Approval of Policies at the School Level

In terms of the actual establishment of policies, the students participating in this study feel that there is no student involvement on a formal basis. On an informal basis, some of the

students feel that the students can, and do influence policy approval through their voice on the school council and student council and through a variety of other mechanisms. However, the students realize that their voice is purely advisory.

Yes, students are involved in helping to decide what courses of action will be approved in order to deal with problem issues as the two student representatives on the school council give their input on these matters, but the final decision is made by teachers or school board members (Student #2, Newfoundland).

One student in British Columbia, indicated that the lack of student participation in policy-making in a formal sense, where students vote on accepting or rejecting a policy, may lead to problems; students may totally reject the policy. According to this student, the absence of student ownership of a policy can lead to student rebellion.

If students have a problem with a policy, they either disregard it, or rebel. In one situation dealing with timetable issues, a few years ago, 300 students walked to protest on the streets in front of the school and school board office (Student #1, British Columbia).

The Review and Modification of Policies at the School Level

The students participating in this study feel that they do not have any input into the review and modification of policies in a formal sense. The students feel that they certainly do not have any final say in the review and modification of policies. However, the students did indicate that they can contribute to policy review by expressing their thoughts and concerns through the student representatives on the student council and school

council. The students also feel that there are other mechanisms in place at the school level through which they can express their concerns. Therefore even though students may not be able to sit in formal meetings on policy review and modification, their views may very well lead to changes in policy.

Students involved with the school council can give their input on modifying courses of action, but they will not have the final decision (Student #7, Newfoundland).

My perceptions regarding student involvement in policy development in my school is fine. I mean, yes, we do get a chance to voice our opinions and it does get heard, but we do not help on the final decision of the policy. I think that along with our involvement now, we should also be able to have a say in the final decision on policies around our school. I mean it does affect us, doesn't it (Student #7, Newfoundland)?

One student in British Columbia indicated that involving students in all aspects of policy-making will allow students to take ownership of the policies and students will then be more accepting of the policies developed.

When the students speak out loud enough, the district or school listens. In the case of semester versus linear timetable, it seems that the school district and teachers union were forced to evaluate their course of action due to the riot from the students (Student #1, British Columbia).

Recruiting Students for Policy-Making at the School

Level

The Type of Policies That Students are Involved in Developing at the School Level

The students participating in this study stated that students are

involved in helping to develop school policies concerning the following topics:

- . attendance,
- . timetables,
- . evaluation tactics,
- . cafeteria schedules,
- . student dress codes,
- . school fees,
- . school safety program,
- . student council events,
- . semester and non-semester issues,
- . school improvement,
- . academic issues,
- . academic policies for athletes,
- . awards night and banquet,
- . orientation events,
- . homework,
- . school spirit activities,
- . mid-term and final examinations,
- . academic graduation,
- . extra-curricular activities,
- . student course load,
- . student/teacher expectations,
- . student council mandate,
- . cafeteria menus,
- . safe prom, and

. school improvement.

The students indicated that the two most common ways in which students can have their voices heard is through the student representation on the student council and school council. According to the students participating in this study, students may also voice their thoughts and concerns by completing surveys conducted by the school administration or through other mechanisms such as producing their own television show centered around student issues.

The students on the school council are involved in developing all kinds of policies. For example, I am a member of a sub-committee that deals with deciding and developing school fund raising policies, but there are only two students on this council. The rest of the students are involved in different ways. Last year the school gave out a survey and students were asked everything from specific problems they are having in the school, to problems with teachers. Now the data from this survey has been analyzed and there are teams of teachers that are making new policies in response to the problems that the students outlined. So, students are a big part of these new policies (Student #3, Newfoundland).

The Frequency of Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School Level

According to the students participating in this study, the amount of time students are involved in policy-making in an advisory capacity at the school level varies according to the mechanisms used to involve students in the policy-making process. In British Columbia, the Student Voice meets two to four times per year. Students involved as student representatives on student councils in various jurisdictions across Canada may meet weekly or

monthly. Students involved as student representatives on school councils across Canada usually meet once every month.

Students may be asked to complete surveys or participate in school improvement or group meetings when requested by the school administration. However, most of the students participating in this study indicated that students are not involved often enough in policy-making at the school level and almost never at the district level.

Usually twice a year students are involved in helping to develop various policies within our school and very rarely if ever, at the district level (Student #4, Newfoundland).

I don't think that students are involved enough in policy-making. Usually the policies are made and finalized by school council, parents, teachers, or mostly the school board (Student #1, Newfoundland).

The Perceptions of Policy-Maker Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the School Level

According to one student in British Columbia, "students are commonly used for input rather than policy-makers" (Student #1, British Columbia, 1998 Survey). All of the students participating in this study from across Canada agree with this statement. The mechanisms listed previously in this chapter on page 123 are used to draw information from students for policy-making at the school level.

At the district level, students do not feel that they have any involvement in policy-making. Only in the province of Ontario

do students sit as non-voting trustees on school boards. In British Columbia, the provincial network of advisors, students and principals called the B.C. Student Voice, has been organized to enable students to present their concerns on a school, district and regional basis. In other parts of Canada, the students feel left out of policy-making at the district level.

There are no students present at school board meetings, so usually students are not involved (Student #1, Saskatchewan).

One student in Newfoundland indicated that students are not involved enough in policy-making at both the school level and the district level.

I don't think that students are involved enough in policy-making. Usually the policies are made and finalized by school council, parents, teachers and mostly the school board (Student #1, Newfoundland).

The students participating in this study stated that they would like to have more student input into policy-making both at the school level and at the district level. The students do not wish to have total control, but they would like to share the responsibility of making policies that will affect their education with the school staff and district staff.

I feel that students aren't given enough input into the policy-making process. While letting students be the sole contributors to policies is ludicrous, I feel that there are some policies that we should be consulted on. I also think that by letting students have input both locally and at a district level, the policies may be seen as less outrageous and in turn, there will be less rebellion against these policies (Student #5, Saskatchewan).

My perceptions regarding student involvement in policy development in my school is fine. I mean, yes, we do get a chance to voice our opinions and it does get heard, but we do not help on the final decision of the policy. I think

that along with our involvement now, we should also be able to have a say in the final decision on policies around our school. I mean it does affect us, doesn't it (Student #7, Newfoundland)?

One interesting point, as indicated by a student from Saskatchewan, is that students still agree with policies that have been made for them even though the students themselves, have been left out of the process.

My perceptions of my school's student involvement in policy development stinks! We have no say in any rules that our school makes, but I can't say I don't agree with them. I would have probably agreed with the rules in which the staff, principal and school board have chosen (Student #4, Saskatchewan).

Therefore, students do not necessarily want to change the existing school structure and its policies, but they do want to be involved. According to the students participating in this study, students feel very positive about their input into policy development. The students feel that their input will not only keep the school staff informed, but it will also keep the students informed as well.

My experience with student involvement in policy-making in my school has been positive. Students are very involved in our high school as compared to other high schools. I think that most schools are starting to open up to student input and they are beginning to act in the interest of the student body. I think that things such as student council and round table discussions encourage student involvement and it makes students feel like they are part of a large process (Student #1, Alberta).

However, because of the present lack of student involvement and input in policy development both at the school level and district level in some parts of Canada, some students feel totally uneducated and inexperienced in policy-making. These

students do not understand how they can go about having an influence in policy-making in their school and district.

The students at our school are very inexperienced in policy-making (Student #2, Saskatchewan).

According to one student in British Columbia, including students in the policy-making process will allow students to build ownership of policies and there will be less rebellion on the part of students.

I would like to see students more integrated in the policy-making model for our school and school district. This would avoid unwanted student outbursts and result in a better education for students (Student #1, British Columbia).

SUMMARY

The students participating in this study from across Canada feel that they do contribute to policy-making at the school level in an informal manner. The students feel that their involvement is strictly advisory and that their main function in policy-making is to provide data to the policy-makers. According to the students, the policy-makers (school administration, teachers and school board) analyze the information collected from students and incorporate the data into their policy-making process. According to the students participating in this study, the policy-makers gather this information using such mechanisms as school councils, student councils, surveys, school improvement committees and direct consultation between students and their principals and

teachers.

It is important for students to know and realize that their concerns are heard when new policies are being developed (Student #1, Nova Scotia).

One of the problems with student involvement in policy-making as pointed out by the students participating in this study, is the lack of written policies providing for student involvement. All of the students participating in this study indicated that there are no such policies in their schools. Policies do exist at the school level, but these policies are for determining how students will be elected to the student council or the school council or how students will conduct themselves throughout the school day. According to the students, there are no policies which outline how students will be involved in helping to make policies for the school. Therefore, students are not formally involved in making policies for their school and they certainly do not have the final say in what policies will be adopted; their function is strictly advisory.

The students really have no involvement in making policies because it's always been left up to the school administration (Student #2, Saskatchewan).

There should be much more student involvement in policy-making and there should be much more reaction to the students' suggestions (Student #1, Nova Scotia).

At the district level, most of the students participating in this study feel that they do not have any role to play in helping to shape policies at the school district level. The exception to this is British Columbia in which student representatives get together with teacher advisors and principals on a district,

regional, and provincial level through the network called B.C. Student Voice. This organization was formed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education and the British Columbia Principals and Vice-principals Association and it is designed to allow students to discuss common concerns across the province.

The Student Voice is currently being organized in my area; a province wide network of advisors, administrators, and students which deal with educational and social issues at provincial, regional and district levels. It was organized in 1990 by the B.C. Ministry of Education and the B.C. Principals and Vice-principals Association (BCPVP) (Student #1, British Columbia).

In the other jurisdictions across Canada, students can only be influential at the district level through student surveys conducted by the district board or through their student representation on the school councils.

The students participating in this study reported that several different mechanisms are used by the school administration to gather the thoughts and ideas from students. However, the two most common ways in which students can act as advisors is through their student representation on the school council and student council.

Students in this school are involved in the practice of policy-making in three ways. The entire student body is involved through student surveys which have a direct influence on development of new policies. Certain students on the school council are involved in direct debate of new policies. They act on behalf of the entire student body in their decision. The student representative council can bring the concerns of other students in relation to school policies to the administration (Student #3, Newfoundland).

Students indicated that the information collected from them is used to help produce policies that deal not only with extra-

curricular matters, but academic issues as well.

According to the students in this study, students should have more input into making policies that will have an influence on their education. The students do not want to take full control of policy-making, but they would like to play a more formal role in sharing this responsibility with the adults.

I think that along with our involvement now, we should also be able to have a say in the final say of policies around our school. I mean, it does affect us, doesn't it (Student #7, Newfoundland).

Table 7.1 on page 137 summarizes the involvement of high school students in policy-making at the school level as reported by the participating students in this study.

Table 7.1

**Summary of Student Involvement in Policy-Making
at the School Level as Reported by High School Students**

Province or Territory	Policies Providing Student Involvement	Type of Student Involvement In Policy-Making	Mechanisms Used To Involve Students
British Columbia	No Policies	Advisory	1. BC Student Voice 2. Future Directions 3. Student Protests 4. Student Councils
Alberta	No Policies	Advisory	1. Student Council 2. Round Table Discussions 3. Weekly Television Show Produced by Students 4. Student Advisory Program 5. School Council
Saskatchewan	No Policies	Advisory	1. Student Clubs 2. Student Council 3. Peer Support Groups 4. Student Services 5. Consultation With Teachers & Principals
Manitoba	No Policies	Advisory	1. Student Surveys 2. School Improvement Committees 3. School Council 4. Student Council 5. Consultation With Principals
Ontario	(No Response)		

Table 7.1

**Summary of Student Involvement in Policy-Making
at the School Level as Reported by High School Students
(con't)**

Province or Territory	Policies Providing Student Involvement	Type of Student Involvement In Policy-Making	Mechanisms Used To Involve Students
New Brunswick	No Policies	Advisory	1. School Councils 2. Student Councils 3. Consultation with Teachers
Nova Scotia	No Policies	Advisory	1. School Council 2. Student Council 3. Student Surveys
Newfoundland	No Policies	Advisory	1. School Council 2. Student Council 3. Student Surveys 4. School Improvement Committees

Chapter Eight

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

During the analysis of the survey data collected at the departmental, school district and school levels from across Canada, five themes became very evident concerning the involvement of students in educational policy-making. These themes are as follows:

1. The Lack of Policies Providing for Student Involvement in Policy-Making at All Levels in Education Systems Across Canada
2. The Nature of Student Involvement in Policy-Making at All Levels in Education Systems Across Canada
3. Mechanisms That Are Used to Involve Students in Policy-Making at All Levels in Education Systems Across Canada
4. The Perceptions of All Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making at All Levels in Education Systems Across Canada
5. Stumbling Blocks to More Student Involvement in Policy-Making at All Levels in Education Systems Across Canada

In this chapter, I wish to analyze and discuss each of these themes on an individual basis.

**The Lack of Policies Providing for Student Involvement
in Policy-Making at All Levels in Education
Systems Across Canada**

During the analysis of the survey data collected at the Ministry of Education, school district and school levels across Canada, one of the concepts that became very clear is that there is a lack of policies providing for student involvement in policy-making at all levels. There are no policies providing for student involvement in policy-making in a formal manner in all jurisdictions across Canada at the departmental, school district and school levels. When asked if student involvement in policy-making is provided for by written policies, 100% of the Ministers of Education (or their designates) responded by saying no, 70% of the Directors of Education responded by saying no, 60% of the principals responded by saying no, and 100% of the students responded no or they are not aware of any policies. The following quotes by a Minister of Education, a Director of Education, a school principal and a student, are very representative of the degree to which all stakeholders are aware of the lack of policies outlining how students can be involved in policy-making at each educational level.

There are no policies in place that specifically involve students in policy-making at the Department of Education level. The Alberta Education Act, 1995, allows for student involvement at the local level on school councils (Ministry of Education, Alberta).

The district has no policy for student inclusion in policy development at the district level (Director of Education #2, British Columbia).

There are no policies providing for student involvement in policy-making (Principal #1, Newfoundland).

No, my school does not have written policies that ensure student involvement in making policies. There is a government policy that ensures that students be involved on the school council (Student #7, Newfoundland).

Therefore, whether or not students are involved in policy-making and how students are to be involved in policy-making at the departmental, school district and school levels across Canada, is very much left up to the whim of the authorities at each level. Students may or may not be included in policy-making at each level. Hodgkinson (1991) and Mackin (1996) suggest that students are often left out of the educational policy-making process because of their position at the bottom of the educational hierarchy.

Even though there is an absence of policies providing for student involvement in policy-making at each level of the educational structure across Canada, one Director of Education in Newfoundland envisions a window of opportunity. According to this Director of Education, we are at a time in education when all stakeholders want to become involved in helping to produce policies that will have a positive impact on education.

I would like to have more student involvement. I think more involvement will be positive and ensure that policies are more student sensitive. I suspect that we will have to remove any barriers which may have prevented their involvement in the past. We are approaching an age of involvement, if we are not already there (Director of Education #2, Newfoundland).

According to this Director of Education, one of the ways in which students can overcome the absence of policies providing for

their inclusion in policy-making is through their participation on local school councils. Sheppard and Devereaux (1997) suggest that countries all around the world are heading in a site-based management direction through the adoption of local school councils, and Canada is no exception. Rideout (1995) suggests that with the establishment of school councils across Canada, students, parents and communities can begin to take some ownership in education. According to the Royal Commission Implementation Secretariat (1995) in Newfoundland, creating local ownership in education is exactly what the creation of school councils is supposed to do.

Therefore, even though there are no policies specifically outlining student involvement in policy-making at the departmental, district or school levels across Canada, there is a move to involve students more at the local level through the creation of school councils. At present, according to data collected from the departmental level during this study, students have representation at the local level on school councils in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Table 2.1 on page 31 in this study illustrates the inclusion of students in school councils established at the local level across Canada.

The role of the school councils across Canada is advisory and therefore, while students may have representation on the councils, they are still functioning in an advisory capacity. According to Rideout (1995), the functions and responsibilities

of the school councils across Canada are set up in such a way that true power still remains in the hands of the authorities at each educational level.

In most jurisdictions, the functions and responsibilities of school councils are being defined with reasonable clarity. However, in some instances the legislative regulations appear vague enough to ensure that power essentially remains concentrated in the traditional centralist structures and local school councils operate at the pleasure of those structures (Rideout, 1995, p. 17).

Since students serving on school councils across Canada do not have any real power to make educational policies, the student positions on school councils, and in fact the school councils themselves, are much like token positions.

In British Columbia, the Ministry of Education has taken steps in order to involve students in policy-making in an advisory capacity at the district, regional and provincial levels. In 1990, the B.C. Ministry of Education and the B.C. Principals' and Vice-principals' Association began the B.C. Student Voice. B.C. Student Voice involves student representatives and advisors from all over the province. The mandate of Student Voice is to allow students to discuss common concerns and to make recommendations to the Minister of Education.

In 1990, a group of dedicated students and educators saw a need for enhancing student leadership in British Columbia. The B.C. Principals' and Vice-principals' Association, with the support of the Ministry of Education, assisted the group in launching a concept called the BC Student Voice. Since then, the voice has grown to represent all regions across the province. BC Student Voice has placed representatives on provincial Ministry of Education committees and represented student opinion at many regional and provincial meetings (BC Student Voice, 1998, p. 2).

The Ministry of Education in British Columbia has also taken steps to involve students more in education at the local level. According to the British Columbia Accreditation Policy, 1989, students, parents and staff participate in all aspects of the accreditation process of each school at the local level. Since each school is up for accreditation renewal every six years, the accreditation process is ongoing. Accreditation involves developing a school growth plan and an ongoing evaluation of the plan for each school.

The accreditation program is an ongoing process which leads schools through a six year cycle of activities focused on continuous school improvement (B.C. Public School Accreditation Program, 1998, p. 4).

The province of Saskatchewan has also taken steps in order to involve students more in the education process at the school level and district level. In 1995, the Ministry of Education in Saskatchewan started the Saskatchewan Council On Children. Students have representation on this council. The purpose of the council is to provide direction to the government in terms of such issues as education, health, housing, justice and social services.

The Council's broad mandate is to advise the Government of Saskatchewan and the Ministers participating in Saskatchewan's Action Plan for children on priorities for achieving the well-being of Saskatchewan children and youth. The Council's work is intended to contribute to advocacy and the continued development of an agenda for children, youth and family across the province (Saskatchewan's Council On Children: First Report, 1995, p. 1).

The Saskatchewan Council On Children meets every four months and at least once a year with the various Ministers in government.

Perhaps the boldest move in all the jurisdictions across Canada in order to obtain more student involvement in policy-making at a district level, came in the province of Ontario. Regulation 461/97 in the Ontario Education Act adopted in 1997, makes provision for students to sit as non-voting trustees on district school boards. According to this regulation, each school board in the province of Ontario must have at least one student sitting as a non-voting trustee at the district level. The regulation also indicates that each district will develop a policy outlining how the students are to be elected, the number of students to be elected, how long the students are to serve as trustees, and what the extent of each student's participation will be on the board.

Regulation 461/97

Pupil representation On Boards

1. (1) Every board shall develop and implement a policy providing for the representation of the interests of pupils on the board.

(2) The policy shall be in accordance with this regulation and with any policies and guidelines issued by the Minister under paragraph 3.5 of subsection 8(1) of the Act.

2. (1) Each board shall have one pupil representative or such greater number of pupil representatives as is specified in the policy.

(2) A pupil representative must be in the last two years of the intermediate division or in the senior division at the time that he or she is elected or appointed.

3. (1) the policy shall specify whether the pupil representatives are to be chosen by peer election or by appointment and shall specify the procedures to be followed for the purpose.

(2) The procedures specified under subsection (1) shall ensure that the elections or appointments occur not later than June 30 in each school year, to take effect with

respect to the following school year.

(3) The policy shall provide for,

(a) the type and extent of participation by pupil representatives;

(Ontario Education Act, Regulation 461, 1997, p. 504)

Presently, Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada where students actually sit as non-voting trustees on district school boards. However, since the role of the student trustees on district school boards in Ontario is to sit as non-voting members, the position is very much like a token position; students can provide advice, but they cannot vote on policy.

Therefore, even though the survey data collected during this study indicated that there is a lack of policies providing for student involvement in policy-making at each level in education across Canada, there appears to be a move to remedy this problem. Almost all jurisdictions across Canada have made provision for student representation on school councils at the local school level. The provinces of British Columbia and Saskatchewan have taken steps to provide for student involvement at the local level through the B.C. Accreditation Program and the Saskatchewan Council on Children. British Columbia and Saskatchewan have also made provision to allow for student involvement in policy-making at the district and provincial levels through the B.C. Student Voice and the Saskatchewan Council On Children. The province of Ontario is the first jurisdiction in Canada to make provision for students to sit as non-voting trustees at the school district level.

Mackin (1996) argues that the only way students are going

to learn to make decisions is if they are put into decision-making roles; this should be part of their education. According to Mackin (1996), "how can we expect students to become true stakeholders in schools when the only decisions they make are of a perfunctory nature" (p. 14)?

Implications for Policy

The absence of policies providing for student involvement in policy-making at each level of the educational structure across Canada suggests that before students can have a greater part to play in the implementation of educational policies, the role of students in educational policy-making must be formalized. Unless there are policies providing for student involvement in policy-making and specifically addressing how students will be involved, there is a greater chance that students will be left out of the entire policy-making process. Hodgkinson (1991) suggests that because students are at the bottom of the hierarchy in the education system, the input from students on how the education system should function is lost in the process. During his analysis of school councils across Canada, Rideout (1995) suggests that if school councils are going to be successful in creating a collaborative environment for policy-making for all stakeholders including students, then several conditions must first be put in place. Rideout (1995) suggests that the purpose and role of school councils in terms of policy-making must be

formalized. Formalizing the role of school councils will ensure the effectiveness of all school councils in working together with school officials to develop and implement educational policies.

If effective school councils are to be established, the research clearly indicates that they will need 1) a clear statement of purpose; 2) a formal definition of authorities outlining who can advise, decide, review, or vote; 3) a formal selection process that provides wide representation within the community; 4) an identification of which issues the council will address; 5) an understanding of the relationship of the council to the board, superintendent, principal, and other advisory groups; and 6) a comprehensive orientation for all incoming council members (Rideout, 1995, p. 18).

If students are going to be influential in helping to develop and implement educational policies, then the role of students in policy-making must first be formalized at all levels in education systems across Canada. Students must be presented with a clear statement of purpose; a clear statement of who can participate in policy-making; a statement of what policies students can help develop; and what the relationship of students to other stakeholders will be. If the role of students in policy-making is not formalized at all levels in education systems across Canada, then students will be continuously left out of the process. In order to be influential in helping to make educational policies, students must know that their voice is important and that they are not mere tokens in the policy-making process.

**The Nature of Student Involvement in Policy-Making
at All Levels in Education Systems Across Canada**

According to the survey data collected during this study at the departmental, district and school levels across Canada, the nature of student involvement in policy-making at all levels in education in Canada is strictly advisory. When asked about the role of students in policy making in the education systems across Canada, 100% of the Ministers of Education (or their designates) responded that students are involved in policy-making in an advisory capacity. At the school district level, 41% of the Directors of Education indicated that students are involved in policy-making in an advisory capacity and 58% of the Directors of Education indicated that students do not have any involvement in policy-making. At the school level, 88% of the principals stated that students are involved in policy-making in an advisory capacity and 12% of the principals stated that students do not have any involvement in policy-making. One hundred percent of the students indicated that their involvement in policy-making if any, is strictly in an advisory capacity.

Therefore, policy-makers gather information regarding the concerns, thoughts and feelings of students and use this information in their policy-making. Students are not part of the formal process of formulating and passing a policy at any level in the educational process in Canada. The following quotes from the survey data collected during this study at the departmental, district and school levels are very representative of the nature

of student involvement at all levels in education across Canada.

Student participation in policy-making in New Brunswick is of an advisory capacity. According to Section 32(6) of the New Brunswick Education Act, 1997, high school students can be members of the School Parent Advisory Committees that are to be set up for each school in the province. Since the establishment of the School Parent Advisory Committees in New Brunswick, the Department of Education has been sending all provincial policies which have a direct impact on pupils, to the School Parent Advisory Committees for input. This provides an opportunity for students to express their concerns through the student representative on the committees (Ministry of Education, New Brunswick).

The only policy currently under review in which students are likely to be involved is the student discipline policy. Students will be consulted as one of the stakeholder groups, but will not be involved in a formal way in the actual development of the policy (Director of Education #2, Alberta).

Although students are not involved in policy development in a formal manner, student government and students on the school advisory council have input on extra-curricular activities such as dances, policies for sports, Oktoberfest, and budgets for clubs and sport teams (Principal #1, Nova Scotia).

Students are commonly used as a source of input rather than policy-makers. The school board and the administration decide whether or not to use the input from students (Student #1, British Columbia).

All participants at all levels in education involved in this study from across Canada, agree that the role of students in helping to produce policies is advisory. Students involved on the school councils across Canada are also in an advisory capacity since the school councils have been set up to advise the school principal on matters of school improvement. Students participating on the B.C. Student Voice or the Saskatchewan Council On Children are also acting in an advisory capacity at the district and provincial levels. The mission of these students

is to discuss issues of common concern and to make recommendation to the Ministers involved at the government level. Students sitting as trustees on the district school boards in Ontario, also act in an advisory capacity since these students sit as non-voting members on the boards. Therefore, no matter what position or organization in education in which students from across Canada are involved, the role of students in policy-making is strictly advisory. As one of the major stakeholder groups in education, and probably the most important stakeholder group, students across Canada do not have a formal role to play in policy-making at any level in education.

According to theorists such as Hamilton (1975), Mackin (1996) and Beck (1990), student involvement in policy-making should be all about students taking some ownership in their education. Hamilton (1975) suggests that students will not be able to take ownership in their education if they are not permitted to be involved in the planning stages. The author suggests that students must be allowed to have a more important part in the planning of their education. According to this author, students should be permitted to help establish their learning goals and should participate in forming plans for reaching their goals. By allowing students to take a more active role in the planning of their education, the author suggests that students will be more successful and they will be happier with their learning. As a result, the theorist suggests that students will take more ownership in their education and they

will be more enthusiastic about schooling.

Children who are involved and enthusiastic about their school program, and who feel they are making real progress, are the best public relations agents a school can have. This implies that schools should help every child establish his own learning goals, participate in planning how to reach those goals and help in the evaluation of his own progress. (p. 130)

Mackin (1996) also suggests that by allowing students to participate in educational decision-making, students will begin to feel that they have a stake in the school and will begin to take more ownership in their education. Beck (1990) argues that there is a need for more input in education from students. If students are not permitted to take some control and have more input in their education, he suggests we will stifle their curiosity and initiative.

In order to overcome many of the problems identified by school critics, it is necessary for schooling to be more child-centered and democratic. If we are to avoid stifling the curiosity and initiative of students, undermining their confidence, making them passive and conformists, cutting them off from their feelings and desires, fostering in them artificial and inappropriate values, we must allow more room for student input and control. (p. 31)

According to one principal surveyed during this study, if students are permitted to have more input in policy-making in a formal manner, then policies would become more student-sensitive and easier to enforce. The reason for this is that students would take some ownership of these policies.

Students who are involved in developing policy almost never have problems adhering to policies (Principal #1, British Columbia).

Students involved in this study indicated that they do have

some input in policy-making in an advisory capacity and this occurs mostly at the school level. However, the students involved in this study also indicated that they would like to have more involvement; they would like to have a formal role in policy-making at all levels in education systems, and especially at the school level. The students wish to take some ownership in their education.

