

SUMMATIVE REPORT III

**EXTENSION OF SUMMATIVE REPORT II
INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS
OF THE ARIZONA CAREER LADDER RESEARCH
& EVALUATION PROJECT**

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SUMMATIVE REPORT III
EXTENSION OF TASK FORCE
REPORT II

Summative Report and Recommendations for Program Modification
of the Arizona Career Ladder Research
and Evaluation Project

Overview

Summative Report II was prepared for presentation to the Task Force on September 14, 1989. The contents of that document consist of a response to the initial Task Force request that the NAU research and evaluation project present evaluative evidence which addresses specific issues.

Initial Task Force Directives. Through the Senate Chair of the JLCCL, the Task Force requested that the districts and NAU separately develop and present evaluative information related to two major concept areas: (1) the type of *organizational environment* (or district *readiness levels*) required for successful integration and implementation of operational career ladder models; and (2) specific evidence of the impact of the intervention program on identification and improvement in levels of effectiveness of four major areas considered to be key elements to the success of the career ladder concept. The four career ladder goal areas which the Task Force identified as essential for immediate consideration were as follows: 1) *student achievement*; 2) *teacher evaluation*; 3) *job enlargement*; and 4) *finance and funding*.

Summative Report III. This report is an extension of the previous Task Force assignment to add the following items: (1) to expand evaluative response to legislative guidelines not previously reported; (2) to address specific legislative staff questions identified as needing attention; and (3) to recommend additional policy targeted at certain important elements not previously included in the legislation.

A. Expanded Evaluative Response to Legislative Policy and Staff Questions

1. Future Legislative Involvement. A major consideration for Task Force resolution relates to the question of whether the Legislature should cease to continue any involvement in the career ladder policy after completion of the pilot-test.

a) Related Legislative Guidelines. In 1988, S. B. 1195 essentially included the original policy guidelines of S. B. 1336 (developed in 1985) and S. B. 1384 (revised in 1986). It also re-established and expanded the *Joint Legislative Committee on Career Ladders*. S. B. 1195 (Section 4, A.) states, in part,

"A joint legislative committee on career ladders is established consisting of five members of the senate education committee appointed by the president of the senate, five members of the house of representatives education committee appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, one educator appointed by the president of the senate, three members of the state board of education appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and president of the senate. . . ."

b) General Research Findings. *The "Model of Interrelated Components of Program Support and Focus for Effecting Change and Reform in Education" is the result of five years of study related to reform movements and career ladder programs across the nation (see Figure 2, page 20, for a copy of the model). "Legislative Guidelines" is at the base of the model, depicting its foundational importance in directing and supporting educational reform and change.*

Legislative policy and involvement has been crucial in determining the levels of success of various programs. Evaluative observations indicate that an oversight committee with the power to develop and implement policy cooperatively is a key element in assuring that program goals are met and that they continue to be refined and improved in the future.

Educational change and reform has failed in the past, largely as a result of diffusion of responsibility and lack of clear intent and action in requiring direct

and specific accountability. Components of government bureaucracies have a tendency of traditionalizing and solidifying after legislation is "completed" and transferred to other agencies, without ongoing formal channels of communication and cooperation for instituting necessary program revisions through planning, development, change and improvement.

c) Recommended Program Continuations and Modifications. Based on legislative guidelines and the research and evaluation findings, the following recommendations are in order:

- (1) A joint legislative committee should continue to function as a crucial component to oversee and assure continuing program development and improvement. As in the past, the committee structure should provide for a balance of members representing government officials, educational professionals and business and industry representatives.
- (2) The committee should convene every three to five years to receive evaluative reports on program progress, as well as to forward appropriate revisions and to make decisions about future program continuation.

2. Teacher Input and Ownership. A primary goal of the career ladder legislation was to provide for involvement of teachers in program planning.

a) Related Legislative Guidelines. Section 5. "Requirements for career ladder plan" essentially remained the same with respect to teacher input for Senate Bills 1336, 1384 and 1195.

