

Appendix B

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Southwest Educational Development Laboratory Resource Allocation Study Overview

*Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701
www.sedl.org*

SEDL, in partnership with the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas, is examining resource allocation in relation to student performance in public school districts across SEDL's region. SEDL researchers will analyze data from existing databases from state education agencies and school districts, as well as from interviews, focus groups, surveys, and documents gathered from administrators and educators through on-site visits, telephone conversations, web pages, and mailings. The study will explore differences in district-level spending for varying levels of student achievement and resource allocation practices and challenges related to high student performance in school districts that have exhibited consistent, sustained performance improvement over time. The results will provide state and local decision-makers with information and strategies for improving resource allocation to support greater student success. A research report will be available in December 2002. The research questions are:

1. What are the expenditure patterns over time in school districts across varying levels of student performance?
2. How do improvement school districts allocate their financial resources?
3. What allocation practices have improvement school districts implemented that they identify as innovative and effective?
4. What barriers and challenges have improvement school districts faced in allocation practices?

Staff contact: [Fill in researcher's name, title, and contact information]

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory Resource Allocation Study Consent Form

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin are conducting a study to examine resource allocation in school districts. The study began in early 2001 and will conclude in December 2002. Your superintendent has agreed to the participation of your district in this study. Researchers will gather information about resource allocation from 12 school districts in four states: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas. Researchers are also studying two other districts in your state.

Researchers invite you to take part in this study of resource allocation by participating in an 90-minute interview. Your interviewer is _____, a _____ staff member. She will tape record your interview and take some notes during the interview. She may be accompanied during the interview by one of her research partners. If you decide to participate in the interview, you will be asked about the type of performance gains achieved by your district, resource allocation efforts directed toward improving student performance, barriers and challenges your district may have faced in allocating resources, and resource allocation practices you consider effective.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your responses will not be linked to your name in any written or verbal report of this research project. There will be no identifying information in publicly released reports, and school district identification will be coded in pseudonyms. Interview audiotapes will remain in a locked file at the Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

A report of the research results will be available in December 2002. Our final research report will help states and school districts improve resource allocation to increase student achievement. The final report will be available in a published format and will also be posted on the SEDL web site. Findings from the study will also be presented at professional conferences.

If you have questions, please contact your interviewer, _____, at (____) _____ or Dr. Catherine Clark (512-232-9207). You will receive a copy of this consent form for your records.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your decision will not affect your future relations with SEDL, the Charles A. Dana Center, or The University of Texas. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate in the study. If you later decide that you do not want to participate in the study, simply call the interviewer or Catherine Clark. You may discontinue your participation in this study at any time.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

Improvement District Interview Protocol
District Administrator

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SEDL Resource Allocation Study
September 2001

Complete this information prior to the interview. Verify it at the time of the interview.

Interviewee Name: _____

Title: _____

School District: _____

Address: _____

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Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Interview Date: _____

Interview Location: _____

Interviewer Guidelines

In preparation for the site visit, collect available background materials regarding the district/school finance structure, recent improvement efforts, teacher compensation schedules or policies, etc. Also review any data compiled and analyzed that will help provide insights on accountability status, teacher tenure/turnover, allocation patterns, student performance improvement history, demographics, unique features. Use this information and the responses provided by the interviewee to help frame the interview questions. Interview prompts are in check boxes under some questions. They should be used to probe for information the interviewee may not discuss in their initial response.

The interview sections are coded to clarify the purpose of the questions in relation to our research questions, i.e., contextual or RQ2-4.

RQ2 = How do improvement districts allocate their financial resources?

RQ3 = What allocation practices have improvement districts implemented that they identify as innovative and effective?

RQ4 = What barriers and challenges have improvement districts faced in allocation practices?

Introduction and consent information to be read aloud or explained before the interview:

I'm _____ from _____ and this is _____ from _____ (introduce interviewers). The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory is a private non-profit organization that works to improve education through research and development. In collaboration with the Dana Center at the University of Texas, we are studying education resource allocation in the Southwestern Region. We are conducting interviews with state, district, and school decision-makers to gain a better understanding of how education resources are allocated to support student performance. The purpose of this interview is to learn about your district's successful allocation practices and the barriers and challenges your district has faced. The information you provide will be confidential and will only be used by the researchers for this study.