My perceptions regarding student involvement in policy development in my school is fine. I mean, yes, we do get a chance to voice our opinions and it does get heard, but we do not help on the final decision of the policy. I think that along with our involvement now, we should also be able to have a say in the final decision on policies around our school. I mean it does affect us, doesn't it (Student #7, Newfoundland)?

One student participating in this study in British Columbia, indicated that by allowing students more input in policy-making and by allowing students to take some ownership in their education, the education system (at any level) could avoid unwanted outbursts and protests by students.

I would like to see students more integrated in the policy-making model for our school and school district. This would avoid unwanted student outbursts and result in a better education for students (Student #1, British Columbia).

Overall, the students participating in this study from various jurisdictions across Canada, are dissatisfied with the amount of input they have in educational policy-making. Even though most students will admit that the situation is getting better and their concerns are being heard, the students wish to have a more formal role in making policies that will impact on their education. Students want to have their concerns heard and

they want to be influential in helping to make educational policy. Students do not want to be given token positions which will leave them powerless in the policy-making process. Simply put, students want to take some ownership of their education.

Primarily their concerns stem from their need and desire to be heard. They want to be involved; they want to be a part of their own fate! They too, want to be in control of their learning environment. They do not want to have it done to them (Principal #2, Alberta).

It is important for students to know and realize that their views are heard when new policies are being developed (Student #1, Nova Scotia).

According to Statistics Canada, a Leaving School Survey conducted in 1993 across Canada, showed that 41% of dropouts said classes were not interesting and 41% of dropouts said that they did not like school. Also according to this survey, 25% of dropouts were dissatisfied with their courses. We live in an age when no students can afford to drop out of school, nor should they do so. If students were permitted to take some ownership in their education, perhaps all students could be turned on to education and student dropout statistics could be lessened in the future.

Implications for policy

The survey results during this study indicate that students and educational administrators across Canada describe the present role of students in educational policy-making as strictly advisory. Students are used as a source of information that may or may not be used by policy-makers during the development and

implementation of educational policy. The survey results during this study also indicate that students across Canada want a greater part to play in the development of policies that will impact on their education. Newton (1986) writes about a study conducted in 1986 concerning Trinidadian students' perceptions of their schools. The author indicates that the Trinidadian students are also concerned about their lack of formal involvement in policy-making.

Administrators need to realize that students are ready for meaningful roles in schools; that student participation in management must be seen as more than gratuitous and passive in nature and that students need to be given the opportunity to exercise authority within the framework of school organization (Newton, 1986, p. 84).

Theorists such as Mackin (1996), Hamilton (1975), and Beck (1990) suggest that students cannot take ownership of policies if they do not have an active part in the development and implementation of the policies. If students take ownership of policies then the policies will be more student-centered and more acceptable to the students. In her writings on public policy analysis, Pal (1992) suggests that policies providing services to people should have input from the clients that the policies serve. Without the maximum input from clients in policy-making, The author suggests that public policies will not meet all the needs of the people served by the policies.

Modern government sometimes seems close to being a tyranny of experts, where the only role for citizens is to pay the bills. Teachers want to control education, doctors the health-care system, and social workers the social system. Obviously there is a legitimate place for experts in these fields, but while bureaus must run efficiently, policies

that involve providing services to people should allow clients the maximum feasible autonomy. Individuals have different needs and interests, and no bureaucracy, however competent, can hope to second guess all of them. (p. 279)

Therefore, since students are the clients served by educational policies, they should have more of a formalized role in the development and implementation of policies. In doing so, students will be able to take ownership of educational policies and the policies will better address needs of all students.

Mechanisms That Are Used to Involve Students in Policy-Making at All Levels in Education Systems Across Canada

Throughout the literature on student involvement in policy-making in education, theorists discuss several different mechanisms or techniques that are used to involve students in the policy-making process in an advisory capacity. Sheppard and Devereaux (1987), Young and Levin (1998), McClure (1993) and Rideout (1995) discuss the growth of student involvement in policy-making in an advisory capacity through the establishment of school councils in Canada and around the world. Henry and Vilz (1990), Tewel (1995), McClure (1993), Furtwengler (1996), Bechtel and Reed (1988) and Clarke and Clarke (1996) write about how students' thoughts, feelings and concerns can enter into the policy-making process in an advisory capacity through the development of school improvement teams. Leisey, Murphy and Temple (1997) and Mackin (1996) suggest that students can present their concerns to

policy-makers by serving as student advisory groups in such educational matters as school consolidation.

During the analysis of the survey data collected in this study at the departmental, district and school level, it was revealed that all the mechanisms for collecting data from students for the purpose of policy-making as discussed by the various theorists, are presently being used at different levels in education systems across Canada. The following summaries illustrate the various mechanisms that are used to collect information about the concerns of students for the purpose of policy-making at the various levels in education systems across Canada. The summaries have been composed from the survey data collected during this study at the departmental, district and school levels in each Canadian province and territory.

Summary #1 - Mechanisms Used to Collect Data From Students In Education Systems Across Canada at the Departmental Level

Canadian Jurisdiction	Departmental Level
Yukon	No Student Involvement In Policy-Making
Northwest Territories	A consultation process is established with students by the Department of Education during some policy-making. Students participate in forums or surveys.
British Columbia	Students have representation on the B.C. Student Voice. Student representatives on B.C. Student Voice attend provincial and regional meetings.

Alberta	A consultation process is established with students by the Department of Education during policy-making. Students participate in forums or surveys.
Saskatchewan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have representation on the Saskatchewan Council On Children. 2. Feedback is obtained from students by the Department of Education on curriculum and courses.
Manitoba	No Student Involvement
Ontario	Students have representation on two student associations. The executive of these student associations meet with the Minister of Education on a regular basis. Student representatives from the two associations serve on some provincial committees.
New Brunswick	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students can send written submissions to the Department of Education. 2. Students participate in focus groups and provincial forums. 3. The Department of Education sends all policies having an impact on students to the Parent Advisory Committees for input. 4. Students have representation on the Youth Council of New Brunswick.
Nova Scotia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students can send written submissions to the Department of Education. 2. Students participate in focus groups.
Newfoundland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students pilot new courses and give feedback to the Department of Education. 2. Students may write their local member of government.

**Summary #2 - Mechanisms Used to Collect Data From Students in
Education Systems Across Canada at the District
Level**

Canadian Jurisdiction	District Level
<hr/>	<hr/>
Yukon	No School Boards In Place
Northwest Territories	No Response
British Columbia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students may serve on standing committees. 2. Student representation on B.C. Student Voice discusses issues at the district level.
Alberta	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Districts set up a consultation process with students through surveys or open forums. 2. Student associations discuss issues at the district level.
Saskatchewan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students provide advice through their parents. 2. Students may serve on district committees. 3. Student representation on the Saskatchewan Council On Children discusses issues at the district level.
Manitoba	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students provide feedback to the district at the school level. 2. Students can provide advice through Parent Advisory Committees.
Ontario	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students serve as non-voting trustees on district boards. 2. Students may make presentations and written proposals to the district boards.
New Brunswick	No Response
Nova Scotia	Students may serve on district committees.
Newfoundland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students may participate in forums or round table discussions conducted by the district boards. 2. Students may serve on district committees.

**Summary #3 - Mechanisms Used to Collect Data From Students in
Education Systems Across Canada at the School Level**

Canadian Jurisdiction	School Level
Yukon	No Response
Northwest Territories	No Response
British Columbia	Students may participate in the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. grade group meetings, 2. informal discussions, 3. student advisory council, and 4. school council.
Alberta	Students may participate in the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. student council, 2. school council, 3. round table discussions, 4. student leadership workshops, and 5. student/teacher advisory groups.
Saskatchewan	Students may participate in the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. school committees, 2. student representative council, and 3. school council.
Manitoba	Students may participate in the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. school improvement teams, 2. parent council, 3. focus groups, and 4. parent committees.
Ontario	Students may participate in the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. student trustees, 2. student surveys, 3. student council, and 4. school councils.
New Brunswick	Students may voice concerns through parents. Students may serve on school councils.
Nova Scotia	Students may be involved in the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. school committees, 2. school advisory council, and 3. student council.

Newfoundland Students may participate in the following:

1. student council,
2. school council,
3. school committees,
4. school improvement teams, and
5. school surveys.

In addition to the mechanisms used for gathering the concerns of students by policy-makers, as discussed by the various theorists, some different mechanisms are being used to gather information from students in certain jurisdictions in Canada. Once examined, these mechanisms can easily be adopted by other jurisdictions across Canada in order to enhance student involvement in policy-making at all levels in education. These mechanisms are as follows:

1. B.C. Student Voice,
2. Student Associations,
3. Saskatchewan Council On Children,
4. Non-voting District Trustees,
5. B.C. School Accreditation Program, and
6. Round Table Discussions and Television Productions.

B.C. Student Voice

B.C. Student Voice is a province-wide network for enhancing student leadership and providing an avenue through which students can come together to discuss common concerns. B.C. Student Voice

was established in 1990 by the Ministry of Education and the B.C. Principals' and Vice-principals' Association. Since its formation, the Student Voice has grown to represent students from all regions across British Columbia. Student representatives on Student Voice are supported by adult advisors. They meet regularly to discuss school, district and regional initiatives.

The Mission of B.C. Student Voice is to empower students to address their needs, interests and concerns by strengthening, at all levels, the links among students and their partners in education (B.C. Student Voice, 1998, p.1).

The Student Voice is currently being organized in my area; a province-wide network of advisors, administrators and students which deals with educational and social issues at provincial, regional and district levels. It was organized in 1990 by the B.C. Ministry of Education and the B.C. Principals' and Vice-principals' Association (BCPVP). In my district, Student Voice is being organized and already students sit on a future directions board which works with the municipality (mayor and councillors, school board and teachers' union) (Student #1, British Columbia).

Student Associations

In the province of Ontario, two student associations, the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association (OSSA) and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS), are very influential in making sure that student concerns are represented in policy-making at all levels in education. The executive of each student association meets with the Minister of Education on a regular basis in order to advise the Minister on specific policy issues. Each of the student associations has representation on various advisory committees that are set up by the Ministry of Education.

The views of students are most often communicated to the Ministry through the existing student associations, specifically the Ontario Secondary School students' Association (OSSSA) and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS). These associations function like other professional organizations with an interest in education. This means that the student association executive may meet with the Minister throughout the year to advise him of their views on specific policy matters. It also means that the student associations may be represented on relevant advisory committees, such as the Secondary School Reform Advisory Group (Ministry of Education, Ontario).

In New Brunswick, students are represented by the Youth Council of New Brunswick. The council, made up of student representatives from across the province, focuses on such issues as educational programs and services, housing, employment and student loans. The council also makes recommendations to the Ministry at the departmental level in government.

Several bodies exist to address general issues affecting youth. The Youth council of New Brunswick conducts a bi-annual survey of its members focussing on issues such as housing, employment, student loans and educational programs and services. This information is provided to the Interdepartmental Committee and through this vehicle reaches the departments and Ministers responsible for identified areas. The Youth Council also makes recommendations to the Ministry of State for Youth (Ministry of Education, New Brunswick).

Saskatchewan Council On Children

The province of Saskatchewan has established a Council On Children. The Council provides a forum for discussion and direction to the government in the areas of health, justice, education, recreation, housing, social services, and other issues as they relate to the well-being of Saskatchewan Children. This

advice is provided to the Ministers responsible for the Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children. Council membership includes youth, Aboriginal, and geographical representation. Reports of the Saskatchewan Council On Children are internal government documents and they are not shared with members of the public. The Saskatchewan Council On Children meets quarterly as a council and at least once annually with Ministers responsible for the Action Plan for Children.

Non-Voting District Trustees

Since 1997, students in Ontario can sit as non-voting trustees at the district board level. This provision is provided for under Section #55 of the Education Quality Improvement Act. As non-voting trustees, students may have at least the same opportunity for participation at board meetings and at board committee meetings as the regular voting trustees. Through their participation as non-voting trustees at the board level, students may present issues, add input, and discuss concerns relevant to board-level policies. Regulation 461/97 in the Ontario Education Act specifies that each school board must implement a policy providing for student involvement as trustees on district boards.

Regulation 461/97 Pupil representation On Boards

1. (1) Every board shall develop and implement a policy providing for representation of the interests of pupils on the board.
- (2) The policy shall be in accordance with the regulation and with any policies and guidelines issued by the

Ministry under paragraph 3.5 of subsection 8(1) of the Act.

2. (1) Every board shall have one pupil representative or such greater number of pupil representatives as specified in the policy.
- (2) A pupil representative must be in the last two years of the intermediate division or in the senior division at the time that he or she is elected or appointed.
3. (1) The policy shall specify whether the pupil representatives are to be chosen by peer elections or by appointment and shall specify the procedures to be followed for the purpose.
- (2) The procedures specified under subsection (1) shall ensure that the elections or appointments occur not later than June 30 in each school year, to take effect with respect to the following year.
- (3) The policy shall provide for;
 - (a) the type and extent of participation by pupil representatives;
 - (b) disqualification of pupil representatives;
 - (c) the filling of vacancies;
 - (d) the term of office of pupil representatives.

B.C. School Accreditation Program

The B.C. School Accreditation Program is an ongoing process of school evaluation, growth and improvement. Under this program, each school in the province must develop a school growth plan. Once every six years, each school is evaluated through an internal review and an external review. School accreditation involves self-assessment and local accountability as well as the full participation of the School Board, school principal, school staff, parents, community and students. Under this plan, students must be involved as active participants in helping to develop a school growth plan and in helping to evaluate and improve the school growth plan on a continuous basis.

Accreditation is a provincial program intended to ensure schools continually examine, improve and report on their growth and achievement in relation to the Goals of Education, the Principles of Learning, the Attributes of the Public School System and select features of quality schools agreed upon by education partners (B.C. Public School Accreditation Program, 1997, p. 3).

Round Table Discussions and Television Productions

One school in Alberta involves students heavily in the policy-making process through round table discussions and through the student production of their own television show. Each year at this school, each grade is invited to participate in a round table discussion. During the discussions, students can share ideas on issues of relevance to the school. The round table discussions are facilitated by students from the leadership seminars. Leadership seminars are held for two days each summer for students with leadership potential. During the two day seminars, 50-70 students concentrate on building leadership and team-building skills.

Students at this school also produce their own local television show which concentrates on student and school issues. The purpose of this program is to make known throughout the district the concerns of the students.

Students are very involved in our school compared to other high school students in other schools. I believe that most schools are starting to open up to student input and acting in the interest of the student body. I think things like student council and round table discussions encourage student involvement and it makes students feel like they are part of a large process. Our school is unique; due to round table discussions we have pushed at a district level for

other schools to follow our policies on a tobacco-free campus and shortening Friday classes (Student #1, Alberta).

Implications for Policy

The survey data collected during this study indicate that many different mechanisms are used across Canada to involve students in policy-making in an advisory capacity. However, within individual education systems, there is no consistency in terms of the mechanisms used to involve students in policy-making at the department, school district and school levels. Also, there is a lack of policies providing for student involvement in policy-making in an advisory capacity and therefore, student participation is left totally up to the whims of the administrators at the different educational levels. Rideout (1995) discusses six criteria for school councils to function effectively in policy-making. The six criteria for effective participation of school councils in policy-making can also apply to the involvement of students as well. If students are going to be involved in policy-making in a more formal manner, the following criteria must be established:

1. students must be given a clear statement of purpose;
2. students must be provided with a formal statement outlining their role in the policy-making process;
3. students must be clear on how student representatives will be elected or chosen to sit on policy-making committees;

4. students must be clear on the issues that need to be addressed;
5. students need to know the relationship that exists between them and other members on the policy-making committee; and
6. students need to receive the proper training necessary to enable them to function on a policy-making team.

**The Perceptions of All Stakeholders Concerning Student
Involvement in Policy-Making at All Levels in
Education Systems Across Canada**

The participants in this study at the departmental, district and school levels across Canada, regard student involvement in policy-making very positively. Many of the participants agree that students, as one of the major stakeholder groups in education, should be involved in the policy-making process. When asked about their perceptions of student involvement in policy-making at each level in education systems across Canada, 30% of the Ministers of Education (or their designates) responded by indicating that their perceptions are very positive. Forty percent of the Ministers of Education (or their designates) stated that they thought there should be more student involvement in policy-making. Thirty-five percent of the Directors of Education at the district stated that student involvement in policy-making is very positive and 12% of the Directors of

Education wish to see more student involvement. At the school level, 53% of the principals regard student involvement in policy-making positively and 18% of the principals wish for more involvement by students. The students who participated in this study appear to be less satisfied with their involvement in policy-making. Although 45% of the students regard their involvement in policy-making positively, 50% of the students wish to have more student involvement. The following quotes are very representative of how all the participants in this study regard the involvement of students in policy-making in education.

Saskatchewan Education supports opportunities for students to participate in decisions affecting their lives. The Department has been encouraging community involvement, including the participation of parents, children, youth, and other community members in determining the direction of education system development (Ministry of Education, Saskatchewan).

My perceptions regarding student involvement in policy development at the school district level is that the participation of students in the process is quite positive (Director of Education #1, Newfoundland).

Many good ideas have come forth from student government, such as school murals to improve morale, and a free meet and greet barbecue for all students (Principal #1, Nova Scotia).

My perceptions are somewhat positive regarding student involvement in policy-making because I am seeing change (Student #6, Newfoundland).

Some of the reasons for the positive attitude towards student involvement in policy-making as indicated by the participants involved in this study, are as follows:

1. Students should be involved in policy-making in education because they are one of the major stakeholder groups and

probably the most important stakeholder group.

Key stakeholders vary depending upon the nature of the specific policy or initiative. In those areas impacting directly upon students, there should be student representation consultation (Ministry of Education, Nova Scotia).

2. If policies are being made in order to have an impact on students and their education, it only makes sense to include students in the process. In doing so, students will be able to develop ownership for their education.

Sometimes when we need information we forget to ask the right people. I support student involvement in that students need to feel ownership for their own education (Ministry of Education, Northwest Territories).

3. Students need to acquire leadership skills through education.

Part of the student leadership role is initiated through involvement in policy-making in education at the district level (Director of Education #1, British Columbia).

4. Students bring a fresh outlook to problem issues in education and to possible solutions to educational problems.

Students bring a positive, practical point of view to policy development discussions. I have nothing but positive comments about their participation (Director of Education #2, Saskatchewan).

5. Students want to be consulted over issues having an impact on their education.

I have all positive perceptions. Students like to be consulted over issues that affect them; not frivolous issues (Director of Education #1, Nova Scotia).

6. Involving students in the policy-making process will ensure that policies are more sensitive to the needs of students. Thus, students will have an easier time accepting the policies.

I would like to have more student involvement. I think more

involvement will be positive and ensure that our policies are more student sensitive (Director of Education #2, Newfoundland).

7. Involving students in policy-making will prevent students from getting upset over policies in which they did not make a contribution.

I would like to see students more integrated in the policy-making model for our school and school district. This would avoid unwanted student outbursts and result in a better education for students (Student #1, British Columbia).

8. Involving students in policy-making will allow administrators to gain a better understanding of how students feel about certain issues.

Student involvement in policy-making allows the administration to see a different perspective from the student's side (Student #2, Saskatchewan).

9. Students do not want to dominate policy-making in terms of their education, but they would like to share this responsibility with adults.

I feel that students aren't given enough input into the policy-making process. While letting students be the sole contributor to policies is ludicrous, I feel that there are some problems that students should be consulted on (Student #5, Saskatchewan).

10. Involving students in policy-making will enable the students to remain aware of what is taking place in the planning stages of their education.

I think that it is good that we have representatives on the school council because this improves our student involvement in policy-making. If we keep these representatives, then the student body will always be updated on new policies that are being discussed and the opinions of what the student body is thinking (Student #1, Newfoundland).

Theorists such as Beck (1990) and MacKin (1996) also feel

very positive about allowing students more opportunity in educational policy-making. According to Beck (1990), students must be permitted to have a greater input into their education. Only in this way will their education improve. MacKin (1996) also suggests that students need to have more input into educational policies. MacKin (1996) suggests that in order to help young people develop the skills that they will need to enable them to survive in the real world, schools must become more personalized. As well, students must be allowed a greater voice in what goes on in schools. According to MacKin (1996), the only way students are going to learn to make decisions is if they are put into decision-making roles.

If the participants in this study at the departmental, district and school levels feel very positive about student involvement in policy-making in an advisory capacity and if many of the participants desire to see more student involvement, especially in a more formal role in policy-making, the question that remains to be asked is, "Why are there not more provisions made for students to become involved in policy-making in a formal role in all levels in education across Canada?" In order to answer this question it was necessary for me to return to a previous study that I did which is entitled, "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Policy-Making In District #4 School System, Newfoundland". During my research for this particular study, I interviewed the Director of Education and during this interview, the Director of Education suggested four

excellent explanations for why there are no provisions made for a formal involvement of students in policy-making. According to this Director of Education, students are not given a more important role to play in the planning of educational policies because of the following reasons:

1. According to this Director of Education, it is often difficult to involve students in the policy-making process in an informal or formal capacity because of the limited time available to get everything done in education.

It makes sense to try and include student input when we are considering policy. However, it is not nearly as effective as it should be because the time factor just kills you when you are trying to do good policy development (Critchley, 1998, p. 50).

2. Students can do a good job in helping to make policies when they are given the opportunity, but often, according to this Director of Education, we simply do not give them the opportunity to do so.

And I think sometimes we simply do not give the students an opportunity to do it. Sometimes we just take it amongst ourselves or the school councils, the administration of the school or the school staff, or sometimes we simply forget. But, I think the only reason is that we don't give it enough of a chance. I think that if we were to give them more of an opportunity, then I think they would become more involved (Critchley, 1998, p. 50).

3. Another reason why students are often left out of the policy-making process according to this Director of Education, is that we, as adults, have the mindset that we must do everything for young people.

So, I think students can become a force and we probably don't use them. I mean that kindly; their energy and their interests are not turned to some of the primary issues.

Student issues probably should be taken on by students. So, if you have teen alcohol or drug use as an issue in a school or a community, the teens should be part of the solution. If the students have other issues that are affecting them directly, better that teens are talking to teens, than adults talking with teens. There is an energy there that can be channelled towards the solution to some problems (Critchley, 1998, p. 45).

4. Also according to this Director of Education, students may often be left out of policy-making in an informal or formal manner simply because administrators may be reluctant to share their power.

Implications for Policy

Participants in this study at the department, school district and school level agree that if students are permitted to participate in policy development in an advisory capacity, the students respond very positively. In fact, many of the participants at the department, school district and school level wish to see more student involvement. According to the survey respondents in this study, students should be involved because educational policies directly affect the students and policies will be more accepted by the students if there is student participation in the policy-making process. Students will take ownership of policies if they are permitted to participate in the development and implementation of policies. Also, according to the survey respondents in this study, student participation in policy-making is an educational experience in itself. Therefore, the perception

of all the stakeholders participating in this study concerning student involvement in policy-making is very positive.

In order to provide for more student involvement in policy-making in a formalized manner, the following constraints to student involvement in policy-making must be addressed:

1. Time must be provided for students to become involved in the policy-making process;
2. Educational administrators at all levels in education systems across Canada must provide opportunities for student involvement in policy-making;
3. Adults must get over the mindset that they must do everything for students and they must teach students to do things for themselves; and
4. Educational administrators and teachers must learn how to share power and work with students in policy development.

According to Pal (1992), policy-makers do not always have to be experts in the field and in fact, sometimes it is best not to have all experts on a policy-making committee. According to Pal (1992), a good policy analyst uses the experts for advice, but he or she tries to maintain a fresh outlook and a willingness to try new approaches.

True experts do not merely know a field, they help shape and define it. Moreover, they may derive their livelihood from the field they study. As a consequence, they sometimes develop prejudices, perspectives, beliefs, and convictions that blind them to new possibilities or different approaches. Good analysts use experts for help on detail and background, but are careful to solicit countervailing advice (Pal, 1992, p. 278).

According to the participants in this study, students bring fresh viewpoints, ideas, and energy to the policy-making table and for this reason students should be involved in the policy-making process. However, students do not want to be used just as a source of information for policy-makers; nor do they want to be given token positions in the policy-making process. Students want to be very influential in helping to establish policies that will have an impact on their education.

Constraints Upon More Student Involvement in Policy-Making at All Levels in Education Systems Across Canada

During the analysis of the survey data collected during this study at the departmental, district and school levels across Canada, it became clear that many of the participants envisioned the need for recruiting more student involvement in the policy-making process at all levels in educational systems across Canada. In order to fulfil this desire, a number of constraints upon student involvement in policy-making, as identified by the participants in this study, must first be dealt with. The first constraint that must be removed in order to increase student involvement in policy-making, is the absence of policies that provide for student involvement in policy-making. All of the participants in this study recognized that there are no policies that ensure student participation in policy-making. The exception

to this are the departmental policies that provide for student involvement in school councils at the local school level in many jurisdictions across Canada, the Ontario departmental policy that provides for student trustees on district school boards, and the Saskatchewan departmental policy that provides for student involvement on the Saskatchewan Council On Children. Since there are no policies in most jurisdictions that ensure student involvement in policy-making, participation of students in policy-making in education is left up to the whims of the educational administrators.

Student-involved policies are uncommon in my school. It seems that students are uninformed in how they can influence policy within the school (Student #1, British Columbia).

There are no written policies that ensure student involvement in helping to make policies in my school (Student #1, Saskatchewan).

Another constraint that must be overcome before more students can become involved in policy-making at the different levels in education, as identified by the participants during this study, is the use of students as mere tokens. Students resent the fact that they are often asked about some problem issue and after they express their views, the entire issue is dropped as far as student participation is concerned. Often students never hear if or how the information they have supplied has helped solve the problem issue. Students are tired of never being a real part of the policy-making process and they are really tired of being a data bank for the policy-makers.

Students have expressed a need to become involved. Students have requested to give their response and input. Students have also expressed the concern that they have not been involved inasmuch as they should be. The students feel that they should be consulted on issues that affect students. Basically, the students feel that they should be consulted more (Principal #2, Newfoundland).

Another constraint that must be overcome in order to have more student involvement in policy-making, as indicated by the participants in this study, is the mindset adults have in which they think they must do everything for young people. Students want to be involved and they want to be able to take part in making policies and plans that will have a direct impact on their education. Students certainly do not want the adult world to do everything for them.

Primarily their concerns stem from their need and desire to be heard. They want to be involved; they want to be a part of their own fate! They, too, want to be in control of their learning environment. They do not want to have it done for them (Principal #2, Alberta).

During my analysis of the survey data collected during this study, I found that some of the students expressed the feeling that the teachers and administrators in education do not have faith in the students' abilities to help in policy-making. This stereotyping of students is another major stumbling block that must be overcome in order for students to gain more involvement in policy-making.

Most students could care less. Unless a particular policy infringes on their perceived rights, they are quite complacent (Principal #1, Saskatchewan).

In general, students do not have much say in policy-making due to the generalization that students are irresponsible and lawless. I believe that the more responsibility that is

given to a person, the more responsible that person becomes (Student #1, British Columbia).

MacKin (1996) also has a problem with teachers and administrators stereotyping students. The author suggests that every school must contain a respect and trust of its students and this can only be accomplished through involvement of students in decision-making.