"Sec. 5. Requirements for career ladder plan. To receive approval to budget for a career ladder program as provided in section 4 of this act, a school district's career ladder plan must contain the following:

1. Evidence that the plan was developed in consultation with the district's teachers. . . ."

to Sec. 5., #12, which states the following:

12. "Evidence of the extent of support for the plan by the teachers in the school district. If there is no consensus among the teachers of the school district, statements both from those opposing the plan and from those supporting the plan shall be included in the plan."

- b) General Research Findings. *The three interrelated areas of the model (page 20) which are most directly affected by teacher involvement in the planning of programs within which they must work are the following: (1) Professional Input and Ownership; (2) Motivation; and (3) Organizational Factors of Climate (i.e., Communication, Interpersonal Relationships, Psychological/Emotional Well-being, etc.) (See Figure 2, page 20 for a copy of the model).*

Programs which have instituted the greatest amount of planning and expanded involvement of teacher leaders have also been the most successful. Individuals are motivated to complete tasks at a higher level of performance when they are treated in a mature adult manner, as well as trusted and supported to "do their jobs" as professionals. Teachers in those organizations which practice open, positive, and clear communication and establish a cooperative environment have also shown correspondingly higher levels of appreciation for the career ladder concept. Several districts have established steering committees which are predominantly composed of teachers; however, other districts have isolated committee operations and have depreciated the advantages of program integration within the total educational system. When teacher leadership within a given district is opposed to the program, the results are essentially a waste of state and local resources.

Furthermore, a self-evaluation of the data-collection process has strongly indicated the existence of a response bias on the part of some districts. This was undoubtedly due, in large measure, to their well-intentioned desire to receive positive responses related to levels of teacher support.

c) Recommended Program Continuations and Modifications. Based on the legislative guidelines and the research and evaluation findings, the following recommendations are in order:

(1) Teachers should continue to provide input into programs at all levels, but they should have a greater role than simply that of a "consultant." At a minimum, legislative policy should officially recognize the importance of professional teacher input into all of the following areas: planning, implementing and evaluating programs for initiation of needed change and improvement.

(2) Before being approved for initial or ongoing funding for a career ladder program, districts should be required to demonstrate a majority support of teacher and administrative personnel by confidential ballot. This process may need to be conducted by the outside program evaluators.

3. Program Plans, Designs and Structures. The legislative guidelines clearly specified that a well-developed plan is necessary for implementation and approval. Therefore, the Joint Legislative Committee has provided greater policy specificity over the pilot-test period.

This section of the report will list those parts of the law in Sec. 5. *Requirements for career ladder plan*, which have been targeted as important components of the research and evaluation activity, but not previously addressed in other areas of the summative documents. The "General Research Findings" and "Recommended Program Modifications and Continuations" will follow the same order of listing.

a) Related Legislative Guidelines. Section 5. Requirements for career ladder plan, states, in part:

"To receive approval to budget for a career ladder program as provided in section 4 of this act, a school district's career ladder must contain the following:"

(1) Paragraph 3 relates to **professional advancement**:

"A description of the career ladder which provides opportunities to teachers for continued professional advancement, . . ."

(2) Paragraph 4 discusses **education as a requirement** and states, in part,

"Education as a requirement for advancement shall be related to advanced performance or expertise and a minimum number of unspecified credits shall not be used as a criteria for advancement."

(3) Paragraph 6, (c) provides for **teacher improvement**:

"(c) Opportunities for improvement of teacher performance."

(4) Paragraph 9 relates to **implementation plans**:

"Plans for implementation of the career ladder program for teachers."

(5) Paragraph 10 provides for **periodic program evaluation**:

"A plan for the periodic review of the career ladder program for teachers which includes who is conducting the review, how the review is performed and the time line for the review."

