MIDDLE SCHOOL SURVEY

FOR

PARENTS OF SIXTH GRADERS

MASTER'S PROJECT

Submitted to the School of Education
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by

Patricia Ferguson

and

Sandra Martin

School of Education
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON
Dayton, Ohio
April, 1995
Approved by:
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are most grateful for the support of

Dr. Thomas Lasley
and
Dr. Carol Rose.

We sincerely appreciate the cooperation of Mr. Steven Shank
and
the parents who completed our survey.
We dedicate this Master's Project to
our families,
our fellow professionals,
and our students.
# Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS............................................................... vi
DEDICATION..............................................................................vii

Chapter:

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM................................. 1
   - Purpose for the Study.................................................. 1
   - Significance of Study................................................ 2
   - Problem Statement.................................................... 2
   - Hypotheses............................................................... 2
   - Assumptions.............................................................. 2
   - Limitations............................................................... 3
   - Definition of Terms.................................................. 4

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE................................. 5-23
   - Developmental Characteristics................................... 5-7
     - Physical Characteristics......................................... 5-7
     - Intellectual Characteristics.................................... 8-9
     - Personality Development....................................... 10-15
   - Middle School Components.................................... 16-17
   - Research Favorable to Middle School....................... 18-20
   - Research Unfavorable to Middle School..................... 21-22
   - Summary............................................................... 22-23

III. METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS....................... 24-34
   - Subjects............................................................... 24
   - Setting...................................................................... 24
   - Data Collection........................................................ 25
   - Data Analysis........................................................ 26-31
   - Discussion............................................................. 32-34

IV. SUMMARY......................................................................... 35-37
   - Summary and Recommendations............................... 35
   - Implications........................................................... 36-37

BIBLIOGRAPHY................................................................. 38-39
APPENDICES........................................................................ 40-53
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose for the Study

Teaching sixth grade is difficult, challenging, joyous, and wondrous. Early adolescents are in the midst of many changes: physical, emotional, social, and intellectual. They are struggling with themselves and with how they fit into the world around them. Middle school is an optimum time to reach out to these students. In the near future the Beavercreek School District will decide whether or not to change its grade structure from a junior high organization (grades 7-9) to a middle school concept (grades 6-8). This study will help determine the attitudes of the sixth grade parents toward this proposed middle school reorganization.

Significance of Study

It can be of immense value to look at adolescents as they enter a critical stage of life: the middle grades, a time when they develop an identity about themselves concerning their future. By the end of the adolescent period, many children will develop a strong sense of their own level of competence and of what the future may or may not hold for them. They will also have a clear picture of how, if at all, school fits into their future. From this perspective, it becomes important to look at adolescent students with a view...
of their characteristics and the implications of their needs for the middle school curriculum and organization.

The Beavercreek School System is currently examining facilities and organizational structures. This study will provide a sample survey of parental attitudes with regard to sixth graders' educational and developmental needs and will assess how these needs can best be met within the local situation.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to assess the perceptions of sixth grade parents relative to the concept of middle school reorganization.

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference between men and women regarding their perceptions of middle school reorganization.

There is no significant difference between those with and those without post-secondary education regarding their perceptions of middle school reorganization.

Assumptions

In order to carry out the study, we, as researchers, made several assumptions. First, we assumed that the surveys were filled out honestly and to the best of the
participants' abilities. Second, we assumed that the testing instruments used were valid in measuring the attitudes that they were intended to measure regarding middle school reorganization. Although no validation study of the attitude instrument was conducted, a field testing did occur to determine that the items on the instrument were clear and understandable. Third, we assumed that the selected sample findings were reflective of the attitudes of the broader Beavercreek community. Therefore, we did generalize the findings to represent sixth grade parental perceptions in other elementary schools in Beavercreek. Finally, people in Beavercreek have an informed opinion about middle school reorganization. That is, people recognize that this age group needs a specialized educational structure.

Limitations

In order to carry out this study, the authors confronted several limitations. First, the time of year that the surveys were distributed may have influenced the parental attitudes. That is, parents may have a different opinion at the beginning of the school year than they do midway or even at the end of the school year. Second, because only parents from two of the five (Beavercreek) elementary schools were surveyed, the sample size of population is a limitation. Furthermore, the survey population that participated in this study represents a limited geographical area within the state.
of Ohio. Finally, lack of parental knowledge concerning the developmental needs of early adolescents may be a limiting factor. Many parents may not recognize the importance of specialized programs for this middle grade age group.

**Definition of Terms**

*Early adolescence* is a period of human growth and development of children between the ages of 10-14.

*Middle school* is the educational response to the needs and characteristics of early adolescence according to National Middle School Association and can be organized by grades 5-9, 6-8, or 5-8.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Major characteristics of early adolescent youth, ages ten to fifteen years of age, should not be regarded as necessarily evident in the behavior of all students. Each individual is unique, and he or she may differ from others in several regards (e.g., physically, emotionally, or socially). Yet each is still expected to achieve normal adolescence and adulthood.

Physical Characteristics

Accelerated physical development of emerging adolescents is marked by increases in weight, height, and muscular strength. Young people are growing at varying rates of speed. Generally, adolescent girls are taller and tend to be more advanced physically. For adolescent girls and boys, lack of coordination and awkwardness may be due to faster bone growth than muscle development (National Middle School Association, 1982).

Secondary sex characteristics mark the adolescent transitional time. Maturation, known as the "secular trend," has been occurring earlier in successive generations due to factors such as better nutrition and the enhanced quality of medical care (George and Alexander, 1981).
As increasing sexual awareness begins during adolescence. During this time girls and boys become more conscious of their sexual characteristics and needs. In the early part of the emerging adolescent period, there is a tendency to prefer being with members of the same sex. This is more marked in boys than girls. In the later stages of pubescence, interest in the opposite sex tends to become more openly manifested (Williamson and Johnston, 1991).