Students behave in responsible and respectful ways because they are expected to do so, and then learn to perceive themselves as a "community of learners born of respect, trust and courage." (p. 14)

Another constraint to student involvement in policy-making in education that was identified during the analysis of the data collected during this study, is the fact that some administrators are reluctant to share their power. In order to provide for student participation in policy-making in a formal capacity, there must be an element of sharing. The element that must be shared is the ability and authority to make decisions.

Students would like more involvement, but would need the authority to make policy, which they do not have now (Principal #2, British Columbia).

I do not believe that it (student involvement in policy-making) should be other than advisory (Principal #1, Alberta).

There are students willing to become involved in helping to make policies, but there isn't anything for them to do (Student #1, New Brunswick).

Certain policies are regulated by the district (for example- suspensions) and as for the administration, some policies are unnegotiable (Student #1, British Columbia).

According to Vesey (1996), more student involvement in

educational policy development will mean that some administrators are going to have to accept a willingness to share power. The author suggests that administrators must learn that the more they empower students to help in developing policies, the more empowered the administrators themselves will become.

Empowering students empowers the educators. More importantly, a collaborative atmosphere where students play a part in deciding what they want to learn and work together learning it, engages them rather than turning them away (Vesey, 1996, p. 33).

Another constraint that must be overcome in order to further involve students in policy-making which was identified from the survey data collected during this study, is that teachers and administrators do not always know how to work with students in a shared policy-making atmosphere. This is probably the most challenging stumbling block of all since it means making a change in the way a lot of things have been done in education over the years.

Students are the customers. Our teachers, Board members, etc., need to open their eyes and drop the stereotypes. They need to learn from those they educate and remember how a student's first hand experience must be worthwhile (Student #2, British Columbia).

Adults learning to work with students, in terms of policy development, will require some education in terms of learning to learn from students. Weber (1996) writes about the need for adults to learn how to learn from students. The researcher addresses this problem while writing about establishing a creative community of high schools and establishing curriculum planning teams.

Students who discuss issues one-on-one with teachers do better in school than those who do not. Interaction between teachers and students helps teachers become students and students become teachers (Weber, 1996, p.80).

During my analysis of the survey data collected during this study, I found that one Director of Education in Ontario indicated that the provision for student involvement in policy-making in education is not consistent throughout the different levels in education. This fragmentation of student involvement is another problem that must be addressed if students are to have a greater role in policy-making.

This is an area we could improve since student involvement (system/school) is fragmented or on a hit or miss basis (Director of Education #2, Ontario).

Another Director of Education who participated in this study, indicated that we are now entering a stage of involvement. According to this Director of Education, students, parents and the community want to play a more important part in the education of young people today. In order for all stakeholders to become more involved and share in the responsibility of making educational policies, the Director of Education suggests that it is necessary first to remove the old constraints and barriers that have prevented all stakeholders, including students, from getting involved in the past.

I would like to have more student involvement. I think more involvement will be positive and ensure that our policies are more student sensitive. I suspect that we will have to remove any barriers which may have prevented their involvement in the past. We are approaching an age of involvement, if we are not already there (Director of Education #2, Newfoundland).

Implications for Policy

The constraints to student involvement in policy-making as identified by the participants in this study are as follows:

1. The absence of policies providing for student involvement in policy-making at all levels in education systems across Canada;
2. The use of students as mere tokens in policy-making;
3. The mindset that adults must do everything for students;
4. Administrators and teachers do not have faith in students' abilities to develop policies; and
5. Administrators are reluctant to share power.

These constraints to student involvement in policy-making have also been identified in three other studies. Newton (1986) writes about the constraints to involving students in policy-making in his study entitled "Trinidadian Students' Perceptions of Their School". The author writes about how the Trinidadian students indicated that their school is totally undemocratic and that the voices of students go unheard. According to this theorist, "the schools themselves are undemocratic. Everything is regimented and handed down" (p. 76). Also according to this theorist, the Trinidadian students indicated that they are often used as tokens in policy-making. The students may raise problems, but the problems are never considered by the administration.

Often even when students have an opportunity to express themselves nothing results. For example, a Students' Council may be proposed by the students; the administration receives the proposals and then nothing happens. The staff

fails to realize that if the students are not involved in matters which concern them, they cannot be expected to co-operate. (p. 74)

The constraints to student involvement in policy-making have also been identified in a study completed by Critchley (1998) entitled "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement in Educational Policy-Making in District #4 School System, Newfoundland". According to this author, students in District #4 are seldom given the opportunity to become involved in policy-making at the school or school district level. Also according to the author, students in District #4 indicated that educational administrators do not always respect the abilities of students to participate in policy-making. Critchley (1998) writes that, "there is a lack of respect for the abilities of students to make responsible decisions" (p. 36). The Director of Education who participated in this 1998 study, indicated that students are often left out of policy-making because administrators are often reluctant to share power. Also, according to Critchley's (1998) study, students often provide information and problems to educational administrators and nothing ever happens. Therefore, students often feel that they are used as mere tokens in the policy-making process.

The school or school board would have to share power (Critchley, 1988, 36).

Another stumbling block that must be overcome before more students can become involved in policy development, as identified by the participants in this study, is the use of students as tokens or a data source only (Critchley, 1998, p. 47).

The constraints to student involvement in policy-making, as identified during this study, are also reported in the study by Wood (1977) entitled "Student Influence in Decision-making in Secondary schools.

Therefore, the constraints to student involvement in policy-making as reported in this study are very real in education systems. If students are to have more of an influential part to play in policy-making in education systems across Canada, the constraints, as identified in this study, must first be dealt with. In order for students to be involved in educational policy-making at all levels in education systems across Canada, the following factors must be in place:

1. Policies must be in place providing for student involvement in policy-making at the departmental, school district and school levels;
2. Students must have a formal role to play in policy-making and they must not be used as mere tokens;
3. Administrators and teachers must allow students to learn to make decisions and to do things for themselves;
4. Administrators and teachers must develop a respect for the ability of students to be involved in policy-making; and
5. Administrators must learn to share power.

During his examination of school councils across Canada, Rideout (1995) suggests that the present legislation and policies

governing school councils do not give the council members (including students) enough power to develop and implement educational policies. Therefore, the members of school councils across Canada, including students, serve somewhat token positions because they carry almost no power and their advice may or may not be taken into consideration by the real people in power to make policies. According to the theorist, if school councils are going to be effective, then they must become more than mere advisory groups.

However, in some instances the legislative regulations appear vague enough to ensure that power essentially remains concentrated in the traditional centralist structures and local school councils operate at the pleasure of those structures. There may seem to be good reason for this, but it appears that more of a balance is needed if parents are to be given meaningful involvement in the exercise of local schooling. This may mean allowing them out of the "advisory strait jacket" and giving them some actual decision-making power. (p. 18)

According to this author, if school councils are going to be effective, the present legislation and policies across Canada must be rewritten in order to allow the councils to have a greater part to play in policy-making. This also applies to students since students are very much a part of school councils in most parts of Canada and students are used in an advisory capacity by policy-makers. If students are going to be effective members of the policy-making team at the departmental, school district and school levels, then policies must be put in place to allow them to participate in a formal manner. If students are going to remain only as advisors to the policy-makers, then their ideas and concerns may or may not be used in

the policy-making process. Educational administrators must become willing to share power if all stakeholders, including students, are going to be able to participate in the policy-making process in education.

Chapter Nine

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge in terms of the nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making at the school, school district and departmental levels in Canadian school systems. I set out to examine student involvement in education across Canada by asking four questions. These questions are as follows:

1. To what extent are policies in place at the school, school district and the departmental levels to provide for student participation in policy development in Canadian educational systems and what is the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development at each level as outlined by the policies?
2. What part of the policy-making process are students involved in at the school, school district and departmental levels?
3. How is student involvement in policy development processes solicited at the school, school district and departmental levels?
4. What degree of satisfaction is expressed by stakeholders (including students) at the school, school district and departmental levels with respect to the extent of student participation in policy-making?

From the survey data collected during this study, I am able to address these four questions.

Policies Providing For Student Involvement in Policy-Making

In terms of what policies are in place to ensure student participation in policy-making in education at the departmental, district and school levels across Canada, all participants in this study agree that there is a major lack of policies at all levels. According to the participants in this study, no level in education (departmental, district or school) in the various jurisdictions across Canada, has established policies that provide for student involvement in policy-making at that level. With the introduction of local school councils and school advisory councils across Canada in the late 1980s and 1990s, the Department of Education in each Canadian jurisdiction has introduced policies which outline whether or not students can be involved and if yes, how students can be involved. These departmental policies provide for student involvement at the local school level, but not at the departmental level. The Department of Education in Ontario has established policies that provide for student involvement at the district level as non-voting trustees on district boards, but the Department of Education for Ontario has no policies for student involvement at the departmental level. In Saskatchewan, the Department of Education has established policies that provide for student involvement at the local and district levels by providing for student representation on the Saskatchewan Council On Children. However, the Department of Education has not established any policies providing for student involvement at the departmental

level. The Department of Education in British Columbia has initiated policies for student involvement in policy-making at the local school level through the B.C. School Accreditation Program, but here too, the department has not produced policies providing for student involvement at the departmental level. Therefore, with the exception of the policies pertaining to school councils, student trustees in Ontario, student representation on the Saskatchewan Council On Children, and student involvement in the B.C. Accreditation Program, there is a genuine absence of policies across Canada providing for student involvement in policy-making. For students this means that if they are going to be involved informally or formally in educational policy-making at the departmental, district and school levels across Canada, the nature and extent of their participation is entirely left up to the whims of educational authorities. Student involvement in educational policy-making for the most part is not guaranteed. This point was emphasized by participants in this study at the departmental, school district, and school levels. Participants in this study commented on the lack of established policies that provide for student involvement in policy-making at each level in the educational systems across Canada.

A report of the National Association of Secondary Principals (NASSP) in 1996, entitled, "Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution", recommended that in future, the American schools must be restructured to provide for more participation in

educational decision-making. This restructuring in order to provide all stakeholders with a voice in policy-making has started in most jurisdictions in Canada with the introduction of school councils in the late 1980s and 1990s. Presently, students now have student representation in policy-making at the local level on school councils in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The Royal Commission of Inquiry Into the Delivery of Programs and Services In Primary, Elementary and Secondary Education in Newfoundland (1992) suggested that involving students and parents in educational policy-making through the implementation of school councils, "is part of a shift worldwide to involve parents and the community more directly in schools" (p.1). Restructuring in education in order to provide students with a voice in policy-making, has also taken place in British Columbia with the introduction of the B.C. School Accreditation Program and in Saskatchewan with the introduction of the Saskatchewan Council On Children. Perhaps the boldest restructuring move to include students in policy-making in education however, has been made in Ontario. Since 1997, students in Ontario may sit on district boards as non-voting trustees.

The Nature of Student Involvement in Educational Policy-Making

According to the participants in this study, since there is a lack of policies providing for student involvement in policy-

making at the departmental, district and school levels in education, the role of students (if they are permitted to participate) in policy-making is strictly advisory. Students across Canada are a source of data for the policy-makers; they express their concerns, answer surveys, and then the policy-makers either use the information obtained from students and incorporate it into their policy development or they simply ignore it. Under Section 55 in the Ontario Education Act, Students serving as district trustees in Ontario may have the same participation as adult trustees in terms of making presentations and raising concerns, but the student trustees are not permitted to vote on policies.

Students participating in the B.C. School Accreditation Program in British Columbia, serve as advisors in terms of school improvement. Students participating on the Saskatchewan Council On Children in Saskatchewan, can make recommendations as a team to the Ministry of Education, but these recommendations do not necessarily have to become policy.

According to the regulations governing school councils in each Canadian jurisdiction, students all across Canada who serve on local school councils are serving strictly in an advisory capacity. Their main mandate is to advise the school on matters of school improvement, but they have no authority to make educational policies for the schools.

All the participants involved in this study at the departmental, district and school levels across Canada agree that

there is no provision made in education systems to involve students in a formal manner in policy-making. Student involvement is strictly advisory to the policy-makers. However, according to the participants in this study, the students' concerns do influence policies. Students are commonly used as a data base or a source of input, rather than as policy-makers.

Recruiting Student Involvement in Policy-Making

According to the participants in this study, students can provide advice and feedback to policy-makers through a variety of mechanisms that are in use throughout education systems across Canada today. The mechanisms that are used to involve students in policy-making in an advisory capacity are as follows:

- . students have representation on school councils,
- . students have representation on student councils,
- . students have representation on school improvement teams,
- . students are asked to complete surveys,
- . students participate in student/teacher advisory programs,
- . students participate in round table discussions,
- . students in Ontario have student representation on district boards as non-voting trustees,
- . students in British Columbia have student representation on school accreditation programs,
- . students in Saskatchewan have student representation on the Saskatchewan Council On Children,

- . students in British Columbia have student representation on the provincial-wide network known as B.C. Student Voice,
- . students in Ontario have student associations known as the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association (OSSSA) and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFA),
- . students in New Brunswick have representation on the student association known as the Youth Council of New Brunswick,
- . students can make written submissions to the Department of education,
- . students can consult with teachers,
- . students can consult with school administrators,
- . students can produce their own television show concentrating on student issues, and
- . students can protest.

During the analysis of the survey data collected for this study, it was found that the two most common ways in which students across Canada contribute to policy-making in an advisory capacity are through their student representatives on school councils and student councils. It would appear that the introduction of school councils in Canada during the late 1980s and 1990s has provided students in most Canadian jurisdictions with an avenue through which to express themselves to educational policy-makers.

Some of the mechanisms through which students can express their concerns to policy-makers are unique in that they are only functioning in one or two jurisdictions in Canada. These methods of involving students in the planning for education can

easily be adopted by other provinces and territories in order to allow students a greater voice. These mechanisms are as follows:

- . the B.C. School Accreditation in British Columbia,
- . non-voting student trustees in Ontario,
- . student associations such as the Ontario Federation of Students or the Youth Council of New Brunswick,
- . the Saskatchewan Council On Children, and
- . student television productions by one school in Alberta on student issues.

The Extent of Student Involvement in Educational Policy-Making

In terms of the extent to which students are involved in policy-making in an advisory capacity, the participants in this study have indicated that students are involved in advising educational authorities on a wide range of policies. According to the participants in this study, students are involved in advising on the following type of policies:

- . school attendance policies,
- . school timetabling,
- . cafeteria schedules and menus,
- . school fee policies,
- . student dress code policies,
- . evaluation policies,
- . homework policies,
- . student council mandates,

- . school improvement policies,
- . school safety policies,
- . academic policies for athletes,
- . student/teacher expectations,
- . extra-curricular policies,
- . student course load policies,
- . course selection policies,
- . school spirit activities,
- . semester and non-semester issues,
- . student orientation events, and
- . mid-term and final examination policies.

It is very interesting to note that students are not only involved in providing advice for policies concerning such issues as extra-curricular activities and cafeteria menus, but they are very much concerned with policies that deal with academic programs such as course selections, student course load, examinations and evaluation procedures. The wide range of policy types that students are concerned with across Canada demonstrates that students wish to take some ownership in their education.

The Perceptions of All Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making in Education

All participants involved in this study at the departmental, district and school levels across Canada demonstrated a very positive regard for student involvement in policy-making.

According to the participants in this study, students bring a fresh outlook to policy-making. In fact, some of the participants in this study at the departmental, district and school levels suggest that students should be given a more formal role to play in the policy-making process. According to the participants in this study, very often when educational policies are being produced, the policy-makers forget to consult with the right people (the students).

Although the students participating in this study agree that student involvement in educational policy-making has increased over the last number of years, they wish to have more input in policy-making and they would like to take on a more formalized role in the actual making of policies. Unless there are specific policies outlining the role of students in policy-making and unless students are given more power in the policy-making process, students feel that they are given token positions in the process; their voices may or may not be listened to. Students wish to share the policy-making responsibility with educators so that they can begin to take some ownership in their education.

Constraints That Must Be Overcome in Order to Involve Students in Policy-Making in Education

In addition to the four questions that I have attempted to answer during this study in order to gain an understanding of the

nature and extent of student involvement in policy-making at all levels in the education systems in Canada, I also noted several constraints that must be overcome if students are going to become more involved in making policies in education. The constraints were reported by the participants at all levels in this study and they are as follows:

1. There is a lack of policies providing for student involvement in policy-making in education at all levels in education systems across Canada.
2. Students are often used as tokens. Information is collected from them for the purpose of policy-making, but not used in the formation of policies.
3. Adults have a mindset that they must do everything for young people and students are often not allowed to do things for themselves.
4. Some teachers and administrators do not have faith in the capabilities of students to make decisions.
5. Administrators may be reluctant to share power in policy-making.
6. Educational administrators and teachers do not always know how to work with students in terms of shared policy-making.
7. Provision for policy-making is not consistent throughout the different levels in education in the various jurisdictions across Canada.

If students are going to become more involved in policy-making at the departmental, district and school levels in

education systems across Canada, then the constraints to student involvement as identified in this study, must be addressed. According to a report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 1989, one of the characteristics that is common in all successful schools is an atmosphere of shared planning and decision-making. The OCDE, 1989, suggests that such an atmosphere develops a true sense of ownership for all stakeholders. Therefore, if our education systems across Canada are going to value students as one of the major stakeholder groups, then provision must be made at all levels in education for students to become involved in policy-making. Students must be allowed to take ownership of their education.

Implications for Policy

This study has shown that a wide range of mechanisms are being used at the departmental, school district and school levels across Canada by educational administrators to draw information from students for the purpose of educational policy-making. The study also shows that although students often feel positive about their contribution to the policy-making process, 55% of the students participating in this study desire to see a more active role for students in the policy-making process in education. Students at present do not have a substantial role to play in educational policy-making across Canada because there is a

genuine absence of policies providing for student involvement in policy-making at the departmental, school district and school levels. During the last ten years, there has been a move across Canada to provide students with more influence in educational policy-making through the introduction of school councils. Also in Ontario, legislation has recently provided for student participation on district boards as non-voting members. In British Columbia, legislation has recently provided for student involvement in local school improvement through the introduction of the School Accreditation Program.

Rideout (1995) suggests that although legislation in most parts of Canada has provided for more student input into policy-making at the local level through the introduction of school councils, the legislation has not gone far enough. Rideout (1995) suggests that school councils across Canada are strictly advisory and therefore, students still remain in an advisory capacity - a data bank for the educational policy-makers.

If students are going to have a more important role in the policy-making process, the following factors as identified in this study, must be addressed:

1. Policies must provide for student involvement in policy-making. Students must be provided with a formal statement outlining their role in the policy-making process at the departmental, school district and school levels.
2. Educational administrators at the departmental, school district and school levels must provide opportunities for

student involvement in policy-making.

3. Educational administrators at the departmental, school district and school levels must learn to share power.
4. Student involvement in policy-making must become more than advisory. Students must be allowed to take an active part in the development and implementation of policies.
5. Students must be clear on how they will be elected or chosen to serve on policy-making committees.
6. Students must be clear on the issues that must be addressed.
7. Students and educational administrators must receive the training necessary to enable them to work together as a collaborative policy-making group.
8. Provision for student involvement in policy-making must become consistent throughout the different levels in education in the various jurisdictions across Canada.

One Director of Education who participated in this study indicated that the education system is entering a period of involvement since students wish to become more involved in helping to develop policies that impact on their education. Before this can be done, the Director of Education suggests that old constraints to student involvement must be removed. According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1996) report, if education reform is going to be successful in our education systems, education policy-making must become a collaborative effort; one in which educators, parents and

students are involved in the policy-making process. In order to create such an atmosphere of shared policy-making, policies must first be put in place to provide for student participation in policy-making.

Summary

It is evident from this study that there is a lack of policies which provide students with a formal role to play in the policy-making process in education at all levels in the education systems across Canada. However, during the last decade, the Departments of Education in many jurisdictions in Canada have begun producing policies that ensure student participation in policy-making at the local level in an advisory capacity. Examples of this are the formation of school councils in many parts of Canada with student participation, the election of non-voting student trustees at the district level in Ontario and the establishment of the B.C. School Accreditation program in British Columbia. Education in many parts of Canada appears to be entering a period of student involvement in policy-making. However, the present advisory role of students in the policy-making process must continue to evolve if students are to become true partners in educational policy-making. In order for students to become true stakeholders in the policy-making process across Canada, the structure of the education systems and the administrative styles of educators must change.

Educational structures in the various jurisdictions across Canada will have to provide for student involvement in policy-making by establishing policies that will give students a formal role to play in the policy-making arena. The educational structure must change from a line of hierarchial authority to a system where all stakeholders have equal opportunity to participate in the policy-making process. This structural change needs to occur not only at the school level, but at the district and departmental levels as well. It must be evident to students that they are very much a part of the entire policy-making process. If students feel that they are only being given token positions in the policy-making process, they will quickly retire their services as mere advisors and go on to more important matters in their lives.

If students are to become true partners in the policy-making process in the education systems across Canada, the administrative styles of educators have to become more open to student involvement in policy-making at all levels. Educators must become more open to working with students on policy matters, rather than attempting to do everything for students. Time and opportunities must be created to allow students to become involved in the policy-making process at all levels. Educational administrators must be open to change and willing to share power. Teacher training programs and administrative courses need to allow opportunities for educators to learn how to work with students in educational planning and policy development.

Across Canada at the present time, there are several unique mechanisms being used to provide students with an advisory role in policy-making. These mechanisms, as discussed in this study, can be and should be shared with the rest of Canada. It is my belief that as students become more and more involved in educational policy-making as advisors through school councils and other mechanisms, educators will begin to realize that students do have something to offer and can make a difference at the policy-making table. As more and more opportunities are made available for students to participate in educational planning and policy-making, the constraints upon student involvement in policy-making will begin to crumble.

Upon completion of this study, a summary of my findings will be sent to all participants at the school, school district and departmental levels. Since many of the Departments of Education across Canada appear to be entering an involvement phase for students in educational policy-making, if only in an advisory capacity, I would hope that this study would be used to provide further direction. I would also hope that the findings of this study would filter down from each Department of Education to the school districts and schools under their jurisdiction.

Recommendations for Future Practice for Policy-Making in Education Systems Across Canada

This study demonstrates that students are not involved in policy-

making in a formal manner at any level in the education systems across Canada. Students serve in an advisory capacity in policy-making, although the degree to which students are involved in policy-making at the different levels in education, varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction across Canada. Future practice in policy-making in Canadian education systems should concentrate on overcoming the constraints upon student participation in policy-making at all levels in education. If the constraints to student involvement in policy-making are removed, the involvement of students in policy development may become more consistent at all levels in education across Canada. Also, future practice should concentrate on providing students with a more formalized role in policy-making at all levels in education. According to Tewel (1995), the only way to improve education systems for young people is to create an atmosphere where all stakeholders, including students, are involved in the policy-making process. According to Tewel (1995), this is the only way that all stakeholders will be able to take ownership of education.

Recommendations for Future Research

During the literature review for this study, I expressed that there is a gap between the literature that suggests that students should be involved in educational policy-making and the actual role of students in the educational policy-making process. This study examines the actual role of students in the policy-making

process in Canadian school systems. There is a need for further research in terms of the actual role of students in educational policy-making in other countries around the world in order to completely close the gap between what is theory and what is practice.

Second, since school councils have been in existence across Canada since the early 1990's, there is a need to examine how effective the councils and the student members of the school councils are in terms of influencing educational policy-making at the school, school district and departmental levels.

Third, considering the problems I faced in obtaining participants at all levels in the education systems across Canada due to education cutbacks and the restricted time of potential participants, there is a need for future study in terms of how research data can be collected in a more convenient and efficient manner at all levels in education systems across Canada. Many potential participants indicated that ordinarily they would be interested in participating in this study, but with all the cutbacks in education, they simply do not have the time. This could present a real problem for educational research in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Stuart Critchley
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AON 2C0

(Date)

(Name of Minister of Education)
Dept. of Education,
(Name of Province or Territory)
(Address of Dept. of Education)

Dear (Name of Minister of Education),

I am currently a doctoral student at The Ontario Institute For Studies In Education, in Toronto, Ontario, and I am conducting field research for my Doctoral Thesis. The title of my study is "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Policy-Making In Canadian School Systems". During this study, I hope to gather enough data at the school, district and departmental levels in all provinces and territories in order to provide me with a full understanding of how students are involved in policy-making at all levels in education.

Data will be gathered in two phases. During phase one, I will collect data from participants by means of a questionnaire. During the second phase of data collection, I will conduct some interviews in Newfoundland, Ontario and in one western province. During all stages of the data collection, the names of participants, schools and school districts will remain strictly confidential and the raw data will only be available to myself. During the actual writing of my thesis, the names of participants, schools and school districts will, again, remain confidential and any reference to a participant, school or school district, will be coded, for example - student (A), principal (B) or school (A), etc. After the completion of my thesis, I will send a summary of my findings to each participant across Canada.

At the Department of Education level, I would like to collect data from the Minister of Education or his/her designate. If you can provide me copies of policies or memorandums that provide for student involvement in policy-making, this information will be very useful in my study. I would also appreciate it if you would

be willing to respond to a questionnaire or if you would be interested in being interviewed by telephone. The telephone interview would involve the same questions included in the questionnaire. Since I also wish to collect data at the district and school levels, if you can recommend the names of two school districts in your jurisdiction that have students actively involved in policy-making, this information will be of great help to my study.

If you are interested in this project and if you can provide me with assistance in my data collection, I will appreciate it and I will ask you to complete the enclosed form and return it to me.

I also feel that it may help you to know some information about myself. I am a high school principal in St. George's, Newfoundland and I teach senior high geology, biology, chemistry and environmental science. I have been in the teaching profession for twenty years and I have been in the position of high school principal for eighteen years. My teaching experience is spread over three provinces, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

I would very much appreciate your favourable consideration of my requests.

Sincerely,

Stuart Critchley

Appendix B

The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Educational Policy-Making In Canadian School Systems

Abstract of Study

Although many theorists will argue that students should be part of the policy-making processes in education, theorists such as Hodgkinson (1991), Treslan (1983) and Mackin (1996) suggest that students have traditionally been left out of the educational policy-making processes. Hodgkinson (1991) suggests that because students are the clientele and because they sit at the bottom of an educational hierarchy, their concerns, values and interests are too often forgotten. Treslan (1983) also expresses concern about the absence of students in the policy-making processes because of where they are placed in the educational hierarchy. Mackin (1996) suggests that because students have not been included in educational policy-making, they can not learn valuable skills that they will need to become contributing democratic citizens.

In recent years there has been a move around the world to decentralize education and to make educational policy-making processes more site-manageable through the introduction of school improvement teams, school councils, school advisory councils, curriculum planning teams and other advisory groups. Students now, more than ever, have an opportunity to participate in shared decision-making in education. Students now, more than ever, have opportunities to begin to take some ownership in their education.

This study will examine the nature and extent of student involvement in educational policy-making in Canadian educational systems and in so doing, find out just how much of a role students have in helping to shape the educational systems that are there to serve them. From this study, I hope to learn how students are involved in educational policy-making across Canada and how student involvement can be improved in the future. The study will involve examining student involvement in policy-making at the school, district and departmental levels in all the provinces and territories in Canada. In so doing, the study will involve surveying Ministers of Education (or their designates) at the departmental level, Directors of Education at the district level, and high school principals and students at the school level.

Appendix C**Survey Questions for the
Minister of Education In Each Province or Territory In Canada****A. Questions Dealing With Policies That Provide for Student
Involvement In Policy-Making**

1. Who are the policy-maker participants at the departmental level as outlined by policies?

2. To what extent is student involvement in policy development provided for at the departmental level as outlined by policies?

3. What is the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development at the departmental level as provided for by policies at the departmental level?