(6) Paragraph 11 relates to **administrative evaluation**:

"A description of how the school district's faculty development program and system for evaluating principals will be revised or adapted to provide support for the career ladder program for teachers."

- b) General Research Findings. *Research and evaluation indicates that most districts are doing an excellent job of developing and improving program plans, designs and structures. These documents are clearly providing specific patterns for systematic professional advancement which are linked to differing levels of performance and are based on specific evaluation criteria. But while all districts have developed excellent plans and guidelines, their actual readiness levels with respect to successful implementation of these designs are extremely diverse.*

Continued education is a rational and effective path to faculty development, especially when it is in the form of a requirement which is tied to performance and assessed improvement needs of teachers. This procedure focuses energies on local instructional and school needs. Even though it is standard procedure, randomly taking courses for college credit which may not relate to improving teachers' skills, students' learning or improved professional activities has not proven to be an effective practice.

*The career ladder program has been extremely successful in focusing school systems' efforts and resources on providing opportunities for **improvement of teacher performance**. Whether provided by internal sources or by outside consultants (i.e., universities and professional experts) **inservice education** has increasingly met the assessed needs of schools and teachers.*

*Research indicates that teachers see opportunities for improvement of their performance as a significant **intrinsic motivator**. The career ladder program allows teachers to identify their own needed areas of improvement, and it is extremely motivating to them to realize positive changes in effectiveness. Initial research findings suggest, in fact, that this motivational factor may be as important as the extrinsic reward of money.*

***Implementation plans** of program designs and structures have been well developed in accordance with the time lines specified by the JLCCL; however, requiring diverse districts to implement plans according to identical time schedules is inefficient and uneconomical. For several such districts, implementation of the comprehensive and complex requirements of the career ladder program policy has resulted in extreme hardship and has also aggravated existing negative conditions; furthermore, in some cases it has been very destructive to morale.*

In addition to external program evaluation, periodic program evaluations are a necessary internal activity for change and improvement. This requirement has caused districts to focus on their own specific needs as well as to develop local program evaluation functions and procedures which were formerly nonexistent.

Attempts to develop teachers in isolation, without focusing on other related key components of educational effectiveness, has been a major reason for the failures of past reform programs. Therefore, administrative evaluation and development is crucial to the success of faculty and student evaluation and improvement. Districts have expended considerable effort in upgrading administrative personnel who work closely with the evaluation and instructional processes.

c) Recommended Program Continuations and Modifications. Based on the legislative guidelines and the research and evaluation findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

(1) The career ladder program should continue to require districts to provide well-planned designs and structures guidelines which clearly define the different career levels, as well as requirements for being able to serve on those levels, and the necessary processes and procedures for advancement. Plans for professional advancement should be adjusted to meet the needs for implementation time and readiness level capabilities of each individual district, in order for it to be able to differentiate staff based on performance reliably. These concerns would be addressed by assessment of district readiness levels, profiling organizational needs and placement of each district on one of the three proposed alternative readiness levels.

(2) Career ladder policy should require that continued education and inservice of teachers be tied to assessed improvement needs and performance levels.

- (3) The career ladder program should also continue to require provision of opportunities for improvement of teacher performance. Since improvement in ability to teach and to provide leadership through direct influence of important district programs has been found to be highly motivating, districts should continue to focus more attention on this significant potential intrinsic reward.
 - (4) Requirement for approval as a career ladder district should continue to be based on the preparation of a well-planned document which clearly defines the conditions and steps for teacher career advancement. Should the program be expanded to include other state districts, current plans would provide excellent models and guides for new participants.
 - (5) Internal periodic review by districts is essential. In addition, the legislation needs to be strengthened to require an integrative research and development component within the district to conduct the following activities: (a) documentation of program progress over a long-term period; (b) coordination of interrelated district programs, and (c) collection of evidence of progress related to the effect of teacher performance on student learning.
 - (6) Administrative evaluation based on effectiveness in providing support for the career ladder program for teachers should be modified to require more than a simple description of the existing program. All approved districts should be held accountable for meeting the program intent of developing or maintaining administrative expertise required for teacher support.
4. Outside or Third-Party Research and Evaluation. Career ladder legislation provided for evaluation of the program by a source which is external to special interests, as well as spheres of influence of districts and teachers involved.
- a) Related Legislative Guidelines. Section 7. Study of career ladder programs relates to provisions for program research and evaluation as follows:

"The center for excellence in education at a state university designated by the Arizona board of regents shall conduct a study of the career ladder programs implemented by the school districts which budget for career ladder expenses . . ."

- b) General Research Findings. *On July 20, 1989, the researchers presented "A Chronology of Research and Evaluation Procedures for Assessment of the Pilot-test Career Ladders Teacher Performance and Incentive Programs, 1985 to 1990." This publication documented the research and evaluation project procedure for policy development and recommendations (See Figure 1, page 19 for a model depicting data collection, analysis, reduction and reporting procedures). Ongoing research consists of continued application of the latest, most sophisticated research and statistical designs and methodologies available, and extends into greater specificity of studying questions which arise from this type of comprehensive research activity.*

This research has attracted widespread interest and positive commentary from a number of distinguished national sources. The University of Arizona and Arizona State University have cooperated in applying considerable time and expertise to the development and implementation of research instrumentation. In addition, ASU is continuing a state-wide study of the important elements of teacher performance and student achievement. The Far West Laboratory has reviewed the research documents and provided information as to their own experiences with other state evaluations. The Rand Corporation, in cooperation with several university research organizations, is studying the process of effective policy development through use of objective research to support public decision makers and legislation within governing bodies. The proposed alternative three models, or levels of program participation, have been very favorably reviewed by the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. In their publications, the Southern Regional Board Clearinghouse has

officially recognized the evaluative efforts as being one of the most valuable third-party program evaluations in the country. These research accomplishments were prominently featured in the HORIZONS: Opportunities for Tomorrow, which is a premiere research publication at Northern Arizona University. Inquiries for information continue to be steadily received from local, state, national and international educators and fellow researchers.

The Arizona legislature chose a wise course when it established a pilot-test procedure of several years' duration. Objective research and evaluation is a key to successful change and reform of complex social systems.

c) Recommended Program Continuations and Modifications. Based on five years of experience in researching and evaluating the career ladder program, the following recommendations are suggested:

- (1) As established by current legislation, the existing career ladder programs should continue to be researched and evaluated by the Center for Excellence in Education at Northern Arizona University in cooperation with ongoing studies being conducted by Arizona State University and individual career ladder districts. Cooperative efforts in supporting doctoral study should be encouraged at all three state universities.
- (2) Legislation should be modified to include an assessment and profiling responsibility of the research center. This assessment would result in placement of districts into the developing, transitional and excellent schools models. In addition, it would provide specific information about support and focus components within those districts which are in need of change or improvement.
- (3) Responsibilities of the research and evaluation center should include assistance to districts in the planning and implementation of their own internal R & D program.

5. School District Governing Boards. As it relates to the local board, legislative content predominantly addressed the budgetary relationship between state funding and formulas for local expenditures. It also required "Phase III" districts to follow a specified "career development evaluation model" which was supported by the organized teaching profession.

a) Related Legislative Guidelines. A sample statement related to the budget and the specified evaluation model can be found in section 8. Provisions for career ladder programs based on a career development evaluation model. It states, in part:

"A. The governing board of any school district not already budgeting for a career ladder program may apply to the joint legislative committee on career ladders for approval to budget for a career ladder program based on a career development evaluation model beginning with fiscal year 1987-1988 as follows:"

b) General Research Findings. *All available research to date which has been directing formulation of the Center's model of organizational support and focus components has substantiated the importance of the local governing board. More specifically, the governing board in the district has been shown to be a key interrelated support component, one which maintains a unique and central role in the success of career ladder programs.*

Governing boards which understand and support the principle of rewarding teachers based on competencies and performance related to student achievement have realized a much greater amount of positive support for appropriate change and improvement. On the other hand, those boards which have shown little interest in the career ladder program, or have used it as a tool to promote their own political interests and personal animosities, have been extremely destructive to successful reform and improvement.