Girls generally reach sexual maturity earlier than boys. Maturity in females is defined as "menarche," about the age of twelve, but reproductive capability may not be reached until several months or even a year later. Maturity for boys is often measured at the peak of the growth spurt at about the age of fourteen. Thus, girls reach maturity, on the average, two years before boys. The developmental lag between boys and girls can be awkward and embarrassing to young people (George and Alexander, 1981).

In the pubescent stage, indications of physical development are: breasts enlarge and menstruation begins for girls, growth occurs in the genitalia for boys, and appearance of pubic hair is evidenced in both sexes. The sequential order of development is relatively consistent for boys and girls (e.g., body development), but boys tend to lag a year or two behind girls. The age of the greatest variability between the sexes in physiological development is age thirteen (Wiles and Bondi, 1986).
Adolescent boys of the same age as girls are usually not of interest to girls unless they have matured early. Mature girls will generally be attracted to older boys, even though the boy's sexual knowledge and drive may be confusing or overwhelming to a young girl. Females who mature late are often tall and thin, with no evident sexual development. Being "different" can lead to withdrawal and extreme self-consciousness. Consequently, self-esteem and self-concept are closely related to physical development. Adolescent females report significantly lower self-esteem and self-image than boys; they also evidence higher levels of self-consciousness than males (George, et al. 1981).

Growth spurts and sexual maturation do not occur in a vacuum. Interrelationships and interactions can influence a child's self-concept as he or she moves from childhood to adolescence. Children evaluate their own growth, maturation, and social status among peers. Any development perceived by the student to be abnormal can cause great anxiety; it may influence both social and emotional development. Physical development is a very important part of the answer to the question that many adolescents ask, "Am I normal?"

The emerging adolescent needs personal counseling in dieting, eating properly, understanding personal hygiene, coping with physical factors such as menstruation, growing beards, changing voices, and outgrowing clothes.
Intellectual Characteristics

The early stages of the adolescent period (ten to twelve years) are usually characterized by success in initiating new and higher level cognitive processes because of the brain growth experienced by most youngsters in their early teen years. Jean Piaget (1977) described four stages of cognitive thought: the sensorimotor period (0-2 years); preoperational thought (2-7 years); concrete operations (7-11 years); and formal operations (11-12 years into adulthood). Piagetan theory has frequently been used as the justification for educational changes that place more emphasis on complex intellectual tasks, especially since Piaget held that students could think more abstractly (the formal operations stage) beginning at age eleven or twelve.

Students range in cognitive development from the concrete-manipulatory stage of development to the ability to deal with abstract concepts (Wiles and Bondi, 1981). Unfortunately, great numbers of students remain in the concrete operation stage throughout most of their adolescent years. It may be intellectually harmful to push the early adolescent too hard to make the transition from concrete operations stage to the more complex, abstract stage (formal operations). According to George and Alexander (1981), children are in a "plateau" period of brain growth from the ages twelve to fourteen years. As a consequence, pushing students to attain higher level thinking skills may cause
frustration and lower self-esteem. Emphasis should be given to learning new facts and information within the framework of thinking skills initiated prior to the "plateau" period according to George and Alexander (1981). This will allow for consolidation, refinement, and maturation of previously developed thinking skills.

In the process of using various skills in a greater number of cognitive areas, emerging adolescents begin to see relationships as they move from concrete to abstract thinking. Some students seem to be more interested in concrete and abstract exercises (e.g., initially thinking more in terms of specifics and later in their maturity considering ideas, rules, and relationships that are more general and abstract). They desire opportunities to express originality on an individual basis, to participate in practical problem-solving situations, and to learn things they consider useful. They are generally uninhibited and find learning more interesting when it is related to immediate goals and interests. They enjoy discussing experiences with adults. They are able to evaluate issues critically, though not always objectively. Their vivid imaginations create strong desires for self-expression and a preference for creative activity (Williamson and Johnston, 1991).

Emerging adolescents display a wide range of skills and abilities unique to their developmental patterns. Whereas
children at the elementary level tend to concentrate on acquiring the skills themselves, emerging adolescent youths begin to use the skills they have acquired in school and in their lives generally. Early adolescence is a time of cognitive awakening, and children awaken to a world of personal possibility and potential.

**Personality Development**

Personality development is an important part of the emerging adolescent transition to adolescence and one that needs constant adult attention.

The areas that personality development embraces are those that pertain to the individual's social interaction. The four major domains of personality development are: 1) self-concept, 2) sexual identification, 3) peer influence, and 4) emotional control.

Emerging adolescents begin to develop a distinct self-concept. Striving to understand their changing selves, they seek activities to help them psychologically produce their individual maturation (Williamson and Johnston, 1991). The early stage of transition in the adolescent period almost always brings lower self-esteem as the person grapples with the turbulence and confusion of major growth experiences. But when and if these experiences are completed successfully, self-esteem is likely to return to a more positive position (George and Alexander, 1981).
Middle school students are known for experiencing fluctuations in their self-esteem. Teachers of these students know their unpredictable nature. The students' desire to fit in while attempting to incorporate the values of their family, friends, church, and community can be confusing. Not looking, sounding, or acting "right" can have negative effects on adolescent self-esteem. "How do I look in the eyes of others?" or "How do I look in my own eyes?" are questions adolescents have about themselves in relationship to others. Conformity is important to this particular age level (ages ten to fifteen) as peer acceptance is a dominant concern (George and Alexander, 1981).