4. To what extent are copies of policies outlining student involvement in policy development at the departmental level made available to the public?

B. Questions Dealing With Student Involvement In Policy-Making

5. How are students involved in identifying problems in education at the departmental level?

6. How are students involved in identifying solutions to problems in education at the departmental level?

7. How are students involved in the approval of solutions to problems in education at the departmental level?

8. How are students involved in the review and modification of solutions to problems in education at the departmental level?

C. Questions Dealing With The Recruitment of Students For Policy-Making

9. What type of policies are students involved in developing at the departmental level?

10. How often do students participate in policy development at the departmental level?

D. Questions Dealing With the Perceptions of All Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement In Policy-Making

11. How are students involved in the practice of policy-making at the departmental level?

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12. What are the perceptions, positive and negative, regarding student involvement in policy development at the departmental level?

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13. What concerns do students have about the nature and extent of their involvement in policy development at the departmental level?

Province or Territory _____

Appendix D**Minister of Education Informed Consent**

I _____, consent to serve as a
(Print Name)
subject for the purpose of providing information for the study
entitled "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Policy-
Making In Canadian School Systems".

The researcher, Stuart Critchley, has explained to me that my
name will remain confidential and I may withdraw myself and my
data from this project at any time, without reason. I have been
informed by the researcher, that I can provide information for
this study by presenting the researcher with copies of policies
or memorandums that provide for student involvement in policy-
making. The researcher has also explained to me that I can
provide information for this study by means of a questionnaire or
interview, based on my choice. The researcher has informed me
that I will receive a summary of the findings upon the completion
of the study.

(Please Check)

I agree to complete a questionnaire. (_____)

I agree to be interviewed. (_____)

Copies of policies providing for (_____) student involvement in policy-
making will be made available.

Signature

Date

Appendix E

Minister of Education Administrative Consent

I _____, give permission for the

(Print Name)

researcher, Stuart Critchley, to contact the following two school districts written below, for the purpose of collecting data for the research study entitled, "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Policy-making In Canadian School Systems". The researcher has informed me that data will be collected at the school district level by obtaining copies of any policies or memorandums that provide for student involvement in policy-making, made available by the Director of Education. Information for this study will also be collected from the Director of Education in each school district, by means of a questionnaire, based on the consent of the Director of Education. The researcher has informed me that the identities of all participants and the identity of the school district will remain in complete confidence.

Signature

Date

Recommended School Districts

1. Name of School District _____

Director of Education _____

School District Address _____

Phone Number _____

2. Name of School District _____

Director of Education _____

School District Address _____

Phone Number _____

Appendix F

Stuart Critchley
P.O. Box 12,
Stephenville Crossing,
Newfoundland
AON 2C0

(Date)

(Name of Director of Education)
(Name of School District)
(Address of School District)
(Province or Territory)

Dear (Name of Director of Education)

I am currently a doctoral student at The Ontario Institute For Studies In Education, in Toronto, Ontario, and I am conducting field research for my Doctoral Thesis. The title of my study is "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Policy-Making In Canadian School Systems". During this study, I hope to gather enough data at the school, district and departmental levels in all provinces and territories in order to provide me with a full understanding of how students are involved in policy-making at all levels in education. I wish to contact two school districts in each province and territory that have students involved in policy-making. Your school district was recommended to me by _____.

Your participation and the participation of your district would be a real asset to my study. I also require the participation of two high schools (two principals and two senior high students in each school) that have students involved in policy-making and therefore, if you can recommend two high schools in your district, I would appreciate it.

Data will be gathered in two phases. During phase one, I will collect data from participants by means of a questionnaire. During the second phase of data collection, I will conduct some interviews in Newfoundland, Ontario and in one western province. If you can provide me with copies of any policies or memorandums that provide for student involvement in policy-making in your district, this information will be very useful to my study.

During all stages of the data collection, the names of participants, schools and school districts will remain strictly confidential and the raw data will only be available to myself.

During the actual writing of my report, the names of participants, schools and school districts will remain confidential and any reference to a participant, school or school district, will be coded, for example - student (B), principal (A) or school (A), etc. After the completion of my thesis, I will send a summary of my findings to each participant across Canada.

If you can provide me with assistance in my data collection, I would appreciate it and I would ask you to complete the enclosed survey and forms and return them to me. Also, even if students are not involved in policy development at the school board level, they may very well be involved at the local school level and therefore, obtaining the name of one or two schools that I can make contact with would be very important to me.

I also feel that it may help you to know some information about myself. I am a high school principal in St. George's, Newfoundland and I teach senior high geology, biology, chemistry and environmental science. I have been in the teaching profession for twenty years and I have been in the position of high school principal for eighteen years. My teaching experience is spread over three provinces, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

I would very much appreciate your favourable consideration of my requests.

Sincerely

Stuart Critchley

Appendix G

Survey Questions for the School District Superintendents or the Directors of Education

A. Questions Dealing With Policies That Provide for Student Involvement In Policy-Making

1. Who are the policy-maker participants at the school district level as outlined by policies?

2. To what extent is student involvement in policy development provided for at the school district level as outlined by policies?

3. What is the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development at the school district level as provided for by policies at the school district level?

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4. To what extent are copies of policies outlining student involvement in policy development at the school district level made available to the public?
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B. Questions Dealing With Student Involvement In Policy-Making

5. How are students involved in identifying problems in education at the school district level?
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6. How are students involved in identifying solutions to problems in education at the school district level?

7. How are students involved in the approval of solutions to problems in education at the school district level?

8. How are students involved in the review and modification of solutions to problems in education at the school district level?

C. Questions Dealing With the Recruitment of Students for Policy-Making

9. What type of policies are students involved in developing at the school district level?

10. How often do students participate in policy development at the school district level?

D. Questions Dealing With the Perceptions of All Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement In Policy-Making

11. How are students involved in the practice of policy-making at the school board level?

12. What are the perceptions, positive and negative, regarding student involvement in policy development at the school district level?

13. What concerns do students have about the nature and extent of their involvement in policy development at the school district level?

Province or Territory _____

Appendix H**Director of Education Informed Consent**

I _____, consent to serve as a
(Print Name)
subject for the purpose of providing information for the study
entitled "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Policy-
Making In Canadian School Systems".

The researcher, Stuart Critchley, has explained to me that my
name and the name of the school district will remain confidential
and I may withdraw myself and my data from this project at any
time, without reason. I have been informed by the researcher,
that I can provide information for this study by presenting the
researcher with copies of policies or memorandums that provide
for student involvement in policy-making. I have also been
informed by the researcher that I can provide information for
this study by means of a questionnaire. The researcher has
informed me that I will receive a summary of the findings upon
the completion of the study.

(Please Check)

I agree to complete a questionnaire. (_____)

Copies of policies providing for (_____) student involvement in policy-
making will be made available.

Signature

Date

Appendix I**Director of Education Administrative Consent**

I _____, give permission for the
(Print Name)
researcher, Stuart Critchley, to contact the following two
schools written below, for the purpose of collecting data for the
research study entitled, "The Nature and Extent of Student
Involvement In Policy-making In Canadian School Systems". The
researcher has informed me that data will be collected at the
school level by obtaining copies of any policies or memorandums
that provide for student involvement in policy-making, made
available by the principal. Information for this study will also
be collected from the principal and two students in each school,
by means of a questionnaire, based on the consent of the
principal and students. The researcher has informed me that the
identities of all participants and the identity of the school
will remain in complete confidence.

Signature

Date**Recommended Schools**

1. Name of School _____

Principal _____

School Address _____

Phone Number _____

2. Name of School _____

Principal _____

School Address _____

Phone Number _____

Appendix J

Stuart Critchley
P.O. Box 12,
Stephenville Crossing,
Newfoundland
AON 2C0

(Date)

(Name of Principal)
Principal,
(Name of School)
(Address of School)

Dear (Name of Principal),

I am currently a doctoral student at The Ontario Institute For Studies In Education, in Toronto, Ontario, and I am conducting field research for my Doctoral Thesis. The title of my study is "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Policy-Making In Canadian School Systems". During this study, I hope to gather enough data at the school, district and departmental levels in all provinces and territories in order to provide me with a full understanding of how students are involved in policy-making at all levels in education. I wish to contact schools in each province and territory that have students involved in policy-making and your school was recommended to me by

_____. Your participation and the participation of two of your senior high school students, who are actively involved on your school council or the student council, would be a real asset to my study. I would appreciate it if you could recommend to me, the names of two senior high school students, who also would be interested in participating in this study.

Data will be gathered in two phases. During phase one, I will collect data from all participants by means of a questionnaire. During the second phase of data collection, I will conduct some interviews in Newfoundland, Ontario and in one western province. If you could provide me with copies of any policies or memorandums that provide for student involvement in policy-making in your school, this information would be very useful in my study.

During all stages of the data collection, the names of participants, schools and school districts will remain strictly confidential and the raw data will only be available to myself.

During the actual writing of my thesis, the names of participants, schools and school districts will, again, remain strictly confidential and any reference to a participant, student, principal, school or school district, will be coded, for example - principal (A), student (A) or school (B), etc. After the completion of my thesis, I will send a summary of my findings to each participant across Canada.

If you are interested in this project and if you can provide me with assistance in my data collection, I would appreciate it and I would ask you to complete the enclosed form and return it to me.

I also feel that it may help you to know some information about myself. I am a high school principal in St. George's, Newfoundland and I teach senior high geology, biology, chemistry and environmental science. I have been in the teaching profession for twenty years and I have been in the position of high school principal for eighteen years. My teaching experience is spread over three provinces, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

I would very much appreciate your favourable consideration of my requests.

Sincerely,

Stuart Critchley

Appendix K**Survey Questions for School Principals****A. Questions Dealing With Policies That Provide for Student Involvement In Policy-Making**

1. Who are the policy-maker participants at the school level as outlined by policies?

2. To what extent is student involvement in policy development provided for at the school level as outlined by policies?

3. What is the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development at the school level as provided for by policies at the school level?

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4. To what extent are copies of policies outlining student involvement in policy development at the school level made available to the public?
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B. Questions Dealing With Student Involvement In Policy-Making

5. How are students involved in identifying problems in education at the school level?
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6. How are students involved in identifying solutions to problems in education at the school level?

7. How are students involved in the approval of solutions to problems in education at the school level?

8. How are students involved in the review and modification of solutions to problems in education at the school level?

C. Questions Dealing With the Recruitment of Students for Policy-Making

9. What type of policies are students involved in developing at the school level?

10. How often do students participate in policy development at the school level?

D. Questions Dealing With the Perceptions of All Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement In Policy-Making

11. How are students involved in the practice of policy-making at the school level?

12. What are the perceptions, positive and negative, regarding student involvement in policy development at the school level?

13. What concerns do students have about the nature and extent of their involvement in policy development at the school level?

Province or Territory _____

Appendix L**Principal's Informed Consent**

I _____, consent to serve as a
(Print Name)
subject for the purpose of providing information for the study
entitled "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Policy-
Making In Canadian School Systems".

The researcher, Stuart Critchley, has explained to me that my name, the name of the school and the name of the school district will remain confidential and I may withdraw myself and my data from this project at any time, without reason. I have been informed by the researcher, that I can provide information for this study by presenting the researcher with copies of policies or memorandums that provide for student involvement in policy-making. I have also been informed by the researcher that I can provide information for this study by means of a questionnaire. The researcher has informed me that I will receive a summary of the findings upon the completion of the study.

(Please Check)

I agree to complete a questionnaire. (_____)

Copies of policies providing for (_____) student involvement in policy-making will be made available.

Signature

Date

Appendix M

Principal's Administrative Consent

I _____, give permission for the
(Print Name)
researcher, Stuart Critchley, to contact the following two
students (names written below), for the purpose of collecting
data for the research study entitled, "The Nature and Extent of
Student Involvement In Policy-making In Canadian School Systems".
The researcher has informed me that data will be collected from
the two students by means of a questionnaire, based on the
consent of each student and based on the consent of each
student's parents. The researcher has informed me that the
identities of the students and the identity of the school and
school district, will remain in complete confidence.

Signature

Date _____

Recommended Students

1. Name of Student _____

Grade _____

Student Council Member Yes _____ No _____

School Council Member Yes _____ NO _____

2. Name of Student _____

Grade _____

Student Council Member Yes NO

School Council Member Yes NO

School Address _____

School Phone Number _____

Appendix N

Stuart Critchley
P.O. Box 12,
Stephenville Crossing,
Newfoundland
AON 2C0

(Date)

(Name of Student)
(Name of School)
(Address of School)

Dear (Name of Student),

I am currently a doctoral student at The Ontario Institute For Studies In Education, in Toronto, Ontario, and I am conducting field research for my Doctoral Thesis. The title of my study is "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Policy-Making In Canadian School Systems". During this study, I hope to gather enough data at the school, district and departmental levels in all provinces and territories in order to provide me with a full understanding of how students are involved in policy-making at all levels in education. I wish to survey a number of students in each province and territory who are involved in policy-making as members of the student council or school council. Your name was recommended to me by _____

_____.

Data will be gathered in two phases. During phase one, I will collect data from all participants by means of a questionnaire. During the second phase of data collection, I will conduct some interviews in Newfoundland, Ontario and in one western province.

During all stages of the data collection, the names of participants, schools and school districts will remain strictly confidential and the raw data will only be available to myself. During the actual writing of my report, the names of participants, schools and school districts will, again, remain confidential and any reference to a participant, school or school district, will be coded, for example - principal (A), student (A) or school (B), etc. After the completion of my thesis, I will send a summary of my findings to each participant across Canada.

If you are interested in this project and if you can provide me with assistance in my data collection by agreeing to complete a questionnaire, I would very much appreciate it and I would ask you to complete the enclosed form and return it to me.

I also feel that it may help you to know some information about myself. I am a high school principal in St. George's, Newfoundland and I teach senior high geology, biology, chemistry and environmental science. I have been in the teaching profession for twenty years and I have been in the position of high school principal for eighteen years. My teaching experience is spread over three provinces, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

I would very much appreciate your favourable consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Stuart Critchley

Appendix O**Survey Questions for Students****A. Questions Dealing With Policies That Provide for Student Involvement In Policy-Making**

1. Who are the people who make the policies for your school?

2. Does your school have written policies that ensure student involvement in helping to make policies for the school?

3. If your school does have policies that ensure student involvement in policy-making, what do these policies say about the role of students in policy-making in the school?

4. If your school does have policies that ensure student involvement in policy-making for the school, are these policies made available to you?

B. Questions Dealing With Student Involvement In Policy-Making

5. Are students involved in helping to identify problem issues in your school or at the district level, and if so, in what way are students involved?

6. Are students involved in helping to identify solutions to problem issues in your school or at the district level, and if so, in what way are students involved?

7. Are students involved in helping to decide what courses of action will be approved in order to deal with problem issues in the school or at the district level, and if so, in what way are students involved?

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8. Are students involved in helping to review and modify courses of action adopted to address problem issues in your school or at the district level, and if so, in what ways are students involved?
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Questions Dealing With The Recruitment of Students For Policy-Making

9. What types of policies are students involved in developing in your school and at the district level?
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10. How often are students involved in helping to develop policies in your school and at the district level?
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**D. Questions Dealing With the Perceptions of All Stakeholders
Concerning Student Involvement In Policy-Making**

11. How are students involved in the practice of policy-making in your school and at the district level?

12. What are your perceptions, positive or negative, regarding student involvement in policy development in your school and at the school district level?

School District _____

Province or Territory _____

Appendix P**Student's Informed Consent**

I _____, consent to serve as a
(Print Name)
subject for the purpose of providing information for the study
entitled "The Nature and Extent of Student Involvement In Policy-
Making In Canadian School Systems".

The researcher, Stuart Critchley, has explained to me that my
name, the name of my school and school district will remain
confidential and I may withdraw myself and my data from this
project at any time, without reason. I have been informed by the
researcher, that I can provide information for this study by
means of a questionnaire. The researcher has informed me that I
will receive a summary of the findings upon the completion of the
study.

(PLEASE Check)

I agree to complete a questionnaire. (_____)

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Parents

Date

Signature of Principal

Date

Appendix Q

Documents I Received From Participants Involved In This Study

Alberta Dept. of Education. (1997). School-based decision making resource guide. Edmonton, Alberta. - received from the Ministry of Education.

British Columbia Dept. of Education, Skills and Training. (1997). B.C. public school accreditation program: Accreditation policy. Vancouver, British Columbia. - received from the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

British Columbia Dept. of Education, Skills and Training. (1997). B.C. public school accreditation program: Accreditation resource. Vancouver, British Columbia. - received from the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

British Columbia Dept. of Education, Skills and Training. (1998). The voice on school. Vancouver, British Columbia. - received from the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

British Columbia Dept. of Education, Skills and Training. (1998). Youth on boards: A voice for B.C. youths. Vancouver, British Columbia. - received from the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association. (1998). BC student voice: Representing students in matters affecting their education. Vancouver, British Columbia. - received from the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

New Brunswick Dept. of Education. (1997). Education act: Chapter E-1.12. Fredericton, New Brunswick. - received from the Ministry of Education.

New Brunswick Dept. of Education. (1997). Education act: Regulation 97-150. Fredericton, New Brunswick. - received from the Ministry of Education.

Ontario Dept. of Education and Training. (1997). Education act: Section 55. Toronto, Ontario. - received from the Ministry of Education and Training.

Ontario Dept. of Education and Training. (1995). Policy/program memorandum no. 122 (ppm 122). Toronto, Ontario. - received from the Ministry of Education and Training.

- Ontario Dept. of Education and Training. (1997). Regulation 461/97: Pupil representation on boards. Toronto, Ontario. - received from the Ministry of Education and Training.
- Ontario Dept. of Education and Training. (1997). Special education advisory committees. Toronto, Ontario. - received from the Ministry of Education and Training.
- Saskatchewan Dept. of Education. (1996). Building communities of hope: Community schools policy and conceptual framework. Regina, Saskatchewan. - received from the Ministry of Education.
- Saskatchewan Dept. of Education. (1995). First Report of Saskatchewan's council on children. Regina, Saskatchewan. - received from the Ministry of Education.
- Yukon Dept. of Education. (1996). Yukon Education Act. Whitehorse, Yukon. - received from the Ministry of Education.
- Yukon Dept. of Education, 1998. Yukon School Listings. Whitehorse, Yukon. - received from the Ministry of Education.

Appendix R

Informal Interview With a Ministry of Education Representative In the Yukon

Date: Sept, 1998.

The Interview Conducted by Telephone

Means of Recording the Interview - I took notes during the interview and immediately following the interview, I summarized the conversation.

Reason for Interview - I wanted to obtain information on why there are no school districts or school boards listed for the Yukon in the Canadian Resource Book, (1998).

Question #1 - Can you explain for me why there are no listings for school boards or school districts in the Canadian Resource Book, 1997/98?

Response #1 - Under the old Yukon Education Act, school committees were set up throughout the Yukon. Everything was very much controlled by the Department of Education. Under the new Education Act, 1990, the school committees had 90 days after the proclamation of the Act to vote to change to school councils. After a school council has been in existence for one or more school years, the council may request that the Minister establish a school board to replace the school council. A vote would then be conducted in the community. So far, only one school council has chosen to become a school board and this one school board only represents one school.

Question #2 - What role do students play on school committees, school councils and school boards?

Response #2 - Students are not involved on school committees, school councils, or school boards.

Question #3 - Are students involved in educational policy-making in the Yukon?

Response #3 - Students have no involvement in policy-making. Most policy is driven by the Dept. of Education. Schools and school boards rely on the Department for the establishment of policy.

Question #4 - Can you send me a copy of the Yukon Education Act?

Response #4 - Yes, I will.

Length of Interview - Approximately 20 Minutes

Appendix S

Informal Interview With a Ministry of Education Representative In New Brunswick

Date : Sept, 1998

The Interview Was Conducted by Telephone

Means of Recording the Interview - I took notes during the interview and immediately following the interview, I summarized the conversation.

Reason for Interview - I wanted to clarify my understanding of how districts are set up in New Brunswick.

Question #1 - Can you explain to me how school districts are presently set up in the province?

Response #1 - After the Education Act, 1997, there are two Provincial Boards of Education in New Brunswick. One Board governs the English districts and one Board governs the French districts. Each Provincial Board of Education is made up of members elected from the District Parent Advisory Councils of the same official language. Local School Boards were disbanded after the Education Act, 1997. Each school district in the province has a District Parent Advisory Council made up of elected or appointed members. The District Parent Advisory Council is made up of parents, aboriginal representatives and the Director of Education. The District Parent Advisory Council is responsible for advising the Director of Education for the district.

Question #2 - Are there any local school councils in New Brunswick?

Response #2 - Yes, there is a School Parent Advisory Committee set up for each school in the province. The

School Parent Advisory Committee is responsible for advising the school principal in matters of school improvement. Each School Parent Advisory Committee is made up of parents, teachers, students, community members and the school principal.

Question #3 - Do students have representation on the Provincial Boards of Education and the District Parent Advisory Councils?

Response #3 - Students are not represented on the Provincial Boards of Education, but they are represented on the District Parent Advisory Councils. The District Parent Advisory Councils are made up of representatives from parents, aboriginals, and students. The District Parent Advisory Councils have a responsibility to advise the Director of Education in each district.

Length of Interview - Approximately 30 Minutes

Appendix T

Informal Interview With a Ministry of Education Representative In Ontario

Date of Interview - Nov. 1998

Interview Was Conducted by Telephone

Means of Recording the Interview - I took notes during the interview and immediately following the interview, I summarized the conversation.

Reason for Interview - I wanted to clarify my understanding of the role of students on district boards.

Question #1 - What is the role of students on district boards in Ontario?

Response #1 - Student representation on district boards is governed by Section #55 of the Education Act, 1997. Under this section of the Act, students are elected or appointed to boards. They are not board members and they can not vote at meetings, nor attend in-camera meetings. Students under this section of the Act, can not attend any meetings conducted by the board that are closed to the public. Students are given the right to student representation on the board, but they are not given the right to vote as board members. Under Regulation #461 of the Education Act, 1997, students representation on district boards are provided with opportunity at board meetings and board committee meetings to make presentations. They have the same opportunity as a board member has to discuss issues that are relevant to board-level policies.

Question #2 - Can you send me a copy of these sections of the Ontario Education Act?

Response #2 - Yes, I will send you a copy of Section #55 and Regulation #461 of the Education Act.

Length of Interview - Approximately 20 Minutes

Appendix U

Informal Interview With a Ministry of Education Representative In Saskatchewan

Date: October, 1998

The Interview Was Conducted by Telephone

Means of Recording the Interview - I took notes during the interview and immediately following the interview, I summarized the conversation. in detail.

Reason for the Interview - I wanted to clarify my understanding of the Saskatchewan Council On Children.

Question #1 - What role do students have in terms of policy-making through their participation on the Saskatchewan Council On Children?

Response #1 - The most significant way that students are involved in policy development at the departmental level is through advisory committees. The Saskatchewan Council On Children is one such committee. The Council provides a forum for discussion and direction to the government of Saskatchewan in the areas of health, justice, education, recreation, housing, social services and other issues that are relevant to the children in Saskatchewan. The advice from the Saskatchewan Council On Children is provided to the various Ministers responsible for the Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children. The advice is certainly taken into consideration during the process of developing policies that will impact on children. The Saskatchewan Council On Children meets quarterly and at least once annually with the Ministers responsible for the Action Plan for Children.

Question #2 - Who is represented on the Saskatchewan Council On Children?

Response #2 - The Saskatchewan Council On Children membership includes youth, Aboriginal, and representation from the various geographical areas.

Question #3 - Can you send me information pertaining to the Saskatchewan Council On Children?

Response #3 - Yes.

Length of Interview - Approximately 20 Minutes

Appendix V

Informal Interview With a High School Principal In Newfoundland

Date: December, 1998

The Interview Was Conducted by Telephone

Means of Recording the Interview - I took notes during the interview and immediately following the interview I summarized the conversation. in detail.

Reason for the Interview - I wanted to clarify the perceptions of this principal concerning student involvement in policy-making at the school/district level.

Question #1 - What are your perceptions of student involvement in educational policy-making at the school/district level?

Response #1 - Government policy now dictates that students must be involved on school councils. We have been fortunate because the students serving on our school council are very knowledgeable and they take an active part on our council. They want to be involved. Our school council is consulted before we finalize any new policy. We also consult with the student body in our school before we finalize any new policy which pertains to students. Yes, students do want to be involved for the most part and I think if they are given the chance, they can do us a good service. I think they can do us a good job. As far as students being involved at the district level, no, I do not see this. I do not think our students are ever consulted by the district board on matters that pertain to students. I think it is necessary to consult with students on policy, especially on policies that affect the students. I do not think that students are

necessarily interested in all policies, but they are interested in those policies that have an impact on them. It is important to get the right students on school council. They must be willing to put the work into it and if they do, they can do a great job.

Question #2 - What concerns do students have about their involvement in policy-making at the school/district level?

Response #2 - Students want to be involved and they have expressed a need to be involved at the school level. They want to be involved on all issues that affect them as students. Their main concern is that they feel they are not consulted enough, especially at the board level. They feel that they are not consulted at all at this level. The students do not want to be left out on matters that affect them. They want a voice and they want their voice to be heard. If you get the right students involved and if they are given a chance to participate in matters that affect them, they will surprise you. They will do a good job.

Question #3 - What concerns do you, as a principal, have about student involvement in policy-making?

Response #3 - I feel, and I know, that it is important to involve students who are mature and want to be there. It is important to have students who will keep in mind what it is that we are trying to do. However, as I have said, we have been quite fortunate on our school council to have students involved who are interested and they have come up with some pretty remarkable things.

Length of Interview - Approximately 30 Minutes

Appendix W

Tel. 902 368 4600
Fax 902 368 4663
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/edu/>

Department of Education

16 Fitzroy Street
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown
Prince Edward Island
Canada C1A 7N8

Tel. 902 368 4600
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Ministère de l'Éducation

ru. 16 Fitzroy
C.P. 2000
Charlottetown
Île-du-Prince-Édouard
Canada C1A 7N8

September 15, 1998

Stuart Critchley
P.O. Box 12
Stephenville Crossing
Newfoundland
A0N 2C0

Dear Mr. Critchley:

Thank you for your recent invitation to participate in field research to support your doctoral dissertation.

Recently our school system has been inundated with massive curriculum changes involving teachers, students, administrators and Department staff. They have given up considerable time already with meeting, surveys, etc. In addition, due to our small size, almost all schools are involved in SAIP testing each year which involves a lot of extra work for teachers and administrators.

Although your project is worthwhile, our province is not interested in participating in private studies that would require additional time from our staff.

I wish you well with your doctoral work and hope you have success with your project.

Sincerely,

Byron Cutcliffe
Coordinator, Assessment and Evaluation
for Chester Gillan, Minister of Education

Appendix X

Διευθυνση
Elihaktolikioni
Education
Éducation

September 17, 1998

**Stuart Critchley
Box 12
Stephenville Crossing
Newfoundland
A0N 2C0**

Dear Mr. Critchley:

Thank you for your request on your study. It sounds very interesting. At this time we are not functioning as a full department yet and will not be for another several months until after April the 1st, 1999. We are in the transition year and only starting to set up our office and hire our staff.