The "career development evaluation model" required for Phase III districts was not validated prior to legislating its implementation. This model should be specifically studied to determine if it is a theoretically and practically sound means of realizing the goals of the career ladder program.

- c) Recommended Program Continuations and Modifications. Based on five years of experience in researching, evaluating and building the resultant model of interrelated organizational support and focus factors, the following recommendations are suggested:
- (1) Legislation should be modified to require governing boards in those districts which request and are approved for career ladder funding to understand both the goals of the program and their responsibility to support the reform and change needed within the district, in order to assure maximally effective and efficient expenditures of funds.
 - (2) Local boards should be assessed by the "third-party evaluator," along with the other essential organizational components in the district, in order to determine members' levels of understanding and support for the career ladder concept. If they are insufficiently prepared to provide adequate support, they should receive specially targeted inservice assistance.
 - (3) Several important concepts related to the CL legislation are the focus of an ongoing research study, i.e., recruitment/retention, motivation, research bias, support of the organized profession, applications of the support and focus model, and the ASU/NAU teacher performance/student achievement research. The "career development evaluation model" for Phase III districts is one of several components which warrants considerable attention and further analysis. This model should be studied and validated prior to its required adoption by individual districts. Until its value is more

clearly understood, any new districts should be allowed a choice of all available proven models being utilized by successful career ladder districts.

B. Additional Guidelines For Legislative Inclusion. Other issues not addressed by current career ladder legislation have become evident during the first five years of research on impact and effectiveness of the law on improved teaching conditions and student achievement. Three especially important recommended additions which require immediate attention relate to the following areas: (1) a professional network; (2) educational specialists; and (3) funding of program research and evaluation.

1. Professional Network. The "Career Ladder Pilot-District Network" is a committee composed of representatives from each of the career ladder districts. One of the sub-groups within this committee is a research division.

a) General Research Findings. *In general, the network serves a very important function of communication between districts and policy-making bodies. Specifically, the organization has been invaluable in its cooperation and assistance with the ongoing research and evaluation efforts. This type of support component is needed within the total interrelated system, mainly to serve as a dynamic and creative unit which is not directly tied to the more traditional standardized operations of bureaucratic agencies required to carry out stated policy. While it is not, and should not, be a policy-making body, the network can serve to make recommendations and support needs for improved legislation in the future.*

b) Recommended Program Additions. Based on five years of program evaluation, the following recommendations for policy additions are proposed:

(1) The law should be modified to include a network which functions outside the jurisdiction and influence of present governing bodies.

(2) Districts approved for career ladder funding should be required to become members of a professional network, for the purpose of assisting each other

in program improvement, as well as making recommendations to governing bodies for needed policy refinements and changes.

2. Educational Specialists. Educational specialists who come into direct developmental contact with students (i.e., school psychologists, counselors, library or media center personnel and nurses) were not explicitly included in the legislation. Only the teaching staff who have direct classroom contact with academic subjects which have traditional methods of evaluation were considered.

a) General Research Findings. *The exclusion of educational specialists from career development opportunities afforded to the regular classroom teachers, while probably due to oversight, has not served to enhance the effectiveness of school organization. Considerable knowledge and evidence supports the fact that students have little chance of learning well if they are socially, emotionally (psychologically), or physically impaired, or if they fail to acquire the necessary skills to locate and comprehend knowledge in libraries and other organized resources.*

Another finding relates to special-area teachers in the creative arts, certain vocational courses and in the special-education and physical-education areas. While they constitute "teachers" according to career ladder specifications, evaluation of their levels of performance and development are considerably lacking in methodologic sophistication.

b) Recommended Program Additions. Based on five years of program evaluation, the following recommendations for policy additions are suggested:

(1) Educational specialists should be included within the staff definition, and thereby explicitly recognized as influencing student growth and related academic achievement.