The emerging adolescent years are characterized by a good deal of apprehensiveness about impending adolescence. Young people appear to evaluate personal capabilities, both attributes and limitations. They are sensitive to criticism of personal shortcomings and are often easily offended. They need to experience frequent success, and they desire attention and recognition for personal achievement and efforts (George and Alexander, 1981).

The conflict between dependence versus independence in the family structures increases as adulthood approaches. Parents and other adults have difficulty understanding why the individual fluctuates between a variety of interests. George and Alexander (1981) note: "Parents and teachers must continuously modify their expectations and relationships as
the adolescent swings between childlike and adult behaviors" (p.14).

For no other age group is there greater concern for peer acceptance. To be socially accepted by the peer group controls many adolescents' total behaviors. The will of the group often determines a response to others outside the group, thus causing the indifference some exhibit to adults, especially teachers and parents.

The emerging adolescent begins to display the well-known adolescent phenomenon of increased group conformity. These youth tend to conform with "in" styles of clothing and hair. They desire to be "different," yet they do so within the overall limits of peer conformity. They specifically adhere to peer group standards and are very aware of "acceptable" behavior within the peer group. They have a strong need for a feeling of belongingness to a group. Group loyalty causes many adolescents to carry out the group will with indifference and sometimes cruelty to outsiders. Overall, it is fair to say that adolescence represents a time when peer relationships gain great influence, and all persons involved with adolescents must be prepared to deal with this realignment of relationships.

As emerging adolescents formulate their self-concept, they also encounter what it means to be a male or female. At this time an individual learns to think, feel, and act in a role congruent with his or her own sex. To identify one's
sex role and the behavior inherent in the role is a major task for the emerging adolescent (Williamson and Johnston, 1991).

Despite a trend toward heterosexual interests, same-sex affiliation tends to dominate during this period (Wiles and Bondi, 1986). However, wide variations in behavior can be expected during this period. Some middle schoolers are dating and some relate to peers of the opposite gender as if they were entities from a different biological species. The relationships among the students in this age group are complex, reflective of a wide range of forms and emotions, and capable of providing adults with a great deal of frustration and confusion.

Short term shifts in peer relationships occur. "Puppy love" years show extreme devotion to a particular boy or girl, but that same adolescent may transfer allegiance to a new friend overnight.

Young adolescents tend to make exaggerated responses to anything with sexual implications. Comparing sexual development with peer and medial expectations is common. A challenge for this age group is to sort fact from folklore concerning sexual development.

Emotional development of the emerging adolescent, if plotted on a graph, will have many peaks and valleys (A.S.C.D., 1975). At no other time in life is an individual likely to encounter such a diverse number of problems.
simultaneously. The adolescent must learn to cope with physical change, endeavor to gain independence from family and become his or her own person, and learn to manage new intellectual functions.

Emerging adolescents seem to be more "dichotomized," and they sometimes are given to extremes (Williamson and Johnston, 1991). Thus, these adolescents may exhibit a wide range of overt behaviors and moods. They may be alternately quiet-loud, shy-boisterous, fearful-confident, or anxious-assured.

These students tend to split into two groups, the "ins" and the "outs." Adolescents are easily offended and sensitive to criticism of personal shortcomings. Threats and release of tension through emotional outbursts are episodic and reflect rapid shifts and mood variations. Expressed or implied criticism from adults is not easily tolerated by young people. They tend to exaggerate simple occurrences and believe their problems are unique. Adult standards and conventions may be ignored, ridiculed, and even defied. Young adolescents often become rebellious toward adults. Observable periods of irritability, distrust, and suspicion convey a tendency to be easily offended and ready to believe adults do not understand them (Williamson and Johnston, 1991).

Early adolescents vacillate between a desire for regulation and direction and a demand for independence. They
continue to have a need for identity with adults but reserve the right to accept or reject adults' suggestions. They often attempt to model adults other than their parents. They induce ambivalent desires: wanting freedom, but fearing the loss of certain securities, directions, and regulations.

The role of the adult is to be a source of support, but that role will often be a thankless and frustrating job. However, it can be a lifeline for youth who otherwise will derive most of their views from their peers. Thus, adults must continue to be available for support and guidance.

Adolescents begin to expand their horizons, and there is an increase in their diverse interests. Their worlds expand beyond the neighborhood to include greater varieties of people with a diversity of lifestyles. This age group is beginning to have a concern for "right and wrong" and social justice. They have a concern for the less fortunate. The early adolescent shows an interest in races and cultures other than his or her own (Williamson and Johnston, 1991). Adolescents have an increased social concern and the beginnings of a realization about the importance of what they do in the present, for what they will be able to do in the future, and the innocent exuberance they bring to so many of life's issues and challenges.
Middle School Components

The emerging middle school movement throughout America is an effort to redefine, rediscover, revamp, and reintroduce the basic pedagogical principles of adolescent learning upon which the original junior high school was established almost seventy years ago (Turning Points, 1989). The middle school academically stands between elementary and high school. It is separately housed (ideally in one building especially designed for this purpose) and it offers at least three years of schooling beginning with either grade five or six (e.g., grades 5-8 or 6-8). A middle school functions as a separate intermediate school. It combines one or more of the elementary grades with one of the lower secondary grades. The appropriate placement of ninth grade continues to be debated (George and Alexander, 1993).