I suggest that you contact the current Department of Education in Yellowknife, N.W.T. and the 3 regional School Boards called; Divisional Educational Councils that are responsible for administering the schools. They might be able to help you with your study. Their addresses are:

Bronwyn Watters, Director Policy & Planning
Education, Culture & Employment
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife, N.W.T.
X1A 2L9

**Don Morrison, Supervisor of Schools
Baffin Divisional Education Council
Box 1330
Iqaluit, NT X0A 0H0**

Chris Pursue, Assistant Director
Box 90
Keewatin Divisional Education Council
Baker Lake, NT X0C 0A0

Jean Phelps, Director
Kitikmeot Divisional Education Council
Kugluktuk, NT X0E 0E0

Sincerely Yours,

Naullaq Armaquq
Director, School Services & Early Childhood

Appendix Y

Survey Results From the Minister of Education or His/Her Designate in Each Province & Territory

A. Questions About Policies That Provide for Student Involvement in Policy-Making

Question #1

Who are the policy-maker participants at the departmental level as outlined by policies?

Responses

Yukon ----- Schools look to the Department of Education to set policy. There are no school boards in the Yukon. Therefore, educational policy is established by the Department of Education.

Northwest Territories - There is no provision for student involvement in policy development at the departmental level in the Northwest Territories. Policy is developed within each division of the Department. Divisional staff write directives. There is a consultation process that involves making responses and recommendations.

British Columbia ----- The Department of Education has provided for student involvement at the local school level through the accreditation program. Students are involved in policy-making at the departmental level in an advisory capacity through their participation on the BC Student Voice. The BC Student Voice has placed representatives on provincial Ministry of Education committees and represented student opinion at many regional and provincial meetings. Supported by adult advisors, students meet regularly to review provincial directives, gather support for their various regional initiatives and facilitate development of school and district policies.

Alberta ----- The Department of Education does not provide for student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level. The Department of Education does provide for student involvement in policy-making at the local level through student participation on school councils.

Saskatchewan ----- Although the Department of Education plays a significant role in the development of education policy in Saskatchewan, cooperation with partners concerned with the education and well-being of children is an integral part of the system. Partners include organizations representing school trustees, teachers, and administrators; Aboriginal peoples; business and labour communities; post-secondary and skills training institutions; and students and parents. At the regional level, school divisions are also partnering with other service agencies and community members to meet the needs of children and families. Funding and delivery of education in Saskatchewan is a shared responsibility between the province and 108 locally-elected boards of education. The Education Act 1995, devolves responsibility for the delivery of education to these autonomous boards of education. This arrangement provides local boards of education considerable authority and flexibility in policy

development and implementation under the guidance and direction of the department. School divisions have total responsibility for encouraging student involvement in policy-making at the division and school level. While the department supports student involvement in policy-making at all levels, they would be more likely to affect change in the education system by participating at the school or division level.

Manitoba ----- Students are not involved in policy-making at the departmental level. The Department of Education does make provision for student involvement in policy-making at the local school level through their participation on local school advisory councils.

Ontario ----- Policy development in the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training typically involves the canvassing of views from education and training stakeholders. This gathering of opinion can be accomplished in several ways which may include: formal public consultation,

focus groups, town-hall meetings around the province, meetings of various associations with the Minister or with ministry staff, and standing advisory committees.

The views of students are most often communicated to the ministry through the existing student associations, specifically the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association (OSSSA) and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS). These associations function like other professional organizations with an interest in education. This means that the student association executive may meet with the Minister throughout the year to advise him of their views on specific policy matters. It also means that the student association may be represented on relevant advisory committees, such as the Secondary School Reform Advisory Group. The OSSSA, for example, has been a member of this advisory group for several years, through a period of significant policy development in this area.

Students may also express their views independently of the student associations. For Example, the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education has a member representing students and youth. At the level of school boards, student representation on district school boards is governed by Section #55 of the Education Quality Improvement Act. Secondary school students are elected/appointed to boards, but are not board members, cannot vote at meetings and may not attend in-camera meetings.

At the level of schools, students have mandatory representation at the secondary school level on their school council.

New Brunswick ----- There are no provincial policies in New Brunswick concerning student involvement in policy-making.

Nova Scotia ----- While there is no Departmental policies on policy development, participants will vary depending upon the specific situation and issues. Much of the policy development within the Nova Scotia

setting is done at the school board level. Departmental policies do exist with respect to student discipline, special education, public school program and education funding.

Newfoundland ----- Executive at the Department (i.e. Minister, Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Ministers with the involvement of Directors, Managers and professional staff as well).

Question #2

To what extent is student involvement in policy development provided for at the departmental level as outlined by policies?

Responses

Yukon ----- The Yukon Department of Education does not make any provision for student participation in policy-making. The schools look to the Department of Education to set policy.

Northwest Territories - Student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level is not provided for specifically. The Department of Education for the Northwest Territories

does not have any policies that provide for student involvement in policy-making at the Department level. However, students are invited by the Department to provide their input in some matters before certain policies are made. The 1996 Education Act does make provision for students at the community level to participate in District Education Authority meetings in Regulation 23, p. 14, Education Act, 1996. However, students are mostly involved in policy making at the local school level in the Northwest Territories.

British Columbia ----- Policies are in place to involve student participation at the local level through the school accreditation and school improvement process.

Alberta ----- There are no policies in place that specifically involve students in policy-making at the Department of Education level. The Alberta Education Act, 1995, allows for student involvement at the local level on school councils. The School Council Handbook, 1995, outlines

the involvement of school councils at the local level and the involvement of students on the school councils. Under the school-based decision-making model, most decisions about student involvement in policy development are made at the local level.

Saskatchewan ----- The most significant way students are involved in policy development at the departmental level is through various advisory committee structures. For example, a process for student involvement is provided through the Saskatchewan Council on Children. The Council provides a forum for discussion and direction to the government in the areas of health, justice, education, recreation, housing, social services, and other issues as they relate to the well-being of Saskatchewan children. This advice is provided to the Ministers responsible for the Saskatchewan action plan for children. Since the 1980s, high school and post secondary students have been included in other advisory

structures such as the High School Review Advisory Committee, Curriculum and Instruction Review Advisory Committee and the now defunct Education Council.

Policy that provides for the involvement of students in decision-making includes the 1996 framework developed for the development of Community Schools. Within this framework, schools are strongly encouraged to include students as an active part of the Community School Council executive and provide opportunities for them to participate in developing the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal. Currently, there are 26 Community Schools in Saskatchewan with an operating budget of \$3.41M for 1997-98.

A less significant method that enables student participation in policy-making occurs through the collection of student feedback about new curriculum and instruction methods.

Manitoba ----- Manitoba Education and Training does not have any regulations or legislation that

pertain directly to student involvement in policy-making. The 1996 Education Act does allow for senior high school student involvement on advisory councils at the local school level.

Ontario ----- Although there are no specific policies at the Department of Education level to involve students in policy-making at the departmental level, policy development in the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training typically involves the canvassing of views from education and training stakeholders. This gathering of opinion can be accomplished in several ways. The views of students are most often communicated to the ministry through the existing student associations, specifically the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association (OSSSA) and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS). These associations function like other professional organizations with an interest in education.

At the level of school boards,

student representation on district school boards is governed by Section #55 of the Education Quality Improvement Act.

Secondary school students are elected/appointed to boards, but are not members, cannot vote at meetings and may not attend in-camera meetings. According to Regulation #461/97, students may have at least the same opportunity for participation at board meetings and at board committee meetings as a board member has; they present issues, add input and discuss concerns, relevant to board-level policies. Of special note is the fact that students may be represented on the board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) since Regulation #464/97 stipulates that one, two or three members of the school board (which includes student representatives) are appointed by the board to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

At the level of schools, students have mandatory representation at the secondary school level on their school

council, as per Policy Program Memorandum #122.

New Brunswick ----- There are no provincial policies in New Brunswick concerning student involvement in policy-making.

Nova Scotia ----- The Nova Scotia Dept. of Education does not have any regulations or legislation that pertain directly to student involvement in policy-making. The 1996 Education Act does allow for senior high student involvement on advisory councils at the local school level.

Newfoundland ----- Policies are in place to ensure student participation at the local level on school councils. There is no provision for student involvement in policy development at the departmental level.

Question #3

What is the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development at the departmental level as provided for by policies at the departmental level?

Responses

Yukon ----- Students are not involved at the departmental level in policy-making.

Northwest Territories - Students may be invited to participate in an advisory capacity during focus sessions before a policy is written. For example, students were invited to be members of focus sessions as information was gathered before the new Education Act was written. The Act came into force in 1996.

British Columbia ----- Policies are in place to ensure student participation at the local school level through the school accreditation and school improvement program.

Students can become involved in policy development at the departmental level in an advisory capacity through student representatives on the BC Student Voice. The BC Student Voice was started by the Principals' and Vice-principals' Association in 1990. It is made up of dedicated students and adult advisors across all regions in British Columbia. The Voice has representatives on

provincial Ministry of Education committees and has represented student opinion at many regional and provincial meetings.

Alberta ----- There is no student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level.

Saskatchewan ----- Students are mainly involved in policy development at the departmental level in an advisory capacity. Student involvement is provided through the Saskatchewan Council on Children. The Council provides a forum for discussion and direction to the government in the areas of health, justice, education, recreation, housing, social services, and other issues as they relate to the well-being of Saskatchewan children. This advice is provided to the Ministers responsible for the Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children. Council membership includes youth, Aboriginal, and geographical representation. Since the 1980s, high school and post secondary students have been included in other structures such as the High School Review Advisory

Committee, Curriculum and Instruction Review Advisory Committee and the now defunct Education Council.

The 1996 framework developed for the development of Community Schools, strongly suggests that students be included as an active part of the Community School Council executive. The 1996 framework also encourages student participation in developing the Community School Plan and in the process for ongoing renewal.

Manitoba ----- There is no involvement of students in policy-making at the departmental level in Manitoba.

Ontario ----- Students may act in an advisory capacity through their student representation on the Ontario Secondary School Students Association (OSSSA) and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS). These associations function like other professional organizations with an interest in education. The student association executive may meet with the Minister throughout the year to advise

him/her of their views on specific policy matters. It also means that the student association may be represented on relevant advisory committees, such as the Secondary School Reform Advisory Group. The OSSSA, for example, has been a member of this advisory group for several years, through a period of significant policy development in this area.

Students may also express their views independently of the student associations. For example, the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education has a member representing students and youth.

New Brunswick ----- Student participation in policy-making in New Brunswick is of an advisory capacity. According to Section 32(6) of the New Brunswick Education Act, 1997, high school students can be members of the School Parent Advisory Committees that are to be set up for each school in the province. Since the establishment of the School Parent Advisory Committees in New Brunswick, the Department of Education have been sending all provincial

policies, which have a direct impact on pupils, to the School Parent Advisory Committees for input. This provides an opportunity for students to express their concerns through the student representative on the committee. Students in New Brunswick can provide input into policy-making in three other ways. Students can take part in provincial forums which are held to gather information and exchange ideas. Students can also provide their input into policy development by participating in focus groups. Through their student representation in student associations such as the Youth Council of New Brunswick, students can also provide input into policy development when the student association participates on advisory committees or task forces.

Nova Scotia ----- Students are not involved in policy-making at the departmental level in Nova Scotia.

Newfoundland ----- None. There is no student involvement at the departmental level.

Question #4

To what extent are copies of policies outlining student involvement in policy development at the departmental level made available to the public?

Responses

Yukon ----- In the Yukon, students are not members of the school committees, school councils, or school boards. Students do not have a part to play in policy development at the departmental level and the Department of Education does not make any provision for students to take part in policy development in a direct manner or in an advisory capacity.

Northwest Territories - There are no policies that provide for student involvement in policy development at the departmental level.

British Columbia ----- N/A at the departmental level. Student participation at the local school level through school accreditation and school improvement are outlined in the British Columbia Accreditation Policy.

Alberta ----- N/A at the departmental level since there are no specific policies at this level

that provide for student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level. Student involvement on school councils at the local school level is outlined in the 1995 Alberta Education Act and the School Councils Handbook, 1995.

Saskatchewan ----- Reports of the Saskatchewan Council on Children are internal government documents and are not shared with members of the public. The Community Schools policy framework - Building Communities of Hope - is available to the public and to school districts and schools interested in applying the policy. Information obtained through advisory committees is shared internally.

Manitoba ----- The policy outlining the provision for student involvement on school advisory councils at the local school level are contained in Regulation 54 of the 1996 Manitoba Education Act.

Ontario ----- The participation of any stakeholders in policy development is not formalized in any one policy statement. Public

consultation with students or any body is more a matter of practice as the situation warrants.

New Brunswick ----- Section 32(6) of the 1997 Education Act in New Brunswick, provides for student involvement on the School Parent Advisory Committees at the local school level. Section 35 of Regulation 97-150 of the 1997 New Brunswick Education Act provides for individuals and groups, including students and student bodies, to submit recommendations to the Provincial Curriculum Advisory Committees.

Nova Scotia ----- N/A at the departmental level, however, student involvement in policy development at the site (school) is communicated.

Newfoundland ----- N/A at the departmental level. The role of secondary students on school councils at the local school level is outlined in the Education Act, Section 26, 1996.

**B. Questions About Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the
Departmental Level**

Question #5

How are students involved in identifying problem issues in education at the departmental level?

Responses

Yukon ----- Students are not involved in identifying problem issues in education at the departmental level.

Northwest Territories - Students are invited to attend information gathering sessions by the Department of Education before certain policies come into effect. Students were consulted by the Department of Education before the Education Act, 1996, was made policy.

British Columbia ----- The BC Student Voice has placed representatives on provincial Ministry of Education committees and has represented student opinion at many regional and provincial meetings.

Alberta ----- At the provincial level, the Department of Education may seek the advice of

students for specific initiatives. For example, students provided comments during a recent consultation process on the health program for Kindergarten to Grade 9 and the Career and Life Management 20 course for senior high. Students also are participating in several projects that are part of the Safe and Caring Schools Initiative. The logo for the Safe and Caring Schools Initiative was designed by a student.

- Saskatchewan ----- Students are involved in identifying problem issues through various advisory committee structures as appropriate and Community School Councils.
- Manitoba ----- Students are not involved in identifying problem issues at the departmental level. Provision is only made for students to demonstrate their concerns through their student representatives on the school advisory councils at the school level.
- Ontario ----- Students, through the executive of their associations will raise issues directly with the Minister when they meet with

him/her throughout the year.

New Brunswick ----- Students are involved in identifying problem issues at the departmental level in New Brunswick in a number of ways. Since the restructuring of the governance structure of the public school system, provincial policies which have direct impact on pupils, parents or communities have been sent to the School Parent Advisory Committees for input and high school students are members of the School Parent Advisory Committees. In New Brunswick, students are also asked by the Dept. of Education to participate in provincial forums and in focus groups. Student representation through student associations such as the Youth Council of New Brunswick, also participate on advisory groups and task forces at the departmental level.

Nova Scotia ----- Students are involved in identifying problem issues through focus group participation and individual submissions.

Newfoundland ----- One way is by having students participate

in piloting new courses/programs or learning resources. The involvement may contribute to the determination of procedures, but it is unlikely to influence policy-making. As well, students can communicate through their MHA or write to the Minister of Education.

Question #6

How are students involved in identifying possible courses of action that will address problem issues in education at the departmental level?

Responses

Yukon ----- Students are not involved in policy development at the departmental level in the Yukon.

Northwest Territories - Students are not involved in policy development at the departmental level. However, students may be invited by the Department of Education to attend information gathering sessions before certain policies are established.

British Columbia ----- Students can express their opinions on

possible courses of action that will address problem issues at the departmental level through their representatives on the BC Student Voice. The BC Student Voice has placed representatives on provincial Ministry of Education committees and has represented student opinion at many regional and provincial meetings.

Alberta ----- At the provincial level, the Department of Education may seek the advice of students for specific initiatives through a consultation process.

Saskatchewan ----- Students are involved in identifying possible courses of action that will address problem issues through various advisory committee structures as appropriate and through the Community School Councils.

Manitoba ----- Students are not involved in identifying possible courses of action that will address problem issues at the departmental level. Provision is made for students to express their opinions

through their student representatives on the school advisory councils at the local school level.

Ontario ----- Students, through their associations are typically invited to sit on advisory groups relevant to their interests.

New Brunswick ----- Students are invited to participate in provincial forums and in focus groups organized by the Dept. of Education. Students participating as members of School Parent Advisory Committees are asked to provide their input into policies that are being established at the departmental level. Students can also provide their input through their student representatives in student associations such as the Youth Council of New Brunswick. Basically speaking, the input of students is an advisory role.

Nova Scotia ----- Through focus group participation and individual submissions.

Newfoundland ----- There is no direct involvement at the departmental level.

Question #7

How are students involved in the approval of courses of action that may be adopted to address problem issues in education at the departmental level?

Responses

Yukon ----- There is no provision made for student involvement in policy-making in the Yukon.

Northwest Territories - Students are not involved in the practice of policy-making at the departmental level. Students may be invited to attend information gathering sessions before certain policies are established.

British Columbia ----- Students are not directly involved. Students can express their opinion through their representatives on the BC Student Voice. The BC Student Voice has placed representatives on provincial Ministry of Education committees and has represented student opinion at many regional and provincial meetings.

Alberta ----- At the provincial level, the Department of Education may seek the advice of students on special initiatives through a

consultation process.

- Saskatchewan ----- The Saskatchewan Council on Children makes recommendations to government departments and then reviews government response. Through the Community Schools Council, courses of action are decided upon locally, considering the input of students.
- Manitoba ----- Students are not involved in the approval of courses of action at the departmental level.
- Ontario ----- Final policy approval is the responsibility of the Deputy Minister, or Cabinet. Students, through their associations may influence development as per any association participating in the process.
- New Brunswick ----- Students can provide recommendations and advice through their participation on School Parent Advisory Committees and through their participation in departmentally organized provincial forums and focus groups. Students can also send along their recommendations

through their representatives in student associations that serve on advisory committees and task forces at the departmental level.

Nova Scotia ----- Students are generally not part of the approval review process for departmental actions.

Newfoundland ----- No direct involvement. Students have been invited to provincial conferences on education by invitation, not by policy.

Question #8

How are students involved in the review and modification of courses of action adopted to address problem issues in education at the departmental level?

Responses

Yukon ----- There is no provision made for student involvement in policy-making at the departmental level. Schools look to the Department of Education to set policy.

Northwest Territories - Students are not involved in the practice of policy-making at the departmental level. Students may be invited by the

Department to attend information gathering sessions before certain policies are established.

British Columbia ----- The BC Student Voice can represent the concerns of students through their representatives on provincial Ministry of Education committees and through their representatives attending provincial and regional meetings.

Alberta ----- There is no direct involvement. The Department of Education may seek the advice of students on special initiatives through a consultation process.

Saskatchewan ----- Through the Saskatchewan Council for Children, student representatives participate in the review and modification of courses of action initiated by the department. Each Community School is responsible for the development of plans, ongoing renewal, and evaluation at the local level.

Manitoba ----- No provision is made at the departmental level for the involvement of students in the review and modification of courses

of action taken to address problem issues.

Ontario ----- Students, through their associations, may be invited, like any other stakeholder organization, to sit on committees linked to policy implementation.

New Brunswick ----- Students provide input through their participation as members of the School Parent Advisory Committees at the local level since the Department of Education sends all policies that impact on students to the School Parent Advisory Committees for their input. Students through the student associations such as the Youth Council of New Brunswick, serve on advisory committees and task forces at the departmental level. Students can also provide input by participating in provincial forums and focus groups.

Nova Scotia ----- Students are generally not part of the approval review process for departmental actions.

Newfoundland ----- No direct involvement.

**C. Questions About Recruiting Students for Policy-Making at the
Departmental Level**

Question #9

What type of policies are students involved in developing at the departmental level?

Responses

Yukon ----- The schools look to the Department of Education to set policies. There is no provision made for student involvement.

Northwest Territories - Students are invited to attend information gathering sessions on various educational issues impacting on students.

British Columbia ----- The BC Student Voice has student representatives on provincial Ministry of Education committees and representatives take part in provincial and regional meetings on various educational issues.

Alberta ----- The Department of Education may seek the advice of students on such initiatives as the health program for kindergarten to grade 9 and the Career and Life Management 20 course for senior high. Students also are participating in

several projects that are part of the Safe and Caring Schools initiative.

Saskatchewan ----- The policies that students are involved in relate to the implementation of goals for the well-being of children, youth, and families in Saskatchewan as outlined in the Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children. Other policies that students are involved in developing include the Community School framework, curriculum and instruction, and high school reviews.

Manitoba ----- Students are not involved in helping to develop policies at the departmental level.

Ontario ----- Students through their associations, can give their advice on various educational issues impacting on students.

New Brunswick ----- Students have provided input into such policies as:

- . the Effective Use of Schools Policy (dealing with shared use of schools and school closures);
- . the Positive Learning Environment Policy (setting best practices for

- discipline and standards for conduct in schools);
- . the establishment of new methods of instruction, curriculum and pilot programmes, and experimental and supplementary courses; and
 - . such topics as housing, employment, student loans and educational programs and services.

Nova Scotia ----- Students are not involved in policy-making at the departmental level.

Newfoundland ----- N/A

Question #10

How often do students participate in policy development at the departmental level?

Responses

Yukon ----- There is no provision made for student involvement in policy development at the departmental level. Schools look to the Department of Education to set policy.

Northwest Territories - Students may be invited to attend information gathering sessions by the

Department of Education for various educational initiatives.

British Columbia ----- The BC Student Voice places student representatives on Ministry of Education committees when they are established and student representatives will attend regional and provincial meetings when they are held.

Alberta ----- The Department of Education will seek the advice of students for various educational initiatives.

Saskatchewan ----- The Saskatchewan Council on Children meets quarterly and at least once annually with the Ministers responsible for the Action Plan for Children. Other advisory committee structures are formed and disbanded as necessary. Feedback from Community Schools is received at the department level on an ongoing basis.

Manitoba ----- Students do not participate in policy development at the departmental level.

Ontario ----- The views of students are most often communicated to the Ministry through the

existing student associations, specifically the Ontario Secondary Students' Association (OSSSA) and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS). These associations function like other professional organizations with an interest in education. This means that the student association executive may meet with the Minister throughout the year to advise him/her of its views on specific policy matters. It also means that the student association may be represented on relevant advisory committees, such as the Secondary School Reform Advisory Group. The OSSSA, for example, has been a member of this advisory group for several years, through a period of significant policy development in this area.

Students may also express their views independently of the student association.

New Brunswick ----- Students in New Brunswick, who serve on the School Parent Advisory Committees at the local school level, provide input into departmental policies when they

are asked to do so by the Dept. of Education. Student members of student Associations serve on departmental task forces when new issues and policies are being discussed. Provincial forums and focus groups are organized by the Department of Education when new issues and policies must have input. Students are encouraged to send submissions to Provincial Curriculum Advisory Committees when new curriculum is being developed.

Nova Scotia ----- Students do not participate in policy development at the departmental level.

Newfoundland ----- Never

D. Questions About the Perceptions of Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making at the Departmental Level

Question #11

How are students involved in the practice of policy-making at the departmental level?

Responses

Yukon ----- There is no provision made for student

involvement in policy development at the departmental level.

Northwest Territories - Students may be invited to attend various focus groups organized to gather information before certain policies are established.

British Columbia ----- Students are involved in an advisory capacity through their BC Student Voice representation on various departmental committees and through their BC Student Voice representation in various provincial and regional meetings.

Alberta ----- The Department of Education may seek the advice of students for specific initiatives.

Saskatchewan ----- Students are involved in advisory structures as appropriate. Additionally, students in Community Schools study the Community Schools policy framework as part of their curriculum and contribute to its implementation and modification in their own schools.

Manitoba ----- Students are not involved in policy development at the departmental level.

Ontario ----- The views of students are most often communicated to the ministry through the existing student associations, specifically the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association (OSSSA) and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS). These associations function like other professional organizations with an interest in education. This means the student association executive may meet with the Minister throughout the year to advise him/her of its views on specific policy matters. It also means that the student associations may be represented on relevant advisory committees, such as the Secondary School Reform Advisory Group. The OSSSA, for example, has been a member of this advisory group for several years, through a period of significant policy development in this area.

Students may also express their views independently of the student associations. For example, the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education has a member representing students and youth.

New Brunswick ----- Students are involved in policy-making at the departmental level in an advisory capacity. Students can provide input into new policies and make recommendations to the Department of Education in several ways:

- . by presenting submissions to the Provincial Curriculum Advisory Committees;
- . by serving as members of the School Parent Advisory Committees at the local level and review policies developed by the Dept. of Education when asked to do so by the Dept. of Education;
- . through the student representation in student associations such as the Youth Council of New Brunswick which has representatives on departmental task forces; and
- . by participating in focus groups and provincial forums when such events are organized by the Department of Education.

Nova Scotia ----- Students do not participate in policy

development at the departmental level.

Newfoundland ----- Students are not involved.

Question #12

What are your perceptions, positive and negative, regarding student involvement in policy development at the departmental level?

Responses

Yukon ----- No perceptions identified at the department level.

Northwest Territories - Sometimes when we need information we forget to ask the right people. I would support student involvement in that students need to feel ownership for their own education.

British Columbia ----- No perceptions identified at the department level.

Alberta ----- The Alberta Department of Education encourages student involvement in policy making at the local level. The Alberta resource guide for school-based decision making entitled, "School-based Decision Making Resource Guide: Focus on Teaching

and Learning", outlines how students should be involved in decisions about how to improve learning and teaching at the local level.

Saskatchewan ----- Saskatchewan Education supports opportunities for students to participate in decisions affecting their lives. The department has been encouraging community involvement, including the participation of parents, children, youth, and other community members in determining the direction of education system development. The department has demonstrated a strong commitment to listening to students, teachers, parents, and others about the needs of Saskatchewan people.

Manitoba ----- No perceptions identified at the department level.

Ontario ----- Positive and Useful

New Brunswick ----- New Brunswick has made formal provision under its Education Act for pupil involvement in an advisory capacity regarding educational matters. Within the

new governance structure of the public education system, each school has a School Parent Advisory Committee whose function it is to, "advise the principal of the school respecting the establishment, implementation and monitoring of the school improvement plan ..." (S. 33(1)).

Nova Scotia ----- Key stakeholders vary depending upon the nature of the specific policy or initiative. In those areas impacting directly upon students, there should be student representative consultation. This is reflected in the Education Act in terms of student participation on School Advisory Councils.

Newfoundland ----- If policies directly affect students, it is probably appropriate to solicit their input. Students should be involved in policy-making at the school level and possibly at the District level. However, there would be very limited opportunities for involvement at the departmental level.

Question #13

What concerns do students have (that have been made known to you) about the nature and extent of their involvement in policy development at the departmental level?

Responses

Yukon ----- No student concerns identified at the departmental level.

Northwest Territories - No student concerns identified at the departmental level.

British Columbia ----- No student concerns identified.

Alberta ----- No student concerns identified.

Saskatchewan ----- Currently it is unknown how students perceive the nature and extent of their involvement in policy development at this level. There is no mechanism at this time to collect or disseminate this information. Districts or schools may be able to provide this information.

Manitoba ----- No student concerns identified at the departmental level.

Ontario ----- No student concerns identified at the departmental level.

New Brunswick ----- None identified.

Nova Scotia ----- No student concerns identified at the
departmental level.

Newfoundland ----- None that I am aware of.

Appendix Z

Survey Results From Directors of Education Representing School Districts Across Canada

A. Questions Concerning Policies That Provide for Student Involvement in Policy-Making

Question #1

Who are the policy-maker participants at the school district level as outlined by policies?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - The policy-maker participants are members of the School Board's standing committee. The committee's role is advisory and the Board approves policy. The committee membership includes unions, management staff, administration, parents, community representatives and student representatives.