Please review and sign the consent form (Get signature on consent form)

Do you have any questions? If you have any questions during the interview, please ask; or if you think of any after the interview, please feel free to contact me at any time (give how to reach you- a business card perhaps).

I would like to record our conversation so that I can refer back to it later for analysis. Is it all right if I record our conversation?

If “**yes**”, tell the interviewee — If at any time during this interview you want me to turn off the tape, just let me know. Also tell me if you decide after the interview that you'd like part of our conversation erased from the tape or considered “off-the-record.” If you would like to end the interview at any time, please let me know. **Begin the audiotape.**

If “**no**”, do not begin the audiotape, just take notes manually. Tell the interviewee —Please tell me if you would like any part of our conversation considered “off-the-record.” If you would like to end the interview at any time, please let me know.

Introductory Lead-In [contextual]

First, I'll ask you a few general questions about you and [insert district name]

1. What are your major responsibilities in your current position with the district?

2. Describe the focus of your current work?

3. How long have you been in this position in the district?

- <1 year 1 - 2 years > 2 - 5 years > 5-10 years > 10 years

4. What would you say is unique about your district?

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Student Performance and Resource Allocation [RQ 2, RQ3, RQ4]

As you know, our study is examining the relationship between resource allocation and student performance. By resource allocation we mean how funds, personnel, programs, and facilities are expended to meet school and district needs. According to state data, your district has sustained continuous improvement in student performance for at least 2 years. (*Be familiar with the district's accountability data.*) The next questions will help us learn about these improvements and their relationship to your district's resource allocation practices.

5. Tell me about performance gains in your district over the past 5 years?

- overall achievement achievement in specific subject areas attendance drop-outs other areas

<p>6a. What did your district do to accomplish these gains? (<i>describe one change</i>)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spending change <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing change <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction change <input type="checkbox"/> Other change	<p>What students were affected?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> All students <input type="checkbox"/> Special population <input type="checkbox"/> Grade level <hr/> <p>What academic areas were influenced?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/bilingual <input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Other subjects
<p>What resources (funds, people, programs, facilities) were used for this change?</p>		
<p>How were your resources, fiscal and non-fiscal, reallocated to support this change?</p>		
<p>How do you know this change has made an impact on student performance improvements?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Used student achievement data only <input type="checkbox"/> Used other student performance data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other than data to evaluate	

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<p>6b. What did your district do to accomplish these gains? (<i>describe another</i>)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spending change <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing change <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction change <input type="checkbox"/> Other change	<p>What students were affected?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> All students <input type="checkbox"/> Special population <input type="checkbox"/> Grade level
<p>What resources (funds, people, programs, facilities) were used for this change?</p>		<p>What academic areas were influenced?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/bilingual <input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Other subjects
<p>How were your resources, fiscal and non-fiscal, reallocated to support this change?</p>		
<p>How do you know this change has made an impact on student performance improvements?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Used student achievement data only <input type="checkbox"/> Used other student performance data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other than data to evaluate	

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<p>6c. What did your district do to accomplish these gains? (<i>describe another</i>)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spending change <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing change <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction change <input type="checkbox"/> Other change	<p>What students were affected?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> All students <input type="checkbox"/> Special population <input type="checkbox"/> Grade level
		<p>What academic areas were influenced?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/bilingual <input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Other subjects
<p>What resources (funds, people, programs, facilities) were used for this change?</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> New money <input type="checkbox"/> Existing money <input type="checkbox"/> Outside sources		
<p>How were your resources, fiscal and non-fiscal, reallocated to support this change?</p>		
<p>How do you know this change has made an impact on student performance improvements?</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Used student achievement data only <input type="checkbox"/> Used other student performance data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other than data to evaluate

<p>6d. What did your district do to accomplish these gains? (<i>describe another</i>)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spending change <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing change <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction change <input type="checkbox"/> Other change	<p>What students were affected?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> All students <input type="checkbox"/> Special population <input type="checkbox"/> Grade level
<p>What resources (funds, people, programs, facilities) were used for this change?</p>		<p>What academic areas were influenced?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/bilingual <input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Other subjects
<p>How were your resources, fiscal and non-fiscal, reallocated to support this change?</p>		
<p>How do you know this change has made an impact on student performance improvements?</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Used student achievement data only <input type="checkbox"/> Used other student performance data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other than data to evaluate

Now, I'd like to find out about any barriers and challenges your district has faced over the past 5 years in allocating resources to support your student performance improvements. These may include financial, staffing, instructional, student population, or any other barriers or challenges.