According to the National Middle School Association (1992), middle school is the educational response to the needs and characteristics of early adolescence, ages 10-14. George and Alexander (1993) suggest any combination of grades 5-9 can be virtually considered middle level school, which is a bridging experience from elementary to high school. Middle school students need a distinctly different educational program of developmental diversity because of their unique educational needs (NMSA, 1992). The organizational structure of the junior high school does not allow for such flexibility.
Essential components to the education of adolescents have been identified by the National Middle School Association (1992). These include committed staff as advisors, a balanced curriculum with many instructional techniques and interest-based activities, a variety of schedules, continuous progress with cooperative learning, and a positive school atmosphere (NMSA, 1992; Turning Points, 1989). Teachers must be willing to listen to and advise their students. The curriculum should offer a theme-based approach with teaching techniques beyond lecturing. Students and teachers in middle schools create a spirit of teamwork when there is cooperative learning, flexible schedules, and continual opportunities for student progress. All of these circumstances work to establish a building where everyone enjoys being a part of the program.

The organization of a middle school creates opportunities for nurturing the adolescent. Middle school students benefit by being in "small learning communities," which are staffed by teachers trained for the age group (Maeroff, 1990; Wiles and Bondi, 1986; Sinks, 1975). "Student-Teacher-Progress" (STP) and "school-within-schools" are formats that develop a sense of community (Turning Points, 1989; George, 1987). All of these programs advocate students organized in small groups with a team of qualified teachers where a sense of belonging can be created for the adolescents. These can include the opportunity for the
students to move through the three year program as a consistent group with a constant team of teachers.

Research Favorable to Middle School

Two studies provide documentation that is favorable for the middle school organization (George, 1987; Sinclair, 1980). Nearly all members of the Lincoln Middle School surveyed by George (1987) were extremely positive about the three-year academic interdisciplinary teams. Another study by Sinclair (1980) showed a significant difference in favor of team teaching and the students' perceptions of the school environment.

Middle school offers the opportunity to modify the presentation of curriculum. According to Turning Points (1989) an experimental curriculum is needed for ten-to-fourteen-year olds in which thematic activities relating to the students' needs are created. The interests of the middle schooler can be the topics chosen for further study. Beyond the academic requirements, the middle school students need knowledge of the importance of practicing a healthy lifestyle with nutrition, exercise, and good mental health (Turning Points, 1989).

Three studies reflect positive data in favor of the middle school concept (Brantley, 1982; Sardone, 1976; Mooney, 1970). One study (Brantley, 1982) which compared junior high students from 1973-75 and middle school students
from 1976-81 found that middle school students (grades 6-8) consistently performed better than junior high students (grades 7-9) in math and reading achievement scores. Sardone's (1976) study, using a variety of standardized tests, showed middle school eighth graders attaining higher scores in basic skills, verbal creativity, and figurative creativity than eighth graders in junior high schools. A study by Mooney (1970) compared attendance records for students in elementary, middle, and junior high schools and found attendance records overwhelmingly favorable for students in the middle school.

Interdisciplinary teams are the primary approach to instruction in middle schools (George and Alexander, 1993; NMSA, 1992). Middle school teachers must commit to working and planning as a total team. They must be willing to be flexible with scheduling and to creating opportunities for cooperative learning. Middle school teachers need to be trained to meet the unique learning needs of this age group. Universities now offer middle school certification with specific requirements to assist in creating skilled middle school teachers.

"A volatile mismatch exists between the organization and curriculum of middle grade schools and the intellectual and emotional needs of young adolescents" (Turning Points, 1989, p.8). The result of this mismatch has been a new emphasis on guidance. Middle school students need adult guidance. Thus,
middle school teachers must be committed to being advisors to their students.

Middle schools aide the transition between elementary and secondary schools (George and Alexander, 1993; Onofrio, 1971). This transition time varies in recommended structures from 5-8 to 6-8 as well as 5-9. According to Gateman (1974) and Creek (1970), sixth grade is the most appropriate entry level grade for middle school. The results of Gateman's study of four groups, middle schools (of 5-8 and 6-8) and elementary schools (of K-5 and K-6), suggest that middle schools, which include sixth graders, perform better than junior highs in terms of higher academic achievement and a more positive self-concept for students. Creek (1970) studied the behavior of fifth, sixth, and seventh grade students in either middle school or elementary and found that sixth graders resemble seventh in certain areas of adjustment to school.

From an historical perspective, the junior high was established in part to help the move from elementary to high school. The process of transitioning early adolescents is the purpose of the junior high (*Strengths and Weaknesses of the Junior High School*, 1955). But for middle schools to be truly effective, teachers must be prepared, interested, and qualified to work with the students in making decisions and adjustments.
Research Unfavorable to Middle School

Four studies show that the organization (grade levels) and name (middle or junior high) does not necessarily determine success of schools for middle grade students (Epstein and MacIver, 1990; Sinclair, 1980; Calhoun, 1975; Mooney, 1970). Epstein and MacIver (1990) found that actual practices in education have little in common with specific grade levels or organizational structures because most teachers do not use the approach of interdisciplinary teams in the middle grades. This would imply that middle school certification needs to be a requirement for staff in a middle school setting. Certification would better ensure that middle school teachers could implement the middle school concept. In his survey of departmentalized eighth graders and team taught eighth graders, Sinclair (1980) found no significant difference between students' attitudes toward teachers in junior high or middle schools. Calhoun (1975) discovered that the organization of grades, 6-8 or 7-9, did not appear to affect the academic or social development of the students. He also found that the quality of the individual school's program was a more important factor and that many middle schools and junior high schools are more alike than different. Finally, in a Florida study of fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth graders who were administered achievement tests, Mooney (1970) found no difference in achievement of middle school students in grades 5-8 that
could be attributed to the structure of a middle school. These studies and the history of the junior high would indicate that middle schools and junior high schools have much in common. They also appear to show that the individual school, staff, and student characteristics actually determine success.