School District #2 - The district has no policy for student inclusion in policy development at the district level.

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - The policy-maker participants at the school district level are the school board trustees

or central office administration.

School District #2 - Students will be committed as one of the stakeholder groups.

School District #3 - No Answer

School District #4 - The policy-maker participants at the school district level, as outlined by policies, include the following:

- . the board of trustees,
- . central office administration,
- . the district principals, and
- . local union input.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - The policy-maker participants at the school district level, as outlined by policies, are as follows:

- . the Board of Education members - elected trustees,
- . the Director of Education, and
- . if the policy impacts on teachers, the Board of Education may ask for input from the teachers.

School District #2 - The policy-maker participants at the school board level are as follows:

- . school-based administrators,
- . teachers,

- . local Board (school Council) members,
- . Division office staff, and
- . trustees (Board of Education).

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - The policy-maker participants at the school district level, as outlined by policies, are as follows:

- . the senior administration
(Superintendent's Department), and
- . the trustee committee.

School District #2 - In operational terms, topics for consideration for the development of a policy can be generated by any or a combination of the following:

- . senior administration,
- . individual trustees (Board of Trustees),
- . school administrators,
- . parent advisory committees,
- . Board advisory committees, and
- . administrative committees.

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - No Answer

School District #2 - The policy-maker participants at the school

district level are as follows:

- . trustees,
- . superintendents,
- . principals, and
- . teachers.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - The policy-maker participants at the school district level are the senior administration with input from the field including principals, teachers, parents, students, Board members, and the community.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - The policy-maker participants at the school district level, as outlined by policies, are as follows:

- . the Director,
- . the program specialists, and
- . the principals.

School District #2 - We do not have a meta policy outlining how policies are developed. However, in practice policies are developed in two major ways:

- . individual engaged, drafted and circulated widely prior to adoption, and

. committee established to draft and
circulate for feedback prior to
adoption.

School District #3 - No Answer

School District #4 - No Answer

Question #2

To what extent is student involvement in policy development
provided for at the school district level as outlined by
policies?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - Students serve on standing committees.

School District #2 - The district has no policy for student
inclusion in policy development at the
district level.

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - Students seldom have the opportunity to
develop policy. This task is normally done
by trustees or central office
administration.

School District #2 - There has not been any formal role for
students in the policy-making process in the
past, nor is one planned in the foreseeable
future. The only policy currently under

review, in which students are likely to be involved, is the student discipline policy. Students will be consulted as one of the stakeholder groups, but will not be involved in a formal way in the actual development of the policy.

School District #3 - We do not involve students in our jurisdiction in the policy-making process.

School District #4 - Students have no involvement in policy development at the school district level as provided for by policies at the school district level.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - There is no policy for student involvement at the district level.

School District #2 - Students are involved in key divisional committees such as technology, adapting the curriculum and parental involvement. These committees recommend policies to the Board of Education.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - Student involvement in policy development is not provided for at the school district level.

School District #2 - There is no provision made in existing policy to involve students in policy development at the district level.

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - Students have not been involved in drafting policy in this district.

School District #2 - There has been limited student involvement until recently. We have two Student Trustees who participate in policy development during the amalgamation period (pre and post). These two students would only be involved in policies that have direct impact on students such as the following:

- . violence free schools,
- . antidescrimination education policies, and
- . student involvement in committee process for revision.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - Depending on the policy, student involvement is not great, but there are focus groups pertaining to programs and services in the schools such as the School Advisory Council.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - Students are consulted on the need for revising policies and the creation of new ones when and where these policies impact on their lives.

School District #2 - Students have very little involvement at the district level, but I suspect in some policy development, students have a major involvement at the school level. In some cases however, students have served on our committees.

School District #3 - Students have not been involved in policy development at the district level.

School District #4 - Students have not been involved in policy-making at the district level.

Question #3

What is the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development at the school district level as provided for by policies at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - The nature and extent of student involvement in policy development at the district level is advisory.

School District #2 - Students have not, to date, been routinely a

part of the policy-making process at the district level.

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - Students seldom have the opportunity to develop policy at the district level.

School District #2 - The only policy currently under review in which students are likely to be involved is the student discipline policy. Students will be consulted as one of the stakeholder groups, but will not be involved in a formal way in the actual development of the policy.

School District #3 - Unfortunately we do not involve students in our jurisdiction in the policy-making process.

School District #4 Students have no involvement in the policy-making process at the school district level since student involvement is not provided for by policies at the school district level.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - There is no policy for student involvement in setting policies at the district level.

School District #2 - Students are involved in key committees such as the following:

- . technology,
- . adapting the curriculum, and
- . parental involvement.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - Students may participate in local input for a district student code of conduct.

School District #2 - Students may advise the School Board of the need for a policy through the parent advisor committees or by making a written submission to the Board.

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - Students have not been involved in policy development at the school district level.

School District #2 - There has been a limited to moderate extent of student involvement in the last five years. School Councils and amalgamation have triggered more student involvement.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - There are student representatives on many committees (or all) as outlined in the Board's Strategic Plan.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - Students have been involved in policy development at the school district level in the following advisory ways:

- . round tables,
- . forums, and
- . questionnaires.

School District #2 - The nature of involvement, where it has existed, would be as a member of the committee. The extent is not widespread, but with the implementation of school councils and students being given seats on them, their involvement and participation is expected to increase as many of us believe it should.

School District #3 - Students have not been involved in policy-making at the district level.

School District #4 - Students in this district have not been involved in policy-making at the district level.

Question #4

To what extent are copies of policies outlining student involvement in policy development at the school district level made available to the public?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - Copies of policies are made available upon request. Annual calls for participants from partner groups raised the level of awareness.

School District #2 - No Answer

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - No Answer

School District #2 - No Answer

School District #3 - No Answer

School District #4 - All policies are public.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - There are no policies outlining student involvement in policy development.
Therefore, no such policies are made available to the public.

School District #2 - The public is informed about the nature and composition of our key committees.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - No Answer

School District #2 - No Answer

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - No Answer

School District #2 - Policies are rarely made available to the public.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - This is minimal in our case. Policies are made available in schools and they are available upon request. The cost factor here is involved.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - Once policies are approved, they can never reflect those who had input. However, the process is well known.

School District #2 - We try to distribute our policies and procedures to as wide a public audience as possible. However, sometimes I wonder how well some of them are known. Perhaps some of the important ones that affect our students are well known. Many of our principals are exerting considerable effort in disseminating the information.

School District #3 - No Answer

School District #4 - No Answer

B. Questions Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making**Question #5**

How are students involved in identifying problem issues in education at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - They have a voice on standing committees.

School District #2 - Students have not, to date, been routinely a part of the policy-making process at the district level.

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - Students seldom have the opportunity to develop policy.

School District #2 - There has not been any formal role for students in the policy-making process in the past, nor is one planned in the foreseeable future. The only policy currently under review in which students are likely to be involved is the student discipline policy. Students will be consulted as one of the stakeholder groups, but will not be involved in a formal way in the actual development of the policy.

School District #3 - We do not involve students in our jurisdiction in the policy-making process.

School District #4 - As part of site-based decision making, students are stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved directly in identifying problem issues in education at the school district level. Students may identify problem issues to their parents, who in turn, may raise the problem issues.

School District #2 - The students interact with school-based administrators and if issues are suggested, they are brought forward at the administrators' meetings.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in identifying problem issues in education at the school district level through discussions with their principal by way of the student council.

School District #2 - Students may identify problem issues in education at the school district level through their parents, the parent advisory committees and through their school administration.

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - Students have not been involved in drafting policy at the school district level.

School District #2 - We have a student-trustee committee with a mandate for students to raise their concerns and discuss possible recommendations for Trustees and other decision-makers to follow. This committee's membership is made up of student representatives from each secondary school. We have fifteen secondary schools, Trustees, and a Superintendent involved. Student representatives are from each student council.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - We use students as part of focus groups or they sit on committees such as our recent policy on drug education in schools (many students involved here).

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - Yes, students are involved in identifying problem issues in education at the school district level through their school councils and through school development planning.

School District #2 - Students are involved in identifying problem issues in education at the school district level mostly through the local school administration. However, in rare instances in my experience, students have come directly to the school district office.

School District #3 - Students have not been involved in policy-making at the district level.

School District #4 - Students have not been involved in policy-making at the district level.

Question #6

How are students involved in identifying possible courses of action that will address problem issues in education at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - Through standing committee participation.

School District #2 - Students have not, to date, been routinely a part of the process of policy-making at the district level.

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - Students seldom have the opportunity to develop policy at the school district level.

School District #2 - There has not been any formal role for

students in the policy-making process in the past, nor is one planned in the foreseeable future. The only policy currently under review, in which students are likely to be involved, is the student discipline policy. Students will be consulted as one of the stakeholder groups, but they will not be involved in a formal way in the actual development of the policy.

School District #3 - We do not involve students in our jurisdiction in the policy-making process.

School District #4 - Students are involved in identifying possible courses of action that will address problem issues in education at the school district level through student membership in student organizations and stakeholder groups for the district priority setting. Students can also be involved through their membership in some school councils.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved in identifying possible courses of action to address problem issues in education at the district level.

School District #2 - Students are not really involved in this

area unless a key committee is formed.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in identifying possible courses of action to address problem issues in education at the district level through discussions with their principal by way of the student council.

School District #2 - Students are involved in identifying possible courses of action to address problem issues in education through their school administrators and through the parent advisor committees.

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - Students have not been involved in drafting policy at the school district level.

School District #2 - Students are involved in identifying possible courses of action to address problem issues through the student-trustee committee. Students also make presentations at a systems level to school councils. Students also have agendas on the student council at a school level.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in focus groups and they sit on committees to look at policies. The school advisory council is good here. Students on these have decision sharing input.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - In school development planning (strategy planning at the school level) that is driven by a district strategy plan, there is a process for involving all stakeholders in moving their school and district to where it ought to be.

School District #2 - In most cases, students are involved in identifying possible courses of action that will address problem issues in education at the school district level through the school administrators.

School District #3 - Students have not been involved in policy development at the district level.

School District #4 - Students are not involved in policy-making at the school district level.

Question #7

How are students involved in the approval of courses of action

that may be adopted to address problem issues in education at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - Students have a voice on standing committees.

School District #2 - This district has no policy for student inclusion and students have not, to date, been routinely a part of the process at the district level.

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - Students seldom have the opportunity to develop policy in this school district.

School District #2 - The only policy currently under review in which students are likely to be involved is the student discipline policy. Students will be consulted as one of the stakeholder groups, but they will not be involved in a formal way in the actual development of the policy.

School District #3 - Unfortunately we do not involve students in our jurisdiction in the policy-making process.

School District #4 - Students are involved in the approval of courses of action that may be adopted to

address problem issues in education at the school district level through their membership in student organizations and through their membership in some school councils.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - Students, through their parents, may provide approval of courses of action to address problem issues in education at the district level.

School District #2 - Students are not generally involved in the approval of policies.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved in the approval of courses of action to address problem issues in education at the district level.

School District #2 - The draft policy is forwarded to the Board for authority to distribute for feedback to schools, parent councils, advisory committees and employee groups. Usually these groups are provided approximately three months to review the draft and provide suggestive changes. Input from schools or parent and advisory councils could, and from

time to time, does include student input. The suggested changes are collated and received by a member of the senior administration. The draft policy and procedures are revised based on the feedback received.

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - Students have not been involved in drafting policy.

School District #2 - Students are involved in the approval of policies through the student-trustee committee. School administrators also participate in the discussions at student council meetings.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - Students have minimal involvement here. When particular problems do arise, focus groups are called together by the principals. For example, we may hold a symposium on school violence.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved in the approval of courses of action that may be adopted to

address problem issues in education at the school board level.

School District #2 - Students are only involved in the approval of courses of action through our administrative staff for the most part.

School District #3 - Students have not been involved in policy-making at the school district level.

School District #4 - Students have not been part of the policy-making process at the school district level. council meetings.

Question #8

How are students involved in the review and modification of courses of action adopted to address problem issues in education at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in the review and modification of courses of action adopted to address problem issues in education at the school district level through their student voice on standing committees.

School District #2 - This district has no policy for student inclusion and students have not, to date, been routinely a part of the process at the district level.

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - Students seldom have the opportunity to develop policy in this district.

School District #2 - The only policy currently under review in which students are likely to be involved is the student discipline policy. Students will be consulted as one of the stakeholder groups, but they will not be involved in a formal way in the actual development of the policy.

School District #3 - Unfortunately we do not involve students in our jurisdiction in the policy-making process.

School District #4 - Students are involved in the review and modification of courses of action adopted to address issues in education at the school district level through their membership in student organizations and the school councils.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved in the review or modification of courses of action adopted to address problem issues.

School District #2 - Students are not generally involved.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved in the review and modification of courses of action adopted to address problem issues in education at the school district level.

School District #2 - Generally a draft policy with procedures is prepared by a member of the senior administration or the committee which suggested the topic. The policy is prepared in the format outlined in the enclosed policy. The draft policy is forwarded to the Board for authority to distribute for feedback to schools, parent councils, advisory committees and employee groups. Usually these groups are provided approximately three months to review the draft and provide suggested changes. Input from schools or parent and advisory councils could, and from time to time does, include student input. The suggested changes are collated and reviewed by a member of the senior administration. The draft policy and procedures are revised based on the feedback received.

Existing policies are amended in a similar fashion, however, they are not

always sent out for feedback depending on the significance of the changes and whether or not the changes are the result of changes in legislation or direction from the Department of Education. Students would of course have a greater input in policies developed for an individual school.

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - Students have not been involved in drafting policy in this school district.

School District #2 - Students are involved in the review and modification of policies by way of the student-trustee committee. The students participate as committee members. The committee would have a mandate to review policies or regulations such as smoking on school property, violence-free schools, and antidiscrimination education. Written proposals submitted and committee decisions make for consideration.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - Students may be called to serve on a committee. The committee's mandate is to monitor and review goals yearly.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - Student input in the review and modification of policies are conducted through the school council and student union. Feedback to the Board is welcomed and encouraged.

School District #2 - Student involvement in the review and modification of policies at the district level is conducted by voicing their concerns through our administrative staff for the most part.

School District #3 - Students are not involved in policy-making in this school district.

School District #4 - Students are not involved in policy-making at the district level.

C. Questions Concerning Recruiting Students for Policy-Making**Question #9**

What type of policies are students involved in developing at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in developing all policies that come before standing committees.

School District #2 - Students have not, to date, been routinely

a part of the process at the district level.

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - Students seldom have the opportunity to develop policy.

School District #2 - The only policy currently under review in which students are likely to be involved is the student discipline policy.

School District #3 - We do not involve students in our jurisdiction in the policy-making process.

School District #4 - No Answer

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved in developing any type of policies at the school division level.

School District #2 - Students are involved in helping to develop the following type of policies:

- . technology,
- . curriculum, adaptation and
- . parental involvement.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved in developing policies at the school district level.

School District #2 - No Answer

Ontario Respons

School District #1 - Students have not been involved in drafting policy in this district.

School District #2 - Students are involved in developing the following type of policies at the school district level:

- . policies that affect students' curriculum, school environment and extra curricular activities,
- . policies about smoking on school grounds,
- . policies about violence free schools, and
- . policies about antidiscrimination education.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in developing the following type of policies:

- . policies on student behavior,
- . policies on drug education,
- . policies on safe grads,
- . policies on extra-curricular activities, and
- . policies on scholarships.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in helping to develop

any policy that impacts on the life of a student, for example learner assessment and evaluation.

School District #2 - I suspect principals will involve them in any policies which directly affect them. Principals should be able to give more definitive answers on this matter.

School District #3 - Students are not involved in developing policies in this district.

School District #4 - Students have not been involved in policy development in this district.

Question #10

How often do students participate in policy development at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - Students participate in regular monthly meetings of standing committees.

School District #2 - Students have not, to date, been routinely a part of the process at the district level.

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - Students seldom have the opportunity to develop policy at the district level.

School District #2 - The only policy currently under review

in which students are likely to be involved is the student discipline policy. Students will be consulted as one of the stakeholder groups, but they will not be involved in a formal way in the actual development of the policy.

School District #3 - We do not involve students in our jurisdiction in the policy-making process.

School District #4 - No Answer

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved in policy development at the school district level.

School District #2 - Students participate in policy development only when key committees are formed.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - Students are rarely involved in policy development at the school district level.

School District #2 No Answer

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - Students have not been involved in drafting policy at the district level.

School District #2 - Students have participated in policy development more often in the last three to

five years. Since amalgamation, Boards are revising all of their policies. Student input has been requested by way of written submissions, presentations and student committee representatives. Student input has been requested on 70% of revised policies with direct impact on students.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in policy-making at the district level when they are needed.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in policy development at the district level when policy changes are requested or reworked.

School District #2 - Students are seldom involved in policy-making at the school district level.

School District #3 - Students are not involved in policy development at the school district level.

School District #4 - Students have not been involved in the policy-making process at the district level.

D. Questions Dealing With the Perceptions of All Stakeholders
Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making

Question #11

How are students involved in the practice of policy-making at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in the practice of policy-making at the district level by serving on standing committees which meet on a monthly basis.

School District #2 - Students have not, to date, been routinely a part of the process at the district level.

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - Students seldom have the opportunity to develop policy at the district level.

School District #2 - There has not been any formal role for students in the policy-making process in the past, nor is one planned in the foreseeable future. The only policy currently under review in which students are likely to be involved is the student discipline policy. Students will be consulted as one of the stakeholder groups, but they will not be involved in a formal

way in the actual development of the policy.

School District #3 - We do not involve students in our jurisdiction in the policy-making process.

School District #4 - Students are involved in the policy-making process at the district level through their membership in student organizations and through their membership in some school councils.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved in the practice of policy-making at the school division level.

School District #2 - Students are involved in policy-making at the school district level through participation on key committees.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - Students are not involved in policy-making at the school district level.

School District #2 - In operational terms, topics for consideration for the development of a policy can be generated by any one or a combination of the following:

- . senior administration,
- . individual trustees (Board of Trustees),
- . school administrators,

- . parent advisory committees,
- . board advisory committees, and
- . administrative committees.

Generally a draft policy with procedures is prepared by a member of the senior administration or the committee which suggested the topic. The policy is prepared in the format outlined in the enclosed policy.

The draft policy is forwarded to the Board for authority to distribute for feedback to schools, parent councils, advisory committees and employee groups. Usually these groups are provided approximately three months to review the draft and provide suggested changes. Input from schools or parent and advisory councils could, and from time to time does, include student input. The suggested changes are collated and reviewed by a member of the senior administration. The draft policy and procedures are revised based on the feedback received.

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - Students have not been involved in drafting

policy at the district level.

School District #2 - Students are involved in policy-making at the district level through the following:

- . written proposal positions,
- . student presentations, and
- . student participation on committees responsible for developing policy.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - Students are not really involved in policy development at the district level. Once involved in the development of policy, we do not burden them with implementation.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - Students are involved in the practice of policy-making at the school district level by sitting on committees and councils that make recommendations and review items for renewal.

School District #2 - Students are involved on some committees and they also provide feedback through the schools.

School District #3 - Students are not involved in policy development at the district level.

School District #4 - Students have not been involved in policy-

making at the district level.

Question #12

What are your perceptions, positive and negative, regarding student involvement in policy-making at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - Part of the student leadership role is initiated through involvement in policy-making in education at the district level.
I do not have any negative perceptions.

School District #2 - No Answer

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - No Answer

School District #2 - No Answer

School District #3 - No Answer

School District #4 - As part of the site-based decision-making, students are stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - The advantages of students participating in policy-making at the district level are that students would take ownership of policies

and policies would then be enforceable and practiced. The disadvantages of students participating in policy-making at the district level are that it would take a long time to research, develop and put policies into practice. Conflict would result since the elected trustees think they know what is best for students.

School district #2 - Students bring a positive, practical point of view to policy development discussions. I have nothing but positive comments about their participation.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - No Answer

School District #2 - No Answer

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - No Answer

School District #2 - This is an area we could improve since student involvement (system/school level) is fragmented or on a hit or miss basis.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - I have all positive perceptions. Students like to be consulted over issues that affect

them; not frivolous issues.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - My perception regarding student involvement in policy development at the school district level is that the participation of students in the process is quite positive.

School District #2 - I would like to have more student involvement. I think more involvement will be positive and ensure that our policies are more student sensitive. I suspect that we have to remove any barriers which may have prevented their involvement in the past. We are approaching an age of involvement, if we are not already there.

School District #3 - No Answer

School District #4 - No Answer

Question #13

What concerns do students have (that may have been made known to you) about the nature and extent of their involvement in policy development at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

School District #1 - No concerns have been made known to me about the nature and extent of student involvement

in policy development at the school district level.

School District #2 - No Answer

Alberta Responses

School District #1 - No Answer

School District #2 - No Answer

School District #3 - No Answer

School District #4 - No concerns have been made known to me about student involvement in policy development at the school district level.

Saskatchewan Responses

School District #1 - I have never been approached by students concerning their involvement in policy development at the district level.

School District #2 - No student concerns have been made known to me.

Manitoba Responses

School District #1 - Students show very little interest.

School District #2 - No Answer

Ontario Responses

School District #1 - No Answer

School District #2 - Some of the concerns students have are as

follows:

1. Smoking policies are too difficult to enforce and the public image of students smoking is a central area off Board property.
2. Students have concerns about late busing. Reduced services caused students to request a return to full services or their extra-curricular activities might suffer. This was especially a concern for rural schools.
3. Students have concerns about student fees. Students are concerned that too many costs will prevent some students from participating in certain courses or extra-curricular activities.

Nova Scotia Responses

School District #1 - Students haven't really voiced concerns. They are there and willing when you need them.

Newfoundland Responses

School District #1 - Students want greater involvement. They also feel that their views are not always listened to. They may have a case since no

one group ever gets everything they ask for.

School District #2 - I cannot remember any problems concerning
policy development where students have come
to me directly.

School District #3 - No Answer

School District #4 - No Answer

Appendix A1

Survey Results From High School Principals Across Canada

A. Questions Concerning School Policies That Provide for Student Involvement in Policy-Making

Question #1

Who are the policy-maker participants at the school level as outlined by policies?

British Columbia Responses

- Principal #1 -- The policy-maker participants at the school level are the school administration, teaching staff, school support staff (as required), parent advisory council and students.
- Principal #2 -- The policy-maker participants at the school level are the school staff.
- Principal #3 -- The policy-maker participants are the school council, teachers who are provided time for leadership positions in subject areas, and interested staff such as the librarian, counsellors, etc.

Alberta Responses

- Principal #1 -- The policy-maker participants at the school level are the school administration, school

staff, parents and students.

Principal #2 -- The policy-maker participants at the school level are the principal, administrative team, faculty council (representatives from all stakeholder groups in the school, except students), the school council representatives from parents as majority, the principal, teacher representatives, student representatives, and community representatives as mandated by the Alberta Department of Education), the staff and staff meetings, and the student council.

Saskatchewan Responses

Principal #1 -- At the school level, the policy-makers are the school staff and administration.

Principal #2 -- Our school division is in a transition period between Directors of Education. The current Director started work in August, 1998. Amongst his new initiatives is a push for greater inclusiveness in the policy-making process to specifically include students.

Principal #3 -- Major policy is produced at the School Board level; procedures are the responsibility of the school staff.

Principal #4 -- There is no policy with regard to who are the policy-makers. The Education Act however describes the role of the principal as "to define and prescribe the standards of the school with regards to the duties of pupils and give such direction to members of his staff and to pupils as may be necessary to maintain the good order harmony and efficiency of the school" (Saskatchewan Education Act, 175(d)).

Manitoba Responses

Principal #1 -- At the school level, the policy-maker participants represent three groups:

- . the staff (teachers and support staff),
- . the school improvement team (teachers and students), and
- . the parent advisory council.

Principal #2 -- The policy-maker participants at the school level are the school board, senior administration, principal and teaching staff.

Ontario Responses

Principal #1 -- The policy-maker participants at the school level are parents, teachers, students,

administration and support staff.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- The policy-maker participants at the school level are the school administrators and teachers.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- The school administration and the school advisory council are the main stakeholders at the school level.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- The policy-maker participants at the school level are made up of three groups:

- . students (through student surveys; two in the last six months),
- . staff council (representatives from all academic departments, the principal, vice-principal and guidance), and
- . staff (through surveys, input at meetings, etc.).

Principal #2 -- At the school level, the policy-maker participants are made up of the following three groups:

- . staff members,

- . school council, and
- . parents.

Principal #3 -- We do not have a policy stating that participants should or must be involved in policy-making. The group or individuals affected by the policy are involved in the development of policies. They might include teachers, students, the school council and the student council.

Question #2

To what extent is student involvement in policy development provided for at the school level as outlined by policies?

British Columbia Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students have input into policies which affect them through grade group meetings and discussions and through the student advisory council.
- Principal #2 -- Student involvement in policy-making at the school level is informal and it is not provided for in policy.
- Principal #3 -- The student council can make suggestions to our school council. Some committees have student representatives such as the School Academic Review Committee.

Alberta Responses

Principal #1 -- Student involvement in policy development is provided for through the student council, student advisory body and student representation on the school council.

Principal #2 -- Students have involvement in policy-making at the school level in the following ways:

- .. student council,
- . round table discussions,
- .. teacher advisory groups, and
- .. leadership retreat workshops.

Students are involved each year in policy-making by participating in round table discussions that are facilitated by students from the Student Leadership Seminars. Student Leadership Seminars are held each summer for two days. The participating students and leader facilitators stay over night on campus. The students learn leadership skills and have round table discussions by grade, to express their ideas and opinions about school issues.

Saskatchewan Responses

Principal #1 -- There is no formal involvement of students in policy development at the school level that is

outlined by policy.

Principal #2 -- Student involvement in policy-making at the school level is only just beginning. Our school division is in a transition period between Directors of Education. The current Director of Education started work in August, 1998. Amongst his new initiatives is a push for greater inclusiveness in the policy-making process, to specifically include students.

Principal #3 -- Student involvement is not formalized by policy. Students are provided with opportunities to have input into policy at the choice of the school staff and school administration. An example of this would be the harassment policy.

Principal #4 -- Student involvement in policy-making is not written out in policy but student input with regard to policies is invited from the following:

- . individuals to the principal and/or staff, and
- . the Student Representative Council.

Manitoba Responses

Principal #1 -- According to school policy, students are to

be consulted on matters affecting them,
including school budget.

Principal #2 -- No written policies to include students in
policy-making at the school level, exist at
the school division or school level.

Ontario Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are represented on policy-making
committees at all levels.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- There are no policies providing for student
involvement in policy-making.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in policy
development in a formal manner. In terms of
the actual development of policy, central
office and the school administration are the
key figures.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- Student involvement in policy development at
the school level is not outlined in policy,
but students are involved in an advisory
capacity. Students are involved in policy

development through surveys, the election of school council representatives from the school body, and through the weekly student council meetings.

Principal #2 -- Government policy dictates that students are required on school council and our school council is consulted before finalizing any new school policy. The student body is also consulted on issues of policy-making pertaining to students.

Principal #3 -- We do not have a policy saying who will be involved in the developmental stage of policy-making. Student input is important and where the decision affects students, then that group is invited in the development of a policy.

Question #3

What is the nature and extent of student involvement in policy development at the school level as provided for by policies at the school level?

British Columbia Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in an advisory capacity through discussion.

Principal #2 -- Although there are no policies allowing for

student participation in policy development, students are involved through informal surveys.