7a. Tell me about one barrier or challenge your district has faced?	How is the district working to overcome this barrier/challenge?
7b. Tell me about another barrier or challenge your district has faced?	How is the district working to overcome this barrier/challenge?

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<p>7c. Tell me about another barrier or challenge your district has faced?</p>	<p>How is the district working to overcome this barrier/challenge?</p>
<p>7d. Tell me about another barrier or challenge your district has faced?</p>	<p>How is the district working to overcome this barrier/challenge?</p>

General Funding and Resource Allocation Practices [RQ 2]

Our previous questions have focused on student performance. Now, I'd like to learn more about [insert district's name]'s general resource allocation practices, not just those related to your improved student performance.

8. In general over the past several years, what shifts were made in your district resource allocations to meet district needs?

9. Tell me about factors, fiscal and non-fiscal, that were a major influence on district allocation changes in the last 5 years?

9a. <i>List one factor</i>	<i>How has this factor influenced changes in your allocation of resources over the past 5 years?</i>	<i>What key people have been (or will be) involved in dealing with this?</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing issues/policies <input type="checkbox"/> Goals/priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Mandates and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Other factor		

<p>9b. <i>List another factor</i></p>	<p><i>How has this factor influenced changes in your allocation of resources over the past 5 years?</i></p>	<p><i>What key people have been (or will be) involved in dealing with this?</i></p>
<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing issues/policies <input type="checkbox"/> Goals/priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Mandates and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Other factor </p>		
<p>9c. <i>List another factor</i></p>	<p><i>How has this factor influenced changes in your allocation of resources over the past 5 years?</i></p>	<p><i>What key people have been (or will be) involved in dealing with this?</i></p>
<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing issues/policies <input type="checkbox"/> Goals/priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Mandates and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Other factor </p>		

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9d. <i>List another factor</i>	<i>How has this factor influenced changes in your allocation of resources over the past 5 years?</i>	<i>What key people have been (or will be) involved in dealing with this?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing issues/policies <input type="checkbox"/> Goals/priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Mandates and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Other factor 		
<p>10. What factors do you think will be a major influence on the allocation of resources in your district in the next 5 years?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> funding <input type="checkbox"/> characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> staffing issues/policies <input type="checkbox"/> goals/priorities <input type="checkbox"/> federal/state mandates and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> other</p>		

We are coming to the end of the interview. I have just two more general questions to ask you.

11. What advice would you give regarding resource allocation to another district that is working to make improvements in student performance?

12. What other information do you think might be important for us to know about resource allocation and improved student performance in your district?

NOTE: Ask other interview staff if they have any additional questions or comments of the interviewee.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS INTERVIEW FOR OUR STUDY.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact me at:

Improvement District Interview Protocol
School Administrator

SEDL Resource Allocation Study
September 2001

Complete this information prior to the interview. Verify it at the time of the interview.

Interviewee Name: _____

Title: _____

School District: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

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Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Interview Date: _____

Interview Location: _____

Interviewer Guidelines

In preparation for the site visit, collect available background materials regarding the district/school finance structure, recent improvement efforts, teacher compensation schedules or policies, etc. Also review any data compiled and analyzed that will help provide insights on accountability status, teacher tenure/turnover, allocation patterns, student performance improvement history, demographics, unique features. Use this information and the responses provided by the interviewee to help frame the interview questions. Interview prompts are in check boxes under some questions. They should be used to probe for information the interviewee may not discuss in their initial response.

The interview sections are coded to clarify the purpose of the questions in relation to our research questions, i.e., contextual or RQ2-4.

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RQ3 = What allocation practices have improvement districts implemented that they identify as innovative and effective?

RQ4 = What barriers and challenges have improvement districts faced in allocation practices?