Summary

The authors believe that to succeed with young adolescents, schools must be responsible for students' developmental needs. The ramifications of early adolescent development are too compelling to be overlooked or denied. We have already defined schooling for this age group of young people who are experiencing dramatic changes in development. The authors believe that schools are isolating the early adolescent from the rest of the age span. Our purpose in this project is to justify that it is developmentally appropriate that early adolescents be educated in a middle school setting.

The Beavercreek School district must acknowledge and address a clear conflict which exists between the developmental needs of early adolescents and the fragmented, subject-centered, departmentalized day currently used in the district. The authors' intent was to survey parents' perceptions regarding middle school reorganization and to report the findings to the school system. The findings are to
be shared with the administration and the Beavercreek Board of Education. The research will provide the board members with concrete data reflecting the attitudes of current sixth grade parents about reorganization to a middle school structure. At the present time, the board is considering school facilities and reorganization. Our survey will provide constructive input into the planning process.
CHAPTER III

Methodology and Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of sixth grade parents concerning the most appropriate setting for educating early adolescents.

Subjects

School. The subjects chosen for this study are sixth grade parents in two elementary buildings of the Beavercreek school district. The two buildings are where the researchers teach; the researchers have, as a result, the most accessibility to sixth grade parents at these two sites.

Setting

School. The research data for this study were collected in a suburban district of nearly 7000 students, which has five elementary buildings (grades K-6), two junior highs (grades 7-9), and one high school (grades 10-12).

Community. According to the 1990 Census Profile for the city of Beavercreek, this southwestern Ohio suburb has a population of 33,626, which consists of 96% Caucasian, 3% African-American, and 1% other races. The median age is 36.6 years with a median family income of $52,531.
Data Collection

Construction of the Data Collection Instrument. A survey instrument (see Appendix A) was constructed by the writers using original questions and information gathered from a review of the literature. This survey measured the attitudes of parents regarding the best grade level organization for the middle schools and the essential components of an educational system for early adolescents. This instrument was reviewed by one University of Dayton faculty member. Revisions in the instrument were made based on comments of that faculty member. The instrument was then field tested (January, 1995) with selected parents from two of the Beavercreek elementary schools that were not involved in the full study. Survey items were revised according to the suggestions of the participants of the field study (See Appendix A).

Administration of the Data Collection Instrument. A survey with an accompanying cover letter was given to parents of 220 sixth graders on the same day in two elementary schools in February 1995. Subjects were given one week to complete the survey and to return it the authors. One hundred fifty-eight (or 72%) of the surveys were completed and returned. Thirty-nine (or 24.7%) were completed by males and 119 (or 75.3%) were completed by females. In terms of education, 93 (or 58.9%) of the respondents had a college
degree, and 65 (or 41.1%) did not have a college degree.

**Data Analysis**

A summary of the data appears in Figure 1 and in Figure 2. The results of the participants' responses to the questionnaire items are presented in Figure 1. The Likert-type scale was constructed with number one (1) representing the respondents' views as extremely important and number five (5) representing the perception that the item was not important. The results of the participants' responses toward grade structures appear in Figure 2. The three grade level descriptors for the school setting were 6-8, 7-8, and the grade structure makes no difference. Respondents used these descriptors to differentiate their response to each of the ten statements concerning the best school environment.

The results of the surveys by parents (Figure 1) indicate the importance of two factors which positively impact children in the middle school. First, it is clear that parents believe that teachers must create a positive classroom climate. Approximately ninety per cent (89.9%) of the respondents reflected this as being extremely important in the educational environment. Secondly, parents believed that teachers must be knowledgeable about the educational needs of young adolescents. This component was a high priority for 86.2% of the respondents.
### Figure 1

**Percentages from survey of parental attitudes toward middle school**

#### Parental Attitudes Toward Middle School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>NI</th>
<th>EX</th>
<th>MI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers must be knowledgeable about the educational needs of young adolescents.</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Schools need to create a balanced curriculum based on the needs of young adolescents (e.g., focus on academic, social, emotional, and physical factors).</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Schools should provide varied organizational arrangements to enhance the learning experience of the student (i.e., teaching teams using large blocks of time instead of a rigid seven period day).</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers need to use a variety of teaching methods.</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Schools need to provide a full exploratory program (i.e., high interest and short-term activities with hands-on components).</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Schools must provide comprehensive advising and counseling for students.</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Educators must plan educational opportunities that provide for continuous student progress (i.e., allow students to progress at their own rates of learning).</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Evaluation procedures need to be provided that help students discover and understand their strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cooperative school-wide planning among faculty, administration, and specialists is essential.</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teachers must create a positive classroom climate.</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2

Parent Attitudes Toward Grade Structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>6-8</th>
<th>7-8</th>
<th>No Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers who understand the educational needs of young adolescents.</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Schools' ability to create a balanced curriculum based on young adolescent needs.</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Schools that provide varied organizational arrangements rather than a 7 period day.</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers' ability to use a variety of teaching methods.</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Schools that provide a full exploratory program (e.g., varied activities with hands-on components).</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Schools that provide comprehensive advising and counseling for students.</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Educational programs that provide continuous progress for students.</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Evaluation procedures that help students discover and understand personal strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cooperative school-wide planning.</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teachers who create a positive classroom climate.</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the surveys by parents indicate two items as being less important in relationship to the other parental concerns. First, 27.7% of the parents disclosed that they did not see it as critical for schools to provide varied organizational arrangements (i.e., teaching teams using large blocks of time). Secondly, 41.5% of the surveyed parents did not feel that it was necessary for continuous student progress to be a high priority for the school district.