Principal #3 -- The students can make suggestions to the school council. Some committees have student representatives such as the Student Academic Review Committee.

Alberta Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in policy development in an advisory capacity only, but they have been influential in bringing changes.

Principal #2 -- Students have been involved in policy development at the school level in the following ways:

- . round table discussions twice a year (all students participate in small group discussions facilitated by student leaders),
- . student councils (students address all/any areas of concern and forward to principal), and
- . students have representation on the school council, along with parents, which is an advisory body to the administration.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students do not have any involvement in policy development at the school level which is outlined by policy. There are no policies that provide for student involvement in policy development at the school level.
- Principal #2 -- There is virtually nothing in the policies that provides for student involvement in policy-making at the school level.
- Principal #3 -- Students are provided with opportunities to have input into policy at the choice of the staff and the school administration. For example, students have had input in the formation of the harassment policy. There are no policies providing for student involvement in policy development at the school level.
- Principal #4 -- Students may be asked for input and/or they may initiate dialogue from individual students or from the Student Representative Council.

Manitoba Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students are involved in policy development through student participation on school improvement teams and through the parent council. Students are also involved in policy

development by participating in focus groups on key issues such as safety.

Principal #2 -- No written policies exist at the school division or school level to involve students in policy-making. However, it is the practice in this school to have students contribute to the development of all school policies. They are also included in any reviews of policies that take place.

Ontario Responses

Principal #1 -- Students have a voice in policy development because of both school policy and board policy. Recently, all school boards in Ontario were obliged to have student trustees sworn in.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in policy-making.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- Although students are not involved in policy development in a formal manner, student government and students on the school advisory council have input on extra-curricular activities such as dances, policies for

sports, Octoberfest, and school budgets for clubs and sport teams.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- The whole staff took one full day to analyze data from student surveys. Our 1998-99 staff committees are a result of these surveys. We hope to use the data from the student surveys to allow us to set directions for the next few years.

Principal #2 -- There are no set policies other than that the constitution states that we may have three students on the school council.

Principal #3 -- Students are involved in policy development by invitation only. Students are invited to be on committees and students are invited to submit recommendations.

Question #4

To what extent are copies of policies outlining student involvement in policy development at the school level made available to the public?

British Columbia Responses

Principal #1 -- Policies are not made available to the public. Any information with regard to policy goes out

in letter form or by way of the school newsletter.

Principal #2 -- There are no policies providing for student involvement in policy-making. Therefore, no such policies can be made available.

Principal #3 -- Policies are presented to the Parent Advisory Council and they are published in newsletters every month.

Alberta Responses

Principal #1 -- Policies are made available to the public through annual reports and handbooks, etc.

Principal #2 -- Policies are not always "formally" shared, but summary information is made available to all. An information brochure (attached) is given to all students and parents upon registration; also, a handbook/agenda (attached) which gives information on policies; also, newsletters are mailed home three times per year by parents.

Saskatchewan Responses

Principal #1 -- There are no policies providing for student involvement in policy-making. Such policies do not exist.

Principal #2 -- Copies of policies outlining student

involvement in policy development are not made available to the public because there are no such policies.

Principal #3 -- A policy (presentation on equity) that looked for student input in policy development was made available at various public levels.

Principal #4 -- There are no policies providing for student involvement in policy-making and therefore, there is no distribution.

Manitoba Responses

Principal #1 -- Policies are made available by our School Board office as it sees fit.

Principal #2 -- No written policies exist at the school division or school level outlining student involvement in policy-making.

Ontario Responses

Principal #1 -- Everything is publicly accessible.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- There are no policies providing for student involvement in policy-making.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- Copies of policies are provided on a request

basis.

Newfoundland Responses

- Principal #1 -- Copies of policies are made available mainly through newsletters to parents and to the school council which has students, members of the public (community representatives) and parents as members in addition to staff.
- Principal #2 -- We have no written policies on student involvement in policy development. Students are part of the school council which is consulted with respect to policy development.
- Principal #3 -- We do not have policies outlining student involvement in policy development.

B. Questions Concerning How Students Are Involved in Policy-Making

Question #5

How are students involved in identifying problem issues in education at the school level?

British Columbia Responses

- Principal #1 -- Problem issues are discussed by grade groups or by the applicant with the administration

and a staff representative.

Principal #2 -- Informal discussions take place between the staff and students.

Principal #3 -- The student council and student leadership CAPP (Career and Personal Planning) courses provide opportunities for students to discuss problem issues.

Alberta Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in identifying problem issues in education at the school level through the following three groups in which student representation is present:

- . student council,
- . student advisory body, and
- . school council.

Principal #2 -- Students share information with teacher advisors daily. This is a two way sharing of information and ideas. Students can also help to identify problem issues in education at the school level through round table discussions which are held twice a year and are facilitated by student leaders. Each year the students have an opportunity to be involved in decision-making through a round table process. Each grade is invited to participate

in the discussions which are facilitated by students from the Leadership Seminars.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students may bring their concerns to the Student Representative Council who in turn approach the school staff.
- Principal #2 -- Students are involved in identifying problem issues at the school level from concerns and suggestions brought forward by the Student Representative Council and currently, by ongoing informal management by wandering around.
- Principal #3 -- The Student Representative Council meets to plan events and provides input into the Harassment and Equity Policy.
- Principal #4 -- Individuals can initiate dialogue with the principal and/or staff. The Student Representative Council can initiate collaborative problem solving.

Manitoba Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students are involved in identifying problem issues at the school level by open discussion at the school committee levels. Students are mostly involved through informal

discussion.

Principal #2 -- Student volunteers at the grade levels are put through a process of identifying problem issues at the school level as part of the annual school plan.

Ontario Responses

Principal #1 -- Students may initiate the identification of problem issues or they may be asked to facilitate in the identification process.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in identifying problem issues at the school level.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- The student council has weekly meetings at noon hour and our school advisory council meets every four weeks.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- The students are surveyed and encouraged to bring concerns to the student council. We also have an appeal procedure set up for grading marks, etc.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in identifying problem

issues at the school level through the student members on the school council and through the student council.

Principal #3 -- Students are involved in identifying problem issues in education at the school level through the school council which is made up of student representatives, teachers, school administration and parents. Students can also raise issues through their classroom representatives on the student council. If there is a consensus that the identified problem is real, a committee will be organized and a course of action established.

Question #6

How are students involved in identifying possible courses of action that will address problem issues in education at the school level?

British Columbia Responses

Principal #1 -- Problem issues are discussed by grade groups with the administration and a staff representative.

Principal #2 -- There are informal discussions between staff and students. Their feedback and ideas are

seriously considered by staff.

- Principal #3 -- Students are involved in identifying possible courses of action to address problem issues at the school level through the following:
- . school council,
 - . student council,
 - . making presentations to the administration, and
 - . making presentations to the staff.

Alberta Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students come up with suggestions through their representation on the student council, student advisory body and the school council. We tell them at the time how we can address the problems.
- Principal #2 -- Students are involved in identifying possible courses of action to address problems by participating in round table discussions. During these discussions, students identify areas of concern; facilitators under the guidance of the principal compile the information; students make suggestions for improvements to the school. Student facilitators form sub-committees to assist in policy writing.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Principal #1 -- The Student Representative Council may attend staff meetings to present a particular viewpoint, but their input is not actively sought in most situations.
- Principal #2 -- There is no formal mechanism in place to involve students in identifying possible courses of action that will address problem issues in education at the school level.
- Principal #3 -- Students sit on the Harassment and Equity Policy Committee and the Student representative Council meets to plan events and provide input into policies.
- Principal #4 -- Students are asked to provide input as:
- . individuals,
 - . a class, and
 - . representatives of the Student Advisory Council

Manitoba Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students help to identify courses of action to address problem issues at the school level through open discussions at the school committee level.
- Principal #2 -- Student volunteers at all grade levels are put through a process of identifying possible

courses of action to address problem issues as part of the annual school plan.

Ontario Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in helping to identify possible solutions to problems through brainstorming, access to student agencies, and seeking our expertise.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in identifying courses of action to address problem issues at the school level.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- We have done questionnaires on student violence at this high school and as a result, we acquired a community constable on a part-time basis and recently students made a presentation to the police commission.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in identifying possible solutions to problems at the school level through surveys, plus each student has an academic advisor. Students also do detailed

course request forms each year. We also have public meetings with parents and students in the spring.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in identifying courses of action to address problems issues at the school level through their student members on the school council and the student council.

Principal #3 -- Students help to identify courses of action through their membership on the school council and student council and through their membership on various committees at the school level.

Question #7

How are students involved in the approval of courses of action that may be adopted to address problem issues in education at the school level?

British Columbia Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in approving courses of action adopted to address problem issues at the school level through consensus. Issues are dealt with until a reasonable solution is attained.

Principal #2 -- Students are not involved in approving courses of action to address problem issues in

education.

Principal #3 -- Depending on the issue, the approval of courses of action would need administration, staff and school council approval.

Alberta Responses

Principal #1 -- Students play an advisory role in the approval of courses of action to address problem issues in education at the school level. Their advice is obtained through representation on three groups:

- . student council,
- . student advisory council, and
- . school council.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in the approval of courses of action to address problem issues at the school level through round table discussions. Students identify areas of concern; facilitators under the guidance of the principal compile the information; students make suggestions for the improvement of the school. Student facilitators form sub-committees to assist in policy writing.

Saskatchewan Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in the approval of

courses of action to address problem issues in education at the school level.

Principal #2 -- Students are not involved in approving courses of action at the school level.

Principal #3 -- Students provide advice through the Student Representative Council and various school committees.

Principal #4 -- Students have input individually or by way of the Student Representative Council.

Manitoba Responses

Principal #1 -- Students provide advice in terms of the approval of courses of action to address problem issues at the school level. This advice is given during discussions at the committees levels.

Principal #2 -- Students are not involved in approving policies.

Ontario Responses

Principal #1 -- No Answer

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in the approval of policies at the school level.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in any formal way in the approval of courses of action to address problem issues in education.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- The school has a handbook which gives school policies on most issues. Each student receives a copy and it is updated yearly and reviewed when necessary. Ongoing review takes place through student surveys and the student council.

Principal #2 -- Once adopted, policies affecting students are presented to students for their input before they are adopted.

Principal #3 -- Students are part of the committee, thus they are part of the entire process.

Question #8

How are students involved in the review and modification of courses of action that have been adopted to address problem issues in education at the school level?

British Columbia Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in the review of

policies mostly by consensus. Issues are dealt with until a reasonable solution is attained.

Principal #2 -- Students are not involved in the review and modification of courses of action that have been adopted to address problem issues in education at the school level.

Principal #3 -- Students are involved in the review and modification of policies at the committee level.

Alberta Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved only in an advisory capacity in the review and modification of policies at the school level.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in the review and modification of policies at the school level through roundtable discussions. Students identify areas of concern; facilitators under the direction of the principal compile information; students make suggestions for the improvements to the school. Student facilitators form sub-committees to assist in policy-making.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in the review and modification of policies at the school level.
- Principal #2 -- Students do not have much involvement in the review and modification of policies at the school level.
- Principal #3 -- Students acting on committees have regular input in the modification of policy. The two committees that students are involved in are the Harassment Committee and the Equity Committee.
- Principal #4 -- The suggestions of students are considered during the review and modification of policies at the school level.

Manitoba Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students are involved in the review and modification of policies at the school level through discussion at the committee level.
- Principal #2 -- The suggestions of students are considered during the review and modification of policies at the school level.

Ontario Responses

- Principal #1 -- Most policies are subjected to yearly review

at the school council level.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in the review and
modification of policies at the school level.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- Students usually voice their concerns through
their student government.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in the review and
modification of policies at the school level
through an ongoing review process through
surveys, the student council and the revision
of the student handbook.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in the review and
modification of policies at the school level
by expressing their concerns through their
student representatives on the student
council.

Principal #3 -- Students are part of the committee, thus
they are part of the total process.

C. Questions Concerning the Recruitment of Students for Policy-Making

Question #9

What type of policies are students involved in developing at the school level?

British Columbia Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in developing the following type of policies at the school level:

- . timetable configurations,
- . student conduct policies, and
- . locally developed course selection.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in developing policies dealing with extra-curricular activities.

Principal #3 -- Students are involved in developing policies concerning discipline, academics and beautification.

Alberta Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in developing any and all policies at the school level.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in developing the following type of policies:

- . attendance/tardiness policies,
- . behavior,

- . dress code,
- . tobacco use,
- . student activities,
- . fund raising,
- . academic excellence,
- . student recognition, and
- . school beautification.

Saskatchewan Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in developing the following type of policies at the school level:

- . policies relating to school dances and similar social functions, and
- . policies and procedures relating to graduation night.

Principal #2 -- At the school level students are involved in developing policies related to course selection and the choice of subjects to be put on the timetable. If there is no demand, the subject is not offered.

Principal #3 -- Students are involved in developing the Student Representative Council constitution and policies relating to expenditures of the Student Representative Council funding. Students are also involved in developing

policies related to transportation and extra-curricular activities.

Manitoba Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in developing policies in terms of the following matters affecting them:

- . timetable structure,
- . school safety,
- . support services,
- . budget, and
- . the nature of the graduation ceremony and parties.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in all types of policies except for ones relating to personnel.

Ontario Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in helping to develop the following types of policies:

- . code of behavior for students,
- . violence-free school environment,
- . no smoking school environment, and
- . school year calendar.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in policy-making

at the school level.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are elected to the advisory council and student government by their peers. An election is organized by student government. Students are involved in developing such school policies as the following:

- . extra-curricular activities,
- . dances,
- . policies for team sports,
- . Octoberfest, and
- . school budgets for clubs and school sports.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in developing the following policies:

- . all school council issues,
- . course offerings through requests, and
- . any other issues through appeal.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in developing policies which are student related.

Principal #3 -- Students are involved in helping to develop policies which have an impact on them.

Question #10

How often do students participate in policy development at the school level?

British Columbia Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students participate in policy development in this school as requested.
- Principal #2 -- Students are not involved in policy development at this school.
- Principal #3 -- Students participate in policy development each year in order to help develop academic policies.

Alberta Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students are involved in policy development at the school level at least once every two weeks but often the meetings are dealing with communication.
- Principal #2 -- Students are involved in policy development regularly and on-going through advisory groups. Specific roundtable discussions are held once in the fall and once in the spring. The sole purpose of these discussions is to gather input from students for decision-making and policy development. School council meetings are held once a month.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students are seldom involved in policy development - perhaps once a year.
- Principal #2 -- Students have little involvement in policy development at the school level.
- Principal #3 -- Students in this school are involved in policy development only through the two committees of Harassment and Equity. Harassment Committee meetings are called by the Vice-principal and Equity Committee meetings are held monthly.
- Principal #4 -- The Student Representative Council meets at least once per month.

Manitoba Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students are involved in policy development at the school level in two ways:
- . the School Improvement Committee which meets twice a month, and
 - . the Parent Council which meets once a month.
- Principal #2 -- Students are involved in policy development at the school level at least once per year or whenever policies are made.

Ontario Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students are one of the stakeholders in all

policy development that affects them.
Therefore, they are most often involved.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- Students do not participate in policy-making
 at the school level.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- Students usually voice their concerns through
 student government. Students are elected to
 the advisory council and student government by
 their peers. An election is organized by the
 student council.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- Students participate in policy development
 in the following ways:

- . surveys (we had two during the last six months),
- . appeal procedure which is ongoing as required,
- . the school council has one meeting per month, and
- . the student council which has one meeting per week.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in policy development

at the school level through the school council and whenever requested; maybe once or twice per year.

Principal #3 -- Students are involved in policy development at the school level whenever required.

D. Questions About the Perceptions of All Stakeholders Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making

Question #11

How are students involved in the practice of policy-making at the school level?

British Columbia Responses

Principal #1 -- All students have an opportunity for input through grade group meetings, the student advisory council, or through the open door policy of the school.

Principal #2 -- Students are not involved in policy-making in a formal manner in this school.

Principal #3 -- Students are involved in policy-making by volunteering for positions on the school council and by volunteering for positions on committees. Students apply for positions on the Graduation Committee, etc. and the students vote.

Alberta Responses

- Principal #1 -- Student involvement in policy-making at this school is strictly advisory.
- Principal #2 -- Students are involved in policy-making at this school through the following methods:
- . roundtable discussions twice a year,
 - . regular ongoing advisory group meetings with teacher advisors (daily), and
 - . school council meetings.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Principal #1 -- Students have little involvement in the practice of policy-making at this school.
- Principal #2 -- Students do not have much involvement in policy-making at this school.
- Principal #3 -- Students in this school are important in policy development in the two areas of equity and harassment.
- Principal #4 -- Students have much control over the Student Representative Council policy-making and advisory input into other policy-making.

Manitoba Responses

- Principal #1 -- There is a feeling from the School Board and school staff that students are involved. Students would agree, but not as strongly.

Principal #2 -- Student volunteers at all grade levels are put through a process of identifying problem issues at the school level as part of the annual school plan.

Ontario Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved through direct input, surveys and decision-making bodies.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- Students voice their concerns through their parents generally. Parents if in agreement will raise the concern with the school administration.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are not involved in policy-making in a formal manner. Student government and students on the school advisory council have input on extra-curricular activities such as dances, policies for team sports, Octoberfest, and the school budget for clubs and sport teams.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are involved in policy development

by voicing their concerns through school surveys, the student council and the school council. The whole staff took one full day to analyze data from student surveys. Our 1998-99 staff committees are a result of these surveys. We hope to use the data from the student surveys to allow us to set directions for the next few years.

Principal #2 -- Students are involved in policy development through the student council.

Principal #3 -- Students are involved in policy development through the student council and school council. If there is a consensus that the identified problem is "real", a committee will be organized and a course of action established. Committees are made up of staff, students and parents.

Question #12

What are your perceptions, positive or negative, regarding student involvement in policy development at the school level?

British Columbia Responses

Principal #1 -- Student involvement in policy-making works better in a small school such as ours in terms of participation. Students who are

involved in developing policy almost never have problems adhering to policies. It works quite well for us.

Principal #2 -- We need much more formal student involvement in policy-making.

Principal #3 -- My perceptions are positive. Students provide insights and a student perspective to policy development.

Alberta Responses

Principal #1 -- Student involvement in policy-making is necessary at the school level.

Principal #2 -- My perceptions are extremely positive. Schools are for student learning, so students must be involved as key players in the decision-making process/policy development. We make every effort to involve our students. We have kids sitting on many school based committees and we have a powerful student leadership development program. It's about ownership.

Saskatchewan Responses

Principal #1 -- Most students could care less. Unless a particular policy hinges on their perceived rights, they are quite complacent.

- Principal #2 -- I would like to increase student involvement in policy-making at the school level.
- Principal #3 -- Our experience has been only positive.
- Principal #4 -- They have generally been very mature in considering the issues and policies of concern to themselves. Their suggestions are usually well thought out.

Manitoba Responses

- Principal #1 -- I feel that it is important to consult students in order to build a stronger learning community (for example, ownership, better insights). However, students find the process to be quite tedious. They want to state their opinions but it is difficult for them to work through the issues.
- Principal #2 -- Student involvement in policy-making is crucial to having a positive school culture.

Ontario Responses

- Principal #1 -- Personally, I think their opinions and input is valuable. the opportunity to participate in policy-making provides the students with a genuine feeling of ownership.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- No Answer

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- Many good ideas have come forth from student government, such as school murals to improve morale, and a free meet and greet barbecue for all new students.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- Most students at this level are very responsible about positive change and we are able to work things through as a team (parents, students and staff).

Principal #2 -- Student involvement is necessary as most school policies affect students. However, students are not necessarily interested in all policies and most students are apathetic towards most policies.

Principal #3 -- Their input is welcome and appreciated.

Question #13

What concerns do students have (that have been made known to you) about the nature and extent of their involvement in policy development at the school level?

British Columbia Responses

- Principal #1 -- No concerns.
- Principal #2 -- Students would like more involvement but they would need the authority to make policy, which they do not have now.
- Principal #3 -- There are no concerns. Students seem to enjoy the opportunity to help develop school policies. My perception is that most committees are dominated by adults and the students may feel intimidated by this in policy development.

Alberta Responses

- Principal #1 -- None, but I do not believe that it should be other than advisory. According to legislation, the school council which is made up of parents and students, only has advisory power. When we went through a major reorganization to a new timetable, there were two groups that had veto power - the staff and students. So, on major issues we realize we need student support.
- Principal #2 -- Primarily their concerns stem from their need and desire to be heard. They want to be involved; they want to be a part of their own fate. They too, want to be in control of

their learning environment. They do not want to have it done for them. Ask them; they will give you a more accurate response to this question.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Principal #1 -- I am unaware of any serious concerns of students relating to policy development at the school level. Student involvement traditionally has been minimal and they do not seem concerned about what they have never had. For the most part, students accept the necessity for different school policies and as long as the staff and administration don't get too extreme, the vast majority of students seem to be satisfied.
- Principal #2 -- No Answer
- Principal #3 -- Students would like to see more involvement in policy-making. They are uncertain as to how their voice can be heard. For example, students feel that our parking is limited and are uncertain about who can help them. Does the administration take on their cause or do their parents? Do they go directly to the Board of Education? Students are unsure

where to find action?

Principal #4 -- Students often feel they have little power in policy-making.

Manitoba Responses

Principal #1 -- Some students wish that they were consulted more so they could get their way. Sometimes students are disappointed that parents and the wider community also have legitimate interests in policy development at the school level.

Principal #2 -- No Answer

Ontario Responses

Principal #1 -- Students are concerned when decisions are made that appear to override their input. Students sometimes feel that they are not listened to. They feel that it is their right to participate and I couldn't agree more.

New Brunswick Responses

Principal #1 -- They voice their concerns through their parents generally. Parents if in agreement, will raise the concerns with the school administration.

Nova Scotia Responses

Principal #1 -- It is not a big issue at this school since students and parents were active participants in the formation of the school discipline policy which was distributed to all students.

Newfoundland Responses

Principal #1 -- It doesn't seem to be an issue.

Principal #2 -- Students have expressed a need to become involved. Students have requested to give their response and input. Students have also expressed the concern that they have not been

Appendix A2

Survey Results From High School Students Across Canada

A. Questions Dealing With Policies that Provide for Student Involvement in Policy-Making

Question #1

Who are the people who make the policies for your school?

British Columbia Responses

Student #1 - Generally, the administration makes the policies. However, my school is currently organizing a student advisory committee (SAC). My school is in its 3rd year since opening and I have participated in late/truancy policies which the leadership class was given to evaluate and improve.

Student #2 - At the district level, we have a Board which is made up of several people. The principal and vice-principal make the school policies in our school. Teachers conduct policy variations as it suits their value systems and teaching style in the classroom.

Alberta Responses

Student #1 - Policies in my school are made by students,

teachers, administrators and parents.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Student #1 - Our school administration makes the policies for our school.
- Student #2 - The policies are made by our principal and the school board.
- Student #3 - Teachers and/or the school board make the policies for our school.
- Student #4 - The people who make the policies for my school are the school board, principal and staff.
- Student #5 - Most of the policies for this school are decided on by our local school board and our division school board.

Manitoba Responses

- Student #1 - The policies for our school are made by the school staff and the community advisory council.
- Student #2 - The school faculty makes the policies for our school.
- Student #3 - The faculty in our school makes the school policies such as the school improvement program.

New Brunswick Responses

- Student #1 - The policies for our school are produced by the

teachers and the district office.

Nova Scotia Responses

Student #1 - Our school policies are made by the school board officials, the school administration, the school advisory council and the student government.

Newfoundland Responses

Student #1 - Usually it is the principal and the vice-principal who try to make the policies. However, sometimes they have to deal with the district office.

Student #2 - The people who make the policies in my school are the teachers, school council and the school board for our district.

Student #3 - The people who make the policies for my school are as follows:

- . the administration,
- . the school council,
- . the student representative council, and
- . a teachers' council.

Student #4 - In my school, various people make various policies. Policies are made by the school board, teachers and students.

Student #5 - The people who make the policies for our school are the school council, school board and teachers. Students have positions on the school council.

Inside the school, students have a student council and through the student council concerns and questions may be made known to the school.

Student #6 - The people who make the policies in my school are the administration, the board office, the school council and the staff.

Student #7 - The people who make the policies for my school are the administration, principal, vice-principal and teachers.

Question #2

Does your school have written policies that ensure student involvement in helping to make policies for the school?

British Columbia Responses

Student #1 - Student-involved policies are uncommon in my school. It seems that students are uninformed in how they can influence policy within the school.

Student #2 - There is absolutely nothing of the sort in my school.

Alberta Responses

Student #1 - There are no written policies that ensure student involvement in helping to make policies in my school. However, the practice is to involve students.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Student #1 - I am not aware of any policy that says students are allowed to help make policies for our school.
- Student #2 - The students really have no involvement in making policies because it has always been left up to the school administration.
- Student #3 - I am not sure if there are any policies that provide for student involvement in policy-making in our school.
- Student #4 - There are no policies that I know of that ensure student involvement in policy-making in our school.
- Student #5 - I am not sure if there are any policies written in the student handbook. Our student representative council duties does have a sub-section that allows for discussion of school policies.

Manitoba Responses

- Student #1 - No, our school does not have any policies that ensure student involvement in policy-making.
- Student #2 - We do have written policies at our school, but not for student involvement in policy-making.
- Student #3 - The school does have written policies, but these are school rules for the students. They are not so much for student involvement in making policies.

New Brunswick Responses

Student #1 - No, our school does not have written policies that ensure student involvement in helping to make policies for the school.

Nova Scotia Responses

Student #1 - All the school discipline policies were developed through consultation with representatives from students, parents and staff.

Newfoundland Responses

Student #1 - No, our school does not have policies ensuring student involvement in making policies. However, it does state in the school council handbook that there should be a representative from the students on the school council to give the students' opinions. But no, this does not mean that we, the students, have any say in the actual policies.

Student #2 - No, our school does not have written policies that ensure student involvement in helping to make policies for the school.

Student #3 - Our school does have a few policies which are contained in our handbook. These are available to all students. It contains such things as elections for school councils and student appeal procedures.

Student #4 - As far as I know, our school does not have written

policies that ensure student involvement in policy-making.

Student #5 - To my knowledge, there are no policies in writing stating that students are ensured to be involved, however, students are involved. Whatever we want, if in reason, we get.

Student #6 - No, our school does not have written policies that ensure student involvement in policy-making, but there are unwritten rules that ensure student involvement.

Student #7 - No, my school does not have written policies that ensure student involvement in making policies. There is a government policy that ensures that students be involved on the school council. The students on the school council can help make policies for their fellow students.

Question #3

If your school does have policies that ensure student involvement in policy-making, what do these policies say about the role of students in policy-making in your school?

British Columbia Responses

Student #1 - Not applicable. If students have, in general, a problem with a policy, they either disregard it, or rebel. In one situation dealing with timetable

issues a few years ago, 300 students walked out of school during session to protest on the streets in front of the school and the school board office.

Student #2 - No Answer

Alberta Responses

Student #1 - No Answer

Saskatchewan Responses

Student #1 - No Answer

Student #2 - Students really have no involvement in making policy.

Student #3 - No Answer

Student #4 - Not Applicable

Student #5 - As I have stated previously, our duties state discussion of school policies. When we question the way our school works, often our principal says it is not our concern. In some cases, we are able to pass policies that don't really matter to anyone but us.

Manitoba Responses

Student #1 - I do not know.

Student #2 - Policies are for guidelines and rules are for students and not really for involvement of students.

Student #3 - The school policies are only for rules - what students must do or not do.