- (2) The curriculum (i. e., the planned learning experiences under the schools' jurisdictional responsibility) which educational specialists apply should be documented and validated.
- (3) An evaluation system should be developed to assess the level at which specialists are performing their respective established curricular roles and functions.
- (4) Educational specialists in "developing schools" should have the same opportunities for job enlargement assignments as regular teachers.
- (5) In most school districts special-area teachers (i.e., art, music, band, physical education, pre-school and kindergarten) are as different in their assigned responsibilities as educational specialists; therefore, they may require a separate curriculum and evaluation system.

3. Funding of Third-Party Research and Evaluation. While the Career Ladder legislation provided for outside research and evaluation, it failed to establish a formal means of financing for conducting this evaluative activity. Therefore, a critical **recommended program addition** is to make explicit provision for evaluation expenditures as a separate line item in future budgets.

C. Evaluation of Program Support Needs Outside Current Career Ladder Jurisdictional Policy

1. University Role, Responsibilities and Needs For Change. In order to serve as a more positive support for the student and instructional needs of education generally, universities should be encouraged to review and revise curricula to which future teachers are exposed. Key deficiencies observed to be predominant with respect to teachers practicing their professional responsibilities relate to the following knowledge and skill domains:
 - a) Professional Level Understanding of Principles or Laws of Human Development from Early Childhood through Adolescence

- b) Academic Knowledge within the Full Range of Content Taught
 - c) Knowledge of Social, Emotional and Psychological Development Associated
 - d) Understanding, Knowledge and Skills in the Use of Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment and Evaluation of Students' Social and Emotional Progress and Academic Learning.
2. Teacher Certification and Licensing. Certification policy should be reviewed to determine the adequacy of present requirements for high-quality instructional personnel, in order to fulfill its function as a positive support in promoting teachers' knowledge and skills development. Well articulated and focused needs of teachers, as well as improvements in certification policy and university teacher education programs, would enhance teacher performance and student achievement.
 3. Influence of Community and the Private Sector. School/Community partnerships are key ingredients to improved learning environments. Through the career ladder concept, job enlargement of teacher leaders and educational specialists can be a very positive element for needed expansion of program association and development. Specific and targeted programs which directly involve parents and community agencies and leaders should be encouraged.

The private sector, such as business, industry and foundations, have exerted significant influence with specific programs, but the total interrelated organizational picture has received little integrative assistance. For example, business and industry has had considerable experience in identifying the kind of work environment which produces the greatest and most positive performance and production. It would therefore be beneficial for school organizations to team up with the private sector and work on the systems' organizational structure and procedures of operation.