Figure 2 indicates parental attitudes regarding grade structures. The ten surveyed items were repeated, and parents were asked to indicate their preferences regarding grade level organizations 6-8, 7-8, or makes no difference. The results indicated that 61% of the respondents favored the 6-8 grade structure, 15% favored the 7-8 structure, and 25% had no preference. The results of surveyed parents suggest an overwhelming preference for a grade structure of 6-8.

T-tests were calculated to determine relationships of two variables: gender and parental education. One T-test evaluated the relationship between gender and parental attitudes. Specifically: Does gender impact parental beliefs about a middle school structure? The second T-test determined whether a relationship existed between educational level and parental attitudes. Specifically: Does having a college degree influence a parent's attitude about educational issues for adolescents? The statistical analysis revealed no
significant difference in regard to gender or educational level. That is, gender and educational background did not affect the way parents perceive developmental needs for adolescents. Parents who are committed to seeking excellence in education have similar attitudes regardless of gender or educational levels.

A number of parents expressed strong feelings about the middle school concept. Their comments were taken from the open-ended section of the questionnaire. Those comments were inductively grouped into three broad categories of ideas. The first set of parental comments (see Appendix B) focused on the importance of moving sixth grade students into a setting that included older students. The comments reflect the concern parents have in finding the best possible situation for their children's educations. The following parental comments exemplify the parental concerns regarding school structure.

I feel that a middle school (Grades 6-8) would be good for addressing and educating adolescents. I feel it would be good for the 9th grade to be in the high school, as their grades and such are considered high school. (Parent Comment #5)

I feel a 6-8 middle school setting makes more sense for young adolescents and their needs. It would allow teachers more flexibility to team teach or use blocks of time to teach a particular unit. However, I have a child in the 7-9 junior high, and have found teachers can be positive, and understand the child's needs at that level too. (Parent Comment #6)
The second set of parental comments (see Appendix B) represented an opposing perspective. These comments reflect the concern parents have for grouping sixth graders with older students in the building. Some parents may feel that an association with older, more mature students would adversely affect their children.

I believe sixth graders do not need to be grouped with the seventh or eighth graders. Most are still immature and impressionable to be around 7/8th graders all day! (Parent Comment #7)

I am not in favor of the 6-8 middle school concept. I think that sixth graders needs in each of the areas indicated on this survey are best met in the K-6 environment. (Parent Comment #8)

The third and fourth sets of parental comments (see Appendix B) were of a general nature. These comments reflected the concern parents have for the variety of complex issues in education. A variety of comments from communication issues, classroom environments, and counseling issues were received from the respondents. Two examples are provided below.

I feel positive classroom environments are necessary to encourage the self-esteem of our youth today. (Parent Comment #29)

We don't believe counseling is necessary in the schools. Church is better for that. (Parent Comment #27)
Discussion

There was no statistically significant difference in the attitudes of male and female and educated and non-educated parents regarding middle school reorganization. This may have occurred because a random sample of parents was not drawn. The authors used a purposeful sample. That is, the sampling came as a result of the authors' accessibility to parents of current sixth grade students.

A large percentage of parents express the feeling that a positive school climate is an essential component for the educational (school) environment. Parents recognize that the climate of the classroom directly impacts the students' attitudes and their academic success. A positive classroom climate will evidence teacher warmth, caring, and respect. The attitudes and actions of a teacher may be reflected in the behaviors and performance of the students.

Parents felt strongly that teachers must be knowledgeable about the educational needs of young adolescents. The unique needs and characteristics of the middle school student require teachers who can implement the curriculum with respect to the students' needs. Educators must have a thorough understanding of growth and development needs and a genuine desire to teach this age group.

The third surveyed item was rated low according to parental attitudes. This item states that schools should
provide varied organizational arrangements to enhance the learning experiences of the student (i.e., teaching teams using large blocks of time instead of a rigid 7 period day). The authors hypothesized that the intent of the item was misunderstood by the respondents. That is, lack of appropriate information or prior exposure to various teaching structures may have influenced the parents' interpretation of this survey item.

Additionally, the authors surmised that the results of survey item number seven (educational opportunities that provide for continuous student progress) were impacted by the respondents' misunderstanding, lack of informed information, or prior exposure in the educational setting. The example that the authors included which states, "Allow students to progress at their own rates of learning," may have been perceived by the parents as a program that was descriptive of teachers who gave no letter grades or did not have high expectations for every student.

Based on the findings of this study, the school district should consider restructuring the current grade alignments (from 7-9 to grades 6-8). A majority of the surveyed parents of sixth graders indicated a strong preference for a 6-8 grade structure. The school system must be responsive to the opinions of those directly affected by such decisions. At the very least, the school district's administrators need to dialogue with parents about the current and proposed future
According to the findings, the school system must consider that parents recognize the importance of positive classroom climates and that teachers must be knowledgeable about the educational needs of young adolescents. These two items must be high priority in the selection of personnel since research indicates these to be critical components for teachers who are to work with this age group. It is important for the school organization to be responsive to research that supports such reorganization as a positive move for young adolescents and the Beavercreek Schools.
CHAPTER IV

Summary and Recommendations

Where can sixth graders' educational and developmental needs best be met given the prevailing district-wide conditions in Beavercreek? It is the authors' belief, supported by our research, that sixth graders belong in a middle school setting, (grade 6-8), which can provide more exploratory experiences, greater variety in teaching approaches, and more ample instructional and physical resources. It is clear that there are advantages that accrue to a sixth grader located in the middle school. A middle school setting offers opportunities to meet this age group's developmental needs. Cooperative learning and cooperative planning are priorities in a middle school setting which benefit adolescents. The challenge is to design a program that addresses both parental and student needs and educators' expectations about students' academic learning and socialization.