New Brunswick Responses

Student #1 - The school policies say nothing about the involvement of students in helping to make policies.

Nova Scotia Responses

Student #1 - It is important for students to know and realize that their views are heard when new policies are being developed.

Newfoundland Responses

Student #1 - No Answer

Student #2 - No Answer

Student #3 - The policies on student elections for school council and student appeals processes do show that students do have an important role in policy-making at our school, even if it is quite a small role.

Student #4 - Not Applicable

Student #5 - Not Applicable

Student #6 - No Answer

Student #7 - No Answer

Question #4

If your school does have policies that ensure student involvement in policy-making for the school, are these policies made available to you?

British Columbia Responses

Student #1 - Certain policies are regulated by the district (for example - suspensions) and as for the administration, some policies are unnegotiable. In general, students do not have much say in policy-making due to the generalization that students are irresponsible and lawless. I believe that the more responsibility that is given to a person, the more responsible that person becomes.

Student #2 - No Answer

Alberta Responses

Student #1 - No Answer

Saskatchewan Responses

Student #1 - No Answer

Student #2 - The students really have no involvement in making policies because it is always left up to the administration.

Student #3 - No Answer

Student #4 - Not Applicable

Student #5 - Yes, policies are available to me, but only when questioned and after they are not explained clearly. It is hard to tell when our decisions matter and when they are totally irrelevant to the process of making a policy.

Manitoba Responses

Student #1 - Not Applicable

Student #2 - If there are policies, then they are made available to us.

Student #3 - If the school did have policies, they would be made available to us.

New Brunswick Responses

Student #1 - Our school does not have policies that ensure student involvement in policy-making.

Nova Scotia Responses

Student #1 - A copy of all school policies is available to any student. This is a school board rule.

Newfoundland Responses

Student #1 - No Response

Student #2 - No Response

Student #3 - Yes, these policies are printed in our student handbook or agendas. Every student is given one of

these at the beginning of each school year, so they are readily available to everybody.

Student #4 - Not Applicable

Student #5 - No Answer

Student #6 - No Answer

Student #7 - No Answer

B. Questions Dealing With Student Involvement in Policy-Making

Question #5

Are students involved in helping to identify problem issues in your school or at the district level and if so, in what way are students involved?

British Columbia Responses

Student #1 - The Student Voice is currently being organized in my area; a province wide network of advisors, administrators and students which deal with educational and social issues at provincial, regional and district levels. It was organized in 1990 by the B.C. Ministry of Education and the B.C. Principals and Vice-Principals Association (BCPVP). In my district, Student Voice is being organized and already students sit on a future directions board which works with the municipality (mayor and councillors, school board and teachers

union).

Student #2 - The students' only involvement with identifying issues is done by the students themselves and forced upon the administration (as problem issues).

Alberta Responses

Student #1 - Students are involved in helping to identify problem issues in the following ways:

- . round table discussions - involves all students to bring up issues and to help find solutions to problems,
- . student council,
- . advisor programs - allows students to talk individually with teachers,
- . weekly television show produced by our school presents student issues and makes them known throughout the district, and
- . school council has two student representatives.

Saskatchewan Responses

Student #1 - We have a number of clubs at our school that deal with problems and certain issues. Our peer support group handles a lot, but so do other groups such as the student representative council. If a

student who is not in one of these clubs wishes to help out, the student can sit in on a meeting in order to express his/her views.

Student #2 - If students have problems, they are able to talk to members of Peer Support, student representative council members, student services, or they may even contact the principal.

Student #3 - No, students are not involved in helping to identify problem issues in my school.

Student #4 - Yes, if we see a problem in our school, we are to report it if it is serious. Otherwise we just tell the students to behave. We are to set the example for our school and always make sure everyone follows the rules.

Student #5 - Directly, we have no input into identifying problem issues at the district level. However, our opinions may be voiced by our principal. Also, the school board is made up of some parents from my school, so often their children's views are their views too. Some of our student representative council meetings deal with student conduct problems with making out in the hallway and punishment of people that make problems at the school. Often by students talking about these issues, the issues get to be discussed at the staff meetings.

Manitoba Responses

- Student #1 - Yes, students are involved in helping to identify problem issues in my school. They may be asked during classes and they may be asked to complete surveys.
- Student #2 - The students are involved in helping to identify problem issues. The students choose students from different grades as representatives and these representatives are included in the meetings to convey their ideas about issues.
- Student #3 - Yes students are involved in helping to identify problem issues. If a student should happen to witness anything, they would most likely come to the main office.

New Brunswick Responses

- Student #1 - There are students that identify problems but they just report them to the teachers to bring the issues up at meetings.

Nova Scotia Responses

- Student #1 - In response to student concerns, a survey was distributed to the student body on safety and violence in the school. As a result of that survey, over 1000 students signed a petition indicating that they wanted a community constable

in the school. The students on the school advisory council made a presentation to the regional police commission and as a result of the presentation, a delegation went to Halifax to meet with the Ministers of Justice and Education.

Newfoundland Responses

- Student #1 - Yes, students are involved in helping to identify problem issues in my school because there are three student representatives on the school council. These student representatives present their opinions, as well as the opinions that have been expressed to them by other students. These opinions include what could be done to address problems that have been occurring around the school.
- Student #2 - Yes, students are involved in helping to address problem issues in my school. The students can do this through their elected representatives on the school council and the student council. The students identify such problem issues as garbage clean-up and they make suggestions to try and solve the problems.
- Student #3 - Yes, students are involved in helping to identify problem issues in school. There are two student members on the school council and these students

can identify problems. Other students can ask these students to identify their problems. Students can also talk to the student representative council. Although the student representative council will probably not be able to deal with the problem themselves, they can pass it on to the administration. Also, the administration occasionally does student surveys in which students can identify problem issues.

Student #4 - Our student council tries to deal with student concerns brought to their attention. The problem will be up for discussion by all student council members. As a member of the student council myself, I know that some students are very active in identifying problem issues.

Student #5 - Yes, students are involved in identifying problem issues. They do this through the student council and the school council. Students are also on committees that produce policies.

Student #6 - Yes, students are involved in helping to identify problem issues in our school. The ways in which students are involved are:

1. school council,
2. student council,
3. and student feedback.

Student #7 - Students are involved in helping to identify problem issues in my school by being involved in the school council and the student council. When students notice problems around the school, their student representatives can bring these problems up at school council meetings and solutions can be discussed.

Question #6

Are students involved in helping to identify solutions to problem issues in your school or at the district level and if so, in what way are students involved?

British Columbia Responses

Student #1 - The Student Voice and future directions function to identify both problems and solutions. Very often students are more than willing to volunteer solutions which are usually unique as compared to those given by someone who is older, due to the norms which the older person is used to.

Student #2 - No, students are not involved in helping to identify solutions to problem issues in this school. Students are only involved through occasional surveys that are given out during the accreditation of our school.

Alberta Responses

- Student #1 - Students are involved in helping to identify solutions to problem issues in this school through the following methods:
- . round table discussions - involves all students to bring up issues and to help find solutions to problems,
 - . student council,
 - . advisor program - allows students to individually talk with teachers,
 - . weekly television show produced by our school presents student issues and makes them known throughout the district, and
 - . school council has two student representatives.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Student #1 - If a student identifies a problem, it is brought to the student representative council. If the council feels that a large number of students are affected by the problem, or if it is something we can not handle, it is taken to the principal.
- Student #2 - Meetings are called where different groups get together within the school and after a problem is presented, we all help to find a solution.
- Student #3 - Students are only somewhat involved in helping to identify solutions to problems.

- Student #4 - We are allowed to give solutions if the problem occurred at a student representative council event. We say the punishment we see fit and the principal rules or overrules it.
- Student #5 - No we are never really consulted on solving problems; just causing them.

Manitoba Responses

- Student #1 - Yes, students are involved in helping to identify solutions to problems in my school. The students are asked during classes and they are asked to complete surveys.
- Student #2 - If students have an idea about a possible solution to a problem, they express this idea at meetings that are held at different grade levels in order to discuss problem issues.
- Student #3 - If students see a problem and if they have a solution to the problem, they can go to the main office.

New Brunswick Responses

- Student #1 - Yes, students are involved in helping to identify solutions to problem issues in my school. The students can pass their ideas to the teachers.

Nova Scotia Responses

Student #1 - No, students are not involved in helping to identify solutions to problems in my school or at the district level.

Newfoundland Responses

Student #1 - Yes, students are involved in helping to identify solutions to problem issues. Students do this either through their involvement with the school council or student council. Any problems that are brought to the school council meetings will be raised at the student council meetings in order to see if there is anything that can be done.

Student #2 - Yes, students are involved in helping to identify solutions to problem issues in my school. The student council members are involved in helping to find solutions to some problem issues in our school.

Student #3 - Yes, students are involved in identifying solutions to problem issues. The students on the school council do this and other students can get their ideas across through them. The student representative council can also offer solutions on behalf of the student body. Student surveys may ask students to identify solutions to certain problems.

- Student #4 - At our school, many students help to identify solutions to problems. Students can do this through their student council. Once everyone has put a lot of thought into all the options that have been presented, we try to decide what would work best.
- Student #5 - Yes, students are involved in identifying solutions to problem issues. Students are involved through their school council or student council.
- Student #6 - Yes, students are involved in helping to identify solutions to problem issues. Students are involved through the school council, student council, and student feedback.
- Student #7 - Students can help identify solutions through the school council, but we do not make the solutions final.

Question #7

Are students involved in helping to decide what courses of action will be approved in order to deal with problem issues in school or at the district level and if so, in what way are students involved?

British Columbia Responses

- Student #1 - No, students are not involved in helping to decide what courses of action will be approved in

order to deal with problem issues in school. Input is taken from students and interpreted by administrators. I understand that it is part of their job to apply and enforce policy and if students were to do that, we could run our own schools. However, absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Student #2 - No Answer

Alberta Responses

Student #1 - The student council members and the facilitators from the round table discussions help to decide what actions will be taken to address problem issues. The school council also has a say in deciding what courses of action will be taken to address problem issues.

Saskatchewan Responses

Student #1 - The students have no say in what courses of action will take place.

Student #2 - The students are not involved in deciding what courses of action will be taken to solve problem issues because we can not choose punishments, etc.

Student #3 - Students are not involved in helping to decide what courses of action will be approved in order to deal with problem issues in the school.

- Student #4 - No, we are either overruled or agreed with for the punishment we thought fit.
- Student #5 - Again, not at the local level, but I think the principal does take into consideration what is said by the students when he decides how things are dealt with and what should be passed unto the board.

Manitoba Responses

- Student #1 - Students are not really involved in helping to decide what courses of action will be approved in order to deal with problem issues in my school.
- Student #2 - In helping to decide what courses of action will be taken, the students express themselves in terms of whether they are opposed to the course of action or for it.
- Student #3 - If students have something to say on what kind of action should be taken in order to address a problem, they can approach the main office. Students can also approach the student council or attend parent meetings on issues.

New Brunswick Responses

- Student #1 - No, students are not involved in helping to approve courses of action that will be taken to address problem issues in my school.

Nova Scotia Responses

Student #1 - No, students are not involved in helping to decide what courses of action will be approved in order to deal with problem issues in my school.

Newfoundland Responses

Student #1 - Usually no. Students aren't involved in what course of action will be taken in order to deal with the problem. However, if the problem deals directly with something the student is doing at the school or if the problem deals with something the students can help with, then we are permitted to help decide what should be done. Students can provide input through the student council or school council.

Student #2 - Yes, students are involved in helping to decide what courses of action will be approved in order to deal with problem issues. The two student representatives on the school council give their input on these matters, but the final decision is made by teachers or the school board members.

Student #3 - The only students that I can see being involved in this aspect of policy-making would be the two students on the school council. The student representative council (SRC) could possibly be involved in this, but I have never seen it

happen.

- Student #4 - No, students do not really have a say on what courses of action should be taken. In the rare occasions that students are involved, the student representatives on the student council are the students involved.
- Student #5 - Students are involved through their representation on the school council and student council.
- Student #6 - In some cases, yes, students are involved in helping to decide what courses of action will be approved in order to deal with certain problem issues. Most of the student involvement occurs through the student representatives on the school council.
- Student #7 - First the issues or problems would have to be brought to the administration and staff. They would decide on what courses of action would be taken, but they might ask for student opinion on the issues.

Question #8

Are students involved in helping to review and modify courses of action adopted to address problem issues in your school or at the district level and if so, in what ways are students involved?

British Columbia Responses

Student #1 - When the students speak out enough, the district or school listens. In the case of semester versus linear table, it seems that the school district and teachers union were forced to evaluate their course of action due to the riot from the students. In the case of the late/truancy policy in my school, it was the students which set up four levels for the course of action.

As a general answer to these last questions, students could easily become more incorporated into policy by identifying problems, solving, approving, and enforcing courses of action.

Student #2 - No Answer

Alberta Responses

Student #1 - Student council members and the facilitators from the round table discussions help in the review and modification of school policies. The school council also helps with this.

Saskatchewan Responses

Student #1 - The only students that really review and modify courses of action are the representatives on the student representative council. However, other students can come to the meetings in order to

express their opinion.

- Student #2 - Students do not get involved in the review and modification of courses of action because we really have no authority. Also, there never seems to be major problems that we have to object to or be involved in.
- Student #3 - No, students are not involved in the review and modification of policies.
- Student #4 - No, we are not involved in the review and modification of courses of action adopted to address problem issues in our school.
- Student #5 - No, students are not really involved in the review and modification of courses of action adopted to address problem issues at our school.

Manitoba Responses

- Student #1 - Students are not really involved in the review and modification of policies.
- Student #2 - Students who are representatives on the school improvement program and such, can express their concerns or what they think about certain ideas.
- Student #3 - Certain students who want to become involved, can do so by joining the student council or school council.

New Brunswick Responses

Student #1 - No, students are not involved in the review and modification of school policies.

Nova Scotia Responses

Student #1 - Yes, students can take their concerns to the student government.

Newfoundland Responses

Student #1 - Sometimes students are permitted to review what courses of action will be taken towards a problem issue. However it is based on what the problem issue deals with.

Student #2 - Yes, students are involved in helping to review and modify courses of action adopted to address problem issues in my school. As members of the school council, students have their say in many school issues. There are two student representatives on the school council.

Student #3 - Again, this would be the students on the school council. Hopefully these students try to get the rest of the student body's opinions on these matters. This is a difficult thing to do because of the size of the student body. Also, some students refuse to give their opinions or they do not care about what happens.

- Student #4 - I have never heard about any of our students helping to review and modify courses of action adopted to address problem issues.
- Student #5 - Yes, students are involved in the review and modification of policies through the student council and school council.
- Student #6 - Yes, students can be involved in the review and modification of policies through their representatives on the school council.
- Student #7 - Students involved with the school council can give their input on modifying courses of action, but they will not have the final decision.

C. Questions Dealing With the Recruitment of Students for Policy-Making

Question #9

What types of policies are students involved in developing in your school and at the district level?

British Columbia Responses

- Student #1 - Students are involved in policies dealing with non-attendance, truancy and lates. However, students are not involved in policies dealing with timetables, the grade eight and nine students eating in the cafeteria, smoking, the type of

clothes one wears, school fees, and evaluation tactics.

Student #2 - Scholarship groups are involved in selecting activities for the students. Students are not involved in policy-making.

Alberta Responses

Student #1 - Students are involved in helping to make all policies that directly relate to students. An example of this is a policy for a tobacco free campus.

Saskatchewan Responses

Student #1 - The students in our school are not really involved in policy-making since there really isn't a problem that gets out of hand which requires us to make a policy.

Student #2 - We are currently not allowed to develop new policies, at least none that I know of.

Student #3 - Students are not involved in developing any school policies.

Student #4 - We are not involved in developing any policies at the district level. We are only allowed to develop policies if it affects events that are run by the student representative council.

Student #5 - We are not involved in making school or district

policies.

Manitoba Responses

Student #1 - Students are not really involved in developing any policies at this school.

Student #2 - Students are involved in the following policies:

- . school safety program,
- . school improvement,
- . timetables, and
- . semester or non-semester issues.

Student #3 - Students are involved in developing policies concerning school safety, programs, and academic concerns.

New Brunswick Responses

Student #1 - Students are not involved in developing any policies at my school.

Nova Scotia Responses

Student #1 - Students at my school are involved in developing policies concerning the following issues:

- . winter carnival,
- . safe grad,
- . principal's award,
- . awards night,
- . grad banquet,

- . orientation social, and
- . academic policies for student athletes.

Newfoundland Responses

Student #1 - The types of policies that students in my school are involved in developing are as follows:

- . level III students must have an excuse for being absent; and
- . grade nine students are allowed to attend the prom.

Student #2 - The types of policies that students are involved in developing in my school are mainly policies involving student activities such as attendance rules for Level III students, and what students can attend the prom.

Student #3 - The students on the school council are involved in developing all kinds of policies. For example, I am a member of a sub-committee that deals with deciding and developing school fund raising policies, but there are only two students on this council. The rest of the students are involved in different ways. Last year the school gave out a survey and students were asked everything from specific problems they are having in school, to problems with teachers. Now the data from this survey has been analyzed and there are teams of

teachers that are making new policies in response to the problems that the students outlined. So, students are a big part of these new policies.

Student #4 - Our students have been involved in developing policies on the following issues:

- . dress code,
- . cafeteria menus,
- . student/teacher expectations, and
- . a constitution or mandate for future student council meetings.

Student #5 - Students have worked on policies concerning such issues as a student dress code and homework.

Student #6 - Students in this school have worked on policies dealing with spirit week activities.

Student #7 - In my school, the policies that students have been involved in developing are as follows:

- . mid-term examinations,
- . final examinations,
- . academic graduation,
- . student course load, and
- . extra-curricular activities.

Question #10

How often are students involved in helping to develop policies in your school and at the district level?

British Columbia Responses

- Student #1 - Students involved in the Student Voice regionally, meet two to four times per year. Students involved in Future Directions at the district level, meet once per month. Students involved in the student representative council, meet once per month.
- Student #2 - Students are never involved in helping to develop policies and they can only become involved when they push issues. Students are never present for the follow-through on policy creation.

Alberta Responses

- Student #1 - Students are involved in policy-making regularly; whenever a policy is needed.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Student #1 - There are no students present at school board meetings, so students are usually not involved.
- Student #2 - We are currently not allowed to develop new policies in school or at the district level.
- Student #3 - Students are never involved in developing policies at the school or district level.
- Student #4 - Students are not very often involved in helping to develop policies in my school.
- Student #5 - An actual vote on policies has never been asked

of the entire student body, nor the student representative council in my entire high school career. Thus, students are never involved in helping to develop policies in my school.

Manitoba Responses

- Student #1 - Students are not very often involved in helping to develop policies in my school.
- Student #2 - Students have a chance to be involved in any meetings. They are always welcome in such meetings.
- Student #3 - Students are involved in helping to develop policies in this school twice a month, every month, through the student council.

New Brunswick Responses

- Student #1 - Students are never involved in helping to develop policies at the school or district level in this school.

Nova Scotia Responses

- Student #1 - Students are involved in helping to develop policies in this school through the student government.

Newfoundland Responses

- Student #1 - I don't think that students are involved enough in policy-making. Usually the policies are made and finalized by the school council, parents, teachers and mostly the school board. The students do have the opportunity to bring up ideas with the principal on new policies, however, the chances of the new ideas coming up at the school council is not likely. The school council doesn't usually discuss these ideas.
- Student #2 - I do not believe that students are involved enough in policy development in our school. At least not as much as I would believe they should be anyway. Most policy-making is made up by teachers and parents and finalized by the school board. If a student has an idea for a policy, our teachers have made it clear that we are welcome to come to them and discuss it. They will try to discuss the students' idea with the other policy-makers such as the school council in order to see if the idea will benefit everyone in the school.
- Student #3 - The students on the school council are involved in policy development on a regular basis in the monthly meetings. As for the rest of the student body, I really do not know. I believe that the student survey last year was the first one of its

kind ever done at our school and I am not sure if it will become an annual event or not. There have also been some other smaller surveys conducted such as the survey completed by all Level III students in September. These surveys are done on rare occasions, but perhaps they will become a regular thing.

- Student #4 - Usually twice a year students are involved in helping to develop various policies within our school and very rarely if ever, at the district level.
- Student #5 - The student council meets once a week or every two weeks. The school council meets once a month.
- Student #6 - Students are not often involved in helping to develop policies at the school level or district level in my school.
- Student #7 - Students are involved in helping to develop policies whenever the school council meets, which is on the third Thursday of every month.

**D. Questions Dealing With the Perceptions of All Stakeholders
Concerning Student Involvement in Policy-Making**

Question 11

How are students involved in the practice of policy-making in your school and at the district level?

British Columbia Response

- Student #1 - Students are commonly used as a source of input rather than as policy-makers. The school board and the administration decide whether or not to use the input from students.
- Student #2 - There are some political student groups working towards increased student involvement with policy-making. Nothing exists to date.

Alberta Responses

- Student #1 - Students are involved in policy-making in this school through the following methods:
- . round table discussions - involve all students to bring up issues and to help find solutions to problems,
 - . student council,
 - . advisor program - allows students to individually talk with teachers,
 - . weekly television show produced by our school presents student issues and make them known throughout the district, and
 - . school council has two student representatives.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Student #1 - Students do not get involved in policy-making because we have no authority to make new policies

and there doesn't really seem to be a need.

Student #2 - The students at our school are very inexperienced in terms of policy-making.

Student #3 - Students in this school are not involved in policy-making.

Student #4 - Students in this school are not involved in policy-making unless it affects the student representative council.

Student #5 - No Answer

Manitoba Responses

Student #1 - Students are involved in policy development in this school when they are asked to respond to surveys.

Student #2 - Students in this school are involved in policy development by going to meetings and expressing their views.

Student #3 - Students are involved in policy development by going to parent council meetings, speaking their mind and getting something they want done.

New Brunswick Responses

Student #1 - Students in this school are not involved in policy development.

Nova Scotia Responses

Student #1 - Students are involved in policy development in this school by taking their concerns to the student government.

Newfoundland Responses

Student #1 - The ways in which students are involved in policy development in this school and at the district level are as follows:

- . we have a school council with a teacher moderator, and
- . we have three student representatives on the school council who can bring up ideas about the school.

Student #2 - Students in my school are involved in policy development through the school council which has two student representatives and the student council which is a student committee with a teacher moderator.

Student #3 - Students in this school are involved in the practice of policy-making in three ways:

- . The entire student body is involved through student surveys which have a direct influence on the development of new policies.
- . Certain students on the school council are

involved in direct debate of new policies. They act on behalf of the entire student body in their decision.

- . The student representative council can bring the concerns of students in relation to school policies to the administration.

- Student #4 - When given the opportunity to be involved in policy-making (about twice per year), student participation is quite good. Everyone has things they want to have an opinion on.
- Student #5 - In this school, students work along with other people such as parents and teachers to come up with various policies for the school.
- Student #6 - In terms of making policies, students in this school are not really included. However, students are involved quite often in planning for the school as well as trying to solve problems around the school. As for policies, the students have little or no input.
- Student #7 - The only involvement in the practice of policy-making in my school for students is through the school council.

Question # 12

What are your perceptions, positive or negative, regarding

student involvement in policy development in your school and at the school district level?

British Columbia Responses

Student #1 - I would like to see students more integrated in the policy-making model for our school and school district. This would avoid unwanted student outbursts and result in a better education for students. The administration allows teachers to influence policy; it is about time they let students do the same.

Student #2 - Students are the customers. Our teachers, Board members, etc. need to open their eyes and drop the stereotypes. They need to learn from those they educate and remember how a student's first hand experience must be worthwhile.

Alberta Responses

Student #1 - My experience with student involvement in policy-making in my school has been positive. Students are very involved in our high school as compared to other high schools. I think that most schools are starting to open up to student input and they are beginning to act in the interest of the student body. I think that things such as student council and round table discussions encourage

student involvement and it makes students feel like they are part of a large process. Our school is unique due to round table discussions. We have pushed at a district level for other schools to follow our policies on such issues as a tobacco free campus and shortening of Friday classes.

Saskatchewan Responses

- Student #1 - I think that students should be more aware about the involvement they have in policy-making and they should try to become more involved. I think that we should have student representatives at school board meetings in order to share the opinions of the student body with the school board.
- Student #2 - Student involvement in policy-making allows the administration to see a different perspective from the student's side. It also allows the students to have a voice for what they want. Although some students may not take on the responsibility.
- Student #3 - Students should be more involved in decisions affecting their education.
- Student #4 - My perception of student involvement in policy development in my school stinks! We have no say in any rules that our school makes, but I can't say

that I don't agree with them. I would have probably agreed with the rules that the staff and administration have chosen if I was allowed to be involved.

Student #5 - I feel that students aren't given enough input into the policy-making process. While letting students be the sole contributor to policies is ludicrous, I feel that there are some policies that students should be consulted on. I also think that by letting students have input both locally and at the district level, the policies may be seen as less outrageous by the students and in turn, there will be less rebellion by students.

Manitoba Responses

Student #1 - I don't really know much about policies since I haven't been involved with them.

Student #2 - The students in my school have been involved in making policies and they feel very positive about them.

Student #3 - I think that student involvement in making policies is positive because they talk about things that will help us.

New Brunswick Responses

Student #1 - There are students willing to become involved

in helping to make policies, but there isn't anything for them to do. The students bring their concerns to teachers, but do the teachers really bring the students' concerns up at meetings? Policies do not just affect students, but teachers as well.

Nova Scotia Responses

Student #1 - There should be much more student involvement in policy-making and there should be much more reaction to the students' suggestions.

Newfoundland Responses

Student #1 - I think that it is good that we have representatives on the school council because this improves our student involvement in policy-making. If we keep these representatives, then the student body will always be updated on new policies that are being discussed and the opinions of what the student body is thinking. However, I think that students shouldn't have to talk to just the school council representatives because the teachers too should listen to the students' concerns.

Student #2 - I think that it is very good that student involvement in policy-making at our school is improving and I also think that it is important to

elect student representatives for our school council who we know will represent the student body well. This is important since these students will be the only students mainly involved in making policies. It is important that we, as students, voice our ideas, thoughts and beliefs to our school council representatives so that they are better able to represent us. It would also be nice for the average student to have their say heard (other than by the student representatives) on school matters that will affect them and their future.

Student #3 - I believe that student involvement in policy-making at my school has greatly improved in recent years. For example, this is only the second year of school council. I think that my school is really making a big effort to get the students involved. One problem though, is that the students who are elected to the school council or student representative council do not always get the opinions of the rest of the student body. Therefore, decision-making is based on a very small majority of the students. This is my first year on both the school council and the student representative council and I know that it is often hard to get opinions from the student body.

I really do not know how this problem can be fixed.

Student #4 - I think that student involvement in policy-making should be mandatory in each school and district. Including students makes the students feel more valued. It does happen sometimes, but not nearly enough. Every policy made within each school and/or district affects all of the students within it, so students (if only one or two) should be given the option to be involved.

Student #5 - There should be more student involvement in policy-making, but students do not get involved. It is only a few students who get involved.

Student #6 - My perceptions are somewhat positive regarding student involvement in policy-making because I am seeing change. However, I have seen decisions, some of which directly affect students, in which the students were not even considered.

Student #7 - My perceptions regarding student involvement in policy development in my school is fine. I mean, yes, we do get a chance to voice our opinions and it does get heard, but we do not help on the final decision of the policy. I think that along with our involvement now, we should also be able to have a say in the final decision on policies around our school. I mean it does affect us,

doesn't it?