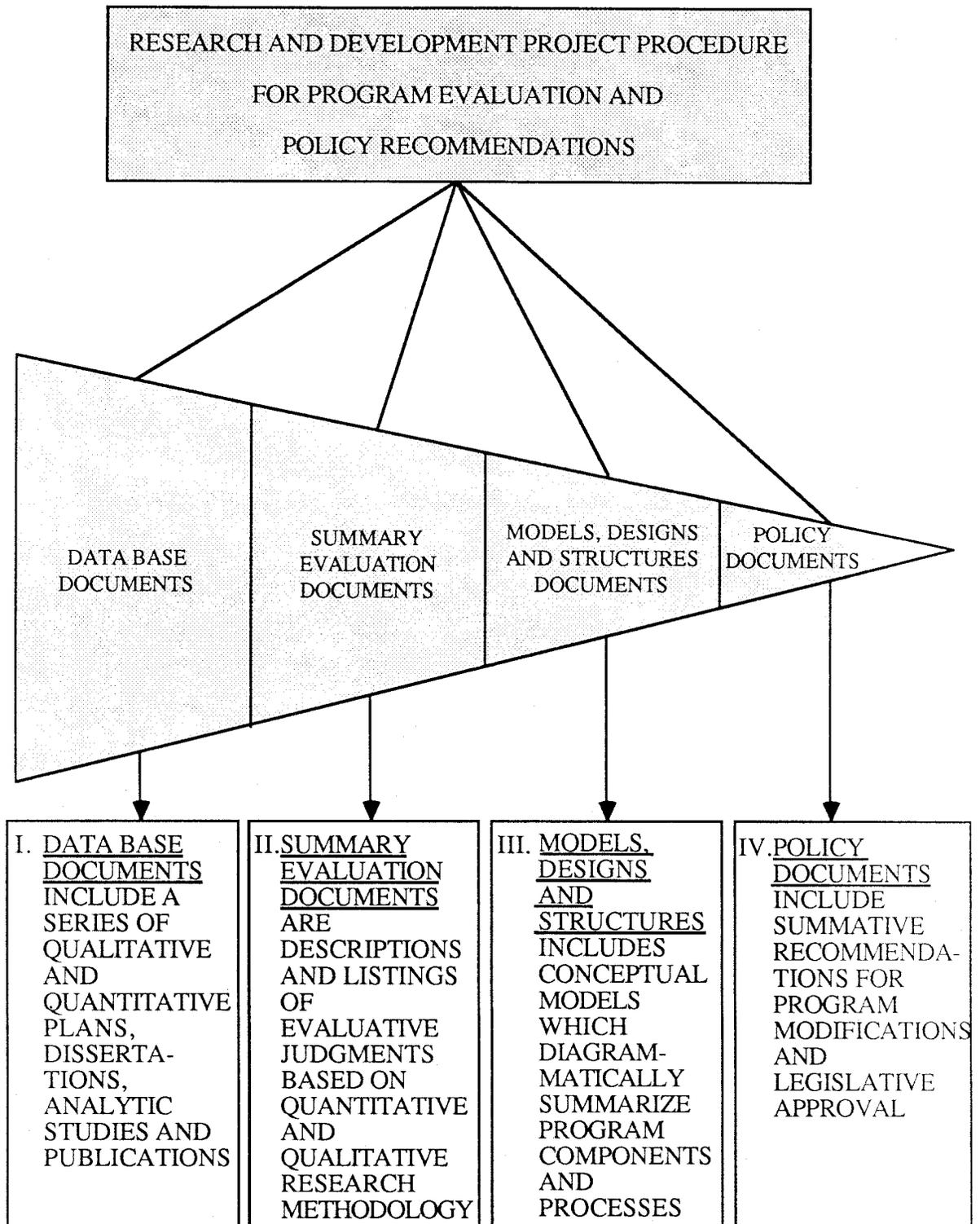
The interrelated support and focus factors which relate to such joint efforts have been identified. Education critically needs outside assistance in refining these

essential organizational components as defined in the evaluation model (see page 20). In particular, education requires support which is not confined to isolated components of essential operations; that is, the total system must be functioning on a high level before effective progress can be maximally accomplished.

Conclusion

If the career ladder program continues as recommended by the evaluators, and if it is expanded to allow an application and approval process for other Arizona school districts, the present Career Ladder districts should continue to be funded at current levels for a three-year period. At the end of that period of time, those districts not meeting the requirements of the Effective Career Ladder Schools Model would be placed at a developing or transitional level and receive appropriate funding for that particular stage of development. Additional schools would be admitted to the program at an approved rate based on the state's funding capabilities and according to their respective assessed model levels.