Introduction and consent information to be read aloud or explained before the interview:

I'm _____ from _____ and this is _____ from _____ (introduce interviewers). The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory is a private non-profit organization that works to improve education through research and development. In collaboration with the Dana Center at the University of Texas, we are studying education resource allocation in the Southwestern Region. We are conducting interviews with state, district, and school decision-makers to gain a better understanding of how education resources are allocated to support student performance. The purpose of this interview is to learn about your district and school's successful allocation practices and the barriers and challenges your school/district has faced. The information you provide will be confidential and will only be used by the researchers for this study.

Please review and sign the consent form (Get signature on consent form)

Do you have any questions? If you have any questions during the interview, please ask; or if you think of any after the interview, please feel free to contact me at any time (give how to reach you- a business card perhaps).

I would like to record our conversation so that I can refer back to it later for analysis. Is it all right if I record our conversation?

If **“yes”**, tell the interviewee — *If at any time during this interview you want me to turn off the tape, just let me know. Also tell me if you decide after the interview that you'd like part of our conversation erased from the tape or considered “off-the-record.” If you would like to end the interview at any time, please let me know. **Begin the audiotape.***

If **“no”**, do not begin the audiotape, just take notes manually. Tell the interviewee — *Please tell me if you would like any part of our conversation considered “off-the-record.” If you would like to end the interview at any time, please let me know.*

Introductory Lead-In [context building]

First, I'll ask you a few general questions about you and [insert school name]

1. What are your major responsibilities in your current position at [insert school name]?

2. Describe the focus of your current work?

3. How long have you been in this position with the school?

- <1 year 1 - 2 years > 2 - 5 years > 5-10 years > 10 years

4. What would you say is unique about your school?

Student Performance [RQ3, RQ4]

According to state data, your district has sustained continuous improvement in student performance for at least 2 years. (Be familiar with the school's accountability data.) The next questions will help us learn about these improvements.

5. Tell me about performance gains in your school over the past 5 years?

- overall achievement achievement in specific subject areas attendance drop-outs other areas

<p>6a. What did your school do to accomplish these gains? (<i>describe one change</i>)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spending change <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing change <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction change <input type="checkbox"/> Other change	<p>What students were affected?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> All students <input type="checkbox"/> Special population <input type="checkbox"/> Grade level
		<p>What academic areas were influenced?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/bilingual <input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Other subjects
<p>What resources (funds, people, programs, facilities) were used for this change?</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> New money <input type="checkbox"/> Existing money <input type="checkbox"/> Outside sources		
<p>How were your resources, fiscal and non-fiscal, reallocated to support this change?</p>		
<p>How do you know this change has made an impact on student performance improvements?</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Used student achievement data only <input type="checkbox"/> Used other student performance data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other than data to evaluate		

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<p>6b. What did your school do to accomplish these gains? (<i>describe one change</i>)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spending change <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing change <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction change <input type="checkbox"/> Other change	<p>What students were affected?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> All students <input type="checkbox"/> Special population <input type="checkbox"/> Grade level <hr/> <p>What academic areas were influenced?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/bilingual <input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Other subjects
<p>What resources (funds, people, programs, facilities) were used for this change?</p>		
<p>How were your resources, fiscal and non-fiscal, reallocated to support this change?</p>		
<p>How do you know this change has made an impact on student performance improvements?</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Used student achievement data only <input type="checkbox"/> Used other student performance data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other than data to evaluate		

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<p>6c. What did your school do to accomplish these gains? (<i>describe one change</i>)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spending change <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing change <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction change <input type="checkbox"/> Other change	<p>What students were affected?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> All students <input type="checkbox"/> Special population <input type="checkbox"/> Grade level
<p>What resources (funds, people, programs, facilities) were used for this change?</p>		<p>What academic areas were influenced?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/bilingual <input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Other subjects
<p>How were your resources, fiscal and non-fiscal, reallocated to support this change?</p>		
<p>How do you know this change has made an impact on student performance improvements?</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Used student achievement data only <input type="checkbox"/> Used other student performance data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other than data to evaluate

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<p>6d. What did your school do to accomplish these gains? (<i>describe one change</i>)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spending change <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing change <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction change <input type="checkbox"/> Other change	<p>What students were affected?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> All students <input type="checkbox"/> Special population <input type="checkbox"/> Grade level
		<p>What academic areas were influenced?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/bilingual <input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Other subjects
<p>What resources (funds, people, programs, facilities) were used for this change?</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> New money <input type="checkbox"/> Existing money <input type="checkbox"/> Outside sources		
<p>How were your resources, fiscal and non-fiscal, reallocated to support this change?</p>		
<p>How do you know this change has made an impact on student performance improvements?</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Used student achievement data only <input type="checkbox"/> Used other student performance data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other data <input type="checkbox"/> Used other than data to evaluate		

Now, I'd like to find out about any barriers and challenges your school has faced over the past 5 years in allocating resources to support your student performance improvements. These may include financial, staffing, instructional, student population, or any other barriers or challenges.