Middle school is a philosophy of education encompassing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions of adolescent learning. Middle school learners have unique characteristics and needs, and meeting those needs must not be simply an extension of the elementary school program or an early introduction to high school. The middle school must provide a program uniquely suited to adolescent needs; it
must also be a dynamic force in improving the educational opportunities for young people. Additionally, the transformation of a junior high to a middle school program provides a unique opportunity for professional collaboration between elementary and secondary teachers.

A need to establish developmentally appropriate schools for early adolescents must not be ignored. The purpose of this research was to discover parental attitudes concerning the appropriate grade structure for sixth graders. The researchers believe that the results favor the reorganization to a 6-8 grade structure.

**Implications**

There are three implications for further study. Within the Beavercreek School District, the three other elementary buildings that were not originally included in this study should be surveyed for parental opinions. If this were completed, the district would have comprehensive results concerning attitudes toward middle school of all the parents of sixth graders. This information could then be submitted to the Beavercreek Board of Education for consideration. Second, a study similar to this one should be replicated in other school districts to compare parental attitudes across geographic areas. That is, other schools which are considering a grade level reorganization should survey parental attitudes. The various studies could then be
compared to assess parental attitudes concerning middle school reorganization. Third, the authors' recommendation for further research would be to compare the attitudes of males who have college degrees with females who have college degrees. That is, a study could be conducted to determine if educated males differ with educated females in attitudes concerning the appropriate educational setting for adolescents.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Appendix A

Middle School Survey
Dear Sixth Grade Parent,

We are in the process of writing a Master's Project in Education as a graduation requirement for the University of Dayton. Our area of study focuses on parent attitudes regarding the reorganization of middle schools.

We have researched the characteristics and needs of the early adolescents and of the grade level organization that best meets their needs. Attached is a survey to assess your perceptions regarding the needs of ten to fourteen year olds.

We would appreciate your thoughtful consideration in the completion of this survey. Please return the instrument by February 17, 1995, to your child's homeroom teacher. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Sandy Martin, Main

Pat Ferguson, Shaw
PARENT SURVEY

PLEASE INDICATE THE FOLLOWING BY PLACING A CHECK ON THE APPROPRIATE LINE:

I am:

_____ male
_____ female

I:

_____ have a college degree
_____ do not have a college degree

Please rate each of the following ideas to show how important each one is to you. Choose the answer that you feel best describes your views and circle the corresponding number. Use this key below to reflect your attitudes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Important</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>Somewhat Important</td>
<td>Not Important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For middle schools (grades 6-8) to have a positive impact on my child:

1. Teachers must be knowledgeable about the educational needs of young adolescents.  
   1  2  3  4  5

2. Schools need to create a balanced curriculum based on the needs of young adolescents (e.g., focus on academic, social, emotional, and physical factors).  
   1  2  3  4  5

3. Schools should provide varied organizational arrangements to enhance the learning experience of the student (i.e., teaching teams using large blocks of time instead of a rigid seven period day).  
   1  2  3  4  5
4. Teachers need to use a variety of teaching methods.

5. Schools need to provide a full exploratory program (i.e., high interest and short-term activities with hands-on components).

6. Schools must provide comprehensive advising and counseling for students.

7. Educators must plan educational opportunities that provide for continuous student progress (i.e., allow students to progress at their own rates of learning).

8. Evaluation procedures need to be provided that help students discover and understand their strengths and weaknesses.

9. Cooperative school-wide planning among faculty, administration, and specialists is essential.

10. Teachers must create a positive classroom climate.
In which setting do you feel these items are best addressed for your sixth grader. Please place a check in only one column. That is, indicate where you believe each is accomplished best in a 6-8 or 7-8 environment. Space has also been provided should you feel that it makes no difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers who understand the educational needs of young adolescents.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Schools' ability to create a balanced curriculum based on young adolescent needs.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Schools that provide varied organizational arrangements rather than a 7 period day.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers' ability to use a variety of teaching methods.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Schools that provide a full exploratory program (e.g., varied activities with hands-on components).</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Schools that provide comprehensive advising and counseling for students.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Educational programs that provide continuous progress for students.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Evaluation procedures that help students discover and understand personal strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cooperative school-wide planning.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teachers who create a positive classroom climate.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
# Figure 1

**Percentages from survey of parental attitudes toward middle school**

## Parental Attitudes Toward Middle School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers must be knowledgeable about the educational needs of young adolescents.</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Schools need to create a balanced curriculum based on the needs of young adolescents (e.g., focus on academic, social, emotional, and physical factors).</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Schools should provide varied organizational arrangements to enhance the learning experience of the student (i.e., teaching teams using large blocks of time instead of a rigid seven period day).</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers need to use a variety of teaching methods.</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Schools need to provide a full exploratory program (i.e., high interest and short-term activities with hands-on components).</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Schools must provide comprehensive advising and counseling for students.</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Educators must plan educational opportunities that provide for continuous student progress (i.e., allow students to progress at their own rates of learning).</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Evaluation procedures need to be provided that help students discover and understand their strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cooperative school-wide planning among faculty, administration, and specialists is essential.</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teachers must create a positive classroom climate.</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 2**

**Parent Attitudes Toward Grade Structures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>6-8</th>
<th>7-8</th>
<th>No Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers who understand the educational needs of young adolescents.</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Schools' ability to create a balanced curriculum based on young adolescent needs.</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Schools that provide varied organizational arrangements rather than a 7 period day.</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers' ability to use a variety of teaching methods.</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Schools that provide a full exploratory program (e.g., varied activities with hands-on components).</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Schools that provide comprehensive advising and counseling for students.</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Educational programs that provide continuous progress for students.</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Evaluation procedures that help students discover and understand personal strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cooperative school-wide planning.</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teachers who create a positive classroom climate.</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Parental Comments
Parental Comments

Favorable to Middle Schools:

Comment 1- We need middle class schools in Beavercreek! Seventh and eighth graders are too young to be thrown into a "mini-high school" environment! Beavercreek Schools need to enter the twentieth century!