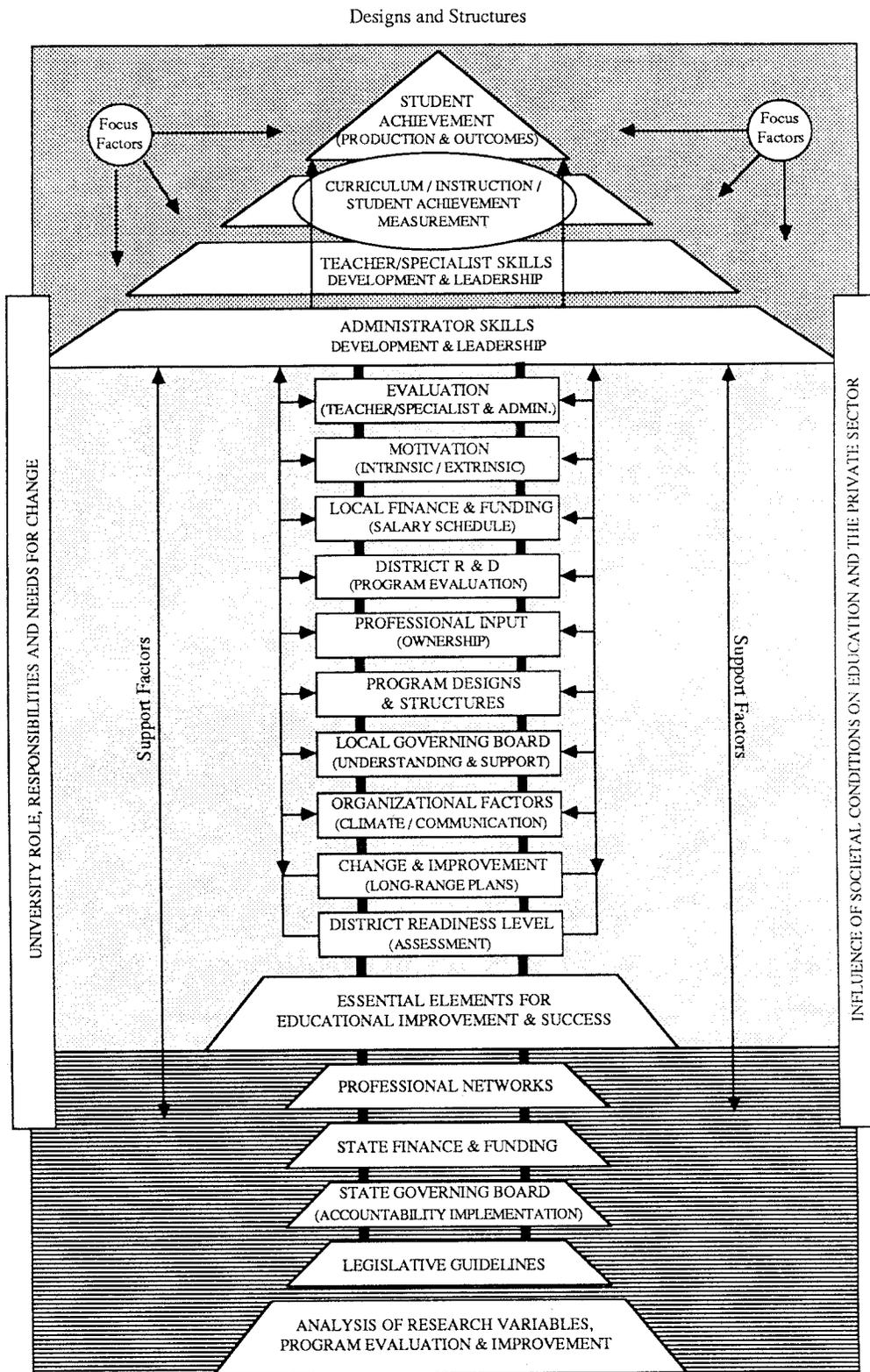
Figure 1



Model Depicting Documentation Procedures of Data Analysis, Reduction and Reporting for Policy Recommendations

Figure 2

MAPPING THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL REFORM:



A Model of Interrelated Components of Program Support and Focus for Effecting Change and Reform in Education