7a. Tell me about one barrier or challenge your school has faced?	How is the school working to overcome this barrier/challenge?
7b. Tell me about another barrier or challenge your school has faced?	How is the school working to overcome this barrier/challenge?

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<p>7c. Tell me about another barrier or challenge your school has faced?</p>	<p>How is the school working to overcome this barrier/challenge?</p>
<p>7d. Tell me about another barrier or challenge your school has faced?</p>	<p>How is the school working to overcome this barrier/challenge?</p>

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Resource Allocation Practices [RQ 2]

As you know, our study is examining the relationship between resource allocation and student performance. By resource allocation we mean how funds, personnel, programs, and facilities are expended to meet school and district needs. We’d like to learn about [insert district name]’s resource allocation practices and how it impacts your school.

8. In general over the past several years, what shifts were made in your district’s resource allocations to meet school needs?		
9. Tell me about factors, fiscal and non-fiscal, that were a major influence on district allocation changes in the last 5 years?		
9a. <i>List one factor</i>	<i>How has this factor influenced changes in your allocation of resources over the past 5 years?</i>	<i>What key people have been (or will be) involved in dealing with this?</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing issues/policies <input type="checkbox"/> Goals/priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Mandates and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Other factor		

<p>9b. <i>List another factor</i></p>	<p><i>How has this factor influenced changes in your allocation of resources over the past 5 years?</i></p>	<p><i>What key people have been (or will be) involved in dealing with this?</i></p>
<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing issues/policies <input type="checkbox"/> Goals/priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Mandates and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Other factor </p>		
<p>9c. <i>List another factor</i></p>	<p><i>How has this factor influenced changes in your allocation of resources over the past 5 years?</i></p>	<p><i>What key people have been (or will be) involved in dealing with this?</i></p>
<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing issues/policies <input type="checkbox"/> Goals/priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Mandates and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Other factor </p>		

9d. <i>List another factor</i>	<i>How has this factor influenced changes in your allocation of resources over the past 5 years?</i>	<i>What key people have been (or will be) involved in dealing with this?</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing issues/policies <input type="checkbox"/> Goals/priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Mandates and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Other factor		
10. What factors do you think will be a major influence on the allocation of resources in your district in the next 5 years? <input type="checkbox"/> revenue <input type="checkbox"/> characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> staffing issues/policies <input type="checkbox"/> goals/priorities <input type="checkbox"/> federal/state mandates and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> other		

We are coming to the end of the interview. I have just two more general questions to ask you.

11. What advice would you give regarding resource allocation to another school that is working to make improvements in student performance?

12. What other information do you think might be important for us to know about resource allocation and improved student performance in your school or district?

Note: Ask other interview staff if they have any additional questions or comments of the interviewee.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS INTERVIEW FOR OUR STUDY.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact me at:

Improvement District Focus Group Protocol

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**SEDL Resource Allocation Study
September 2001**

Complete this information prior to the interview. Verify it at the time of the interview.

Pass around a focus group attendance sheet and ask participants to complete.

School District: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

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Interviewer Name: _____

Interview Date: _____

Interview Location: _____

Focus Group Facilitator Guidelines

In preparation for the site visit, collect available background materials regarding the district/school finance structure, recent improvement efforts, teacher compensation schedules or policies, etc. Also review any data compiled and analyzed that will help provide insights on accountability status, allocation patterns, student performance improvement history, demographics, and unique features. Use this information and the responses provided by the focus group participants to help frame the focus group questions.