Comment 2- I feel it would be a much better learning atmosphere if the 6th graders were with the 7th and 8th graders.

Comment 3- I am more in favor of a middle (6-8) school environment than the present (7-9) junior high system.

Comment 4- I also feel the quality of the facilities and equipment is important and that Beavercreek Schools are sadly lacking quality facilities and equipment. How can this be remedied?!

Comment 5- I feel that a middle school (6-8) would be good for addressing and educating adolescents. I feel that it would be good for the 9th grade to be in the high school, as their grades and such are considered high school.

Comment 6- I feel a 6-8 middle school setting makes more sense for young adolescents and their needs. It would allow teachers more flexibility to team teach or use blocks of time to teach a particular unit. However, I have a child in the 7-9 junior high, and have found teachers can be positive, and understand the child's needs at that level too.
Unfavorable to Middle School:

Comment 7- I believe teachers of each grade level 6, 7, or 8 need to do the above. However, I still believe 6th graders do not need to be grouped with the 7th or 8th graders. Most are still immature and impressionable to be around 7-8 graders all day!

Comment 8- I am not in favor of the 6-8 middle school concept. I think that 6th graders needs in each of the areas indicated on this survey are best met in the K-6 environment.

Comment 9- I think we should keep the middle school as is: 7-9 graders.

Comment 10- I think that K-6 being in elementary school is fine. 6-8 puts kids together that are too far apart in ages 11-14,15.

General Comments:

Comment 11- I do not see how either environment has an advantage. Implementation requires commitment, not necessarily changes to organization.

Comment 12- I feel that there is a wide variation in levels of maturity between a 10 year old and a 14 year old, but all of the areas included in your survey apply to each child no matter what their current level of development.

Comment 13- These were difficult to select for "either or" since these are programs and procedures which ideally should be applied throughout the schooling process.
Comment 14- At age 12 years old (6th grade) I don't yet see a lot of adolescent characteristics. Many of the characteristics you are looking at should be a part of education grades K-12.

Comment 15- I feel that the above are all important no matter if the structure is 6-8 or 7-8.

Comment 16- These are all important to 6-8 graders.

Comment 17- Most of the above need to be started in earlier years and continued through the students' educational career.

Comment 18- These should be addressed from 6th through high school.

Comment 19- These are all items I'm interested in regardless whether grades 6-8 or 7-8 are situated in the same building. There are innovative ways of structuring time to gain time blocks vs. a 7 period day. If students are not strong in organizational skills, they will need help switching classes multiple times a day, until they mature or learn to cope with demands. I don't think 6th graders are mature enough for 7 periods.

Comment 20- I like the idea in # 3 above (e.g. spending several days on one subject area- and really study it intensely).
Comment 21- I'm not fully knowledgeable of advantages and learning disadvantages that varied organizational arrangements bring. I think some flexibility is important for teachers covering more difficult concepts at certain times, but I have doubts about subjects scheduled for 1 semester (i.e. math at 2-3 hours a day rather than 1 hour a day all year). Continuous progress and evaluation of my children's personal strengths and weaknesses have been the best tools for helping them learn.

Comment 22- I think the varied organizational arrangements rather than a 7 period day is an exciting, innovative approach. I believe in "sinking in" a concept. This is a great way to do it.

Comment 23- I've never had any experience with a middle school concept and how it differs from a junior high. My daughter is in education at UD and explains some of the differences, but I still could use more information to decide which I really feel is more advantageous, if either one is.

Miscellaneous Comments:

Comment 24- Regarding #6 of both sections (comprehensive advising and counseling) care should always be taken to ensure open communication between parent/guardian and school guidance. The school must be careful to respect parental views (and turf)!

Comment 25- It makes sense to group together the ages of most growth and hormonal disruption so that counselors and such can provide for these special needs individually and in group sessions.
Comment 26- I really feel our (at one time) excellent schools in Beavercreek district should provide comprehensive advising and counseling or tutoring for the kids in need of it, especially if it's short term.

Comment 27- We don't believe counseling is necessary in the schools. Church is better for that.

Comment 28- As one with a Master's Degree in Education and a parent, I don't see that many of these questions hit the mark reference organization of middle schools. Most questions are motherhood and apple pie ideas of good versus poor educational institutions. There seems to be a prejudice toward the idea that emotional support is a primary responsibility of schools. In this community that primary function remains with parents. In Beavercreek, schools are seen as supporting parental values, not establishing them.

Comment 29- I feel positive classroom environments are necessary to encourage the self-esteem of our youth today.

Survey Criticisms:

Comment 30- I felt a little uncomfortable with the word "must" which is used in some of the questions. I would have probably answered entirely "extremely important" if it had been written with a "should".

Comment 31- Kids in 6-8 or 7-8 ages vary so little that they render these questions invalid.

Comment 32- To compare grade level organization best for a 6th grader- should you not have used (4-6) and (6-8) rather than the (7-8)?
Comment 33- Part 2 (the above) is confusing. What are you trying to measure? Questions in Part 1 are good- but most of them apply to all educational environments, 6 - 12.