Introduction and consent information to be read aloud or explained before the interview:

*I'm _____ from _____ and this is _____ from _____ (introduce research staff). The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory is a private non-profit organization that works to improve education through research and development. In collaboration with the Dana Center at the University of Texas, we are conducting this focus group to learn about how resources are allocated in districts that have had student performance improvement for at least the past several years. **By resource allocation we mean how funds, personnel, programs, and facilities are expended to meet school and district needs.** The perspective of principals and other school administrators about resource allocation practices is most important to the study.*

The information each of you provide will be used for the purpose of this study only. Be assured that confidentiality will be maintained and information will be disclosed only with your permission. Your identities will remain anonymous in our written reports.

I ask that each of you review and sign the consent form (Get signature on consent form)

We will be taping the focus group session. If at any time during this discussion any of you want me to turn off the tape, just let me know. Also tell me if you decide any part of our conversation should be erased from the tape or considered “off-the-record.” If you would like to or need to end your participation in the group discussion at any time, please feel free to do so while the others continue. If you are not comfortable with participating in this taped conversation, we understand and thank you now.

Do you have any questions? If you have any questions during the group session, please ask; or if you think of any after, please feel free to contact me at any time (give how to reach you- a business card perhaps).

Introductory Lead-In [contextual]

1. What would you say is unique about your district? (demographics, population, size, wealth, community/environment)

Student Performance and Resource Allocation [RQ 2, RQ3, RQ4]

According to state data, your district has sustained continuous improvement in student performance for at least 2 years.

2. What has been implemented in your schools and district over the past five years to improve student performance?

- overall achievement
- achievement in specific subject areas
- attendance
- drop-outs
- other areas
- spending change
- staffing change
- instruction change
- other

;

3. How have these changes affected the way your schools and district allocates resources (funds, personnel, programs, time, and facilities)?

1
1
1

Now, I'd like to find out about any barriers and challenges your district has faced over the past 5 years in these allocation practices. These may include financial, staffing, instructional, student population, or any other barriers or challenges.

4. What resource allocation barriers or challenges have your schools and district faced in improving student performance?

Our previous questions have focused on student performance. Now, I'd like to learn more about [insert district's name]'s general resource allocation practices, not just those related to your improved student performance.

5. Tell me about factors, fiscal and non-fiscal, that were a major influence on school and district allocation changes in the last 5 years.
- funding characteristics staffing issues/policies goals/priorities mandates and regulations other

1
2
3

We are coming to the end of the group discussion.

6. What advice about effective resource allocation practices would you offer to educators interested in improving student performance?

7. What other information do you think might be important for us to know about resource allocation and improved student performance in your district?

NOTE: Ask other research staff if they have any additional questions or comments of the group.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS FOCUS GROUP FOR OUR STUDY

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory Teacher Survey Improvement District Survey

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) is conducting this survey to learn about how resources are allocated in districts in which student performance improved for at least the past several years. **By resource allocation we mean how funds, personnel, programs, and facilities are expended to meet school and district needs.** The perspective of teachers and other instructional staff is most important to the study.

Your participation is voluntary. Your anonymous responses will be taken as evidence of your consent to have the information used for the purposes of this study. Feel free to make additional comments on the back of the survey form.

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope to SEDL no later than (insert date). For additional information or a summary of the research findings, please contact Dr. Zena Rudo or Ms. Diane Pan at SEDL, 211 E. Seventh St., Austin, TX 78701, phone 1-800-476-6861.

PLEASE BE SURE TO COMPLETELY DARKEN EACH BUBBLE THAT YOU MARK.

1. Which of the following best describes your relationship to your public school?
 Teacher Teacher's aide
 Curriculum specialist Other (Specify: _____)

2. How long have you held this position, in this school or any other?
 First year Two to four years Five to ten years More than ten years

3. Which of the following characteristics best describe your school district? (***Please bubble-in all that apply***)
 Rural High percentage of minority students
 Urban High percentage of students with limited English language
 Suburban High student mobility
 High poverty student population Other _____

4. How much improvement in student performance has your school made in the last five years?
 Much improvement for all students Some improvement for some students
 Much improvement for some students No improvement
 Some improvement for all students Unsure

5. Under the column labeled “School”, place a check next to any resource strategy your school has implemented over the past five years to improve student performance. If the strategy has also been implemented district-wide, place a check in the column labeled “District.” (*Please check all that apply; you may have a check for a strategy in both the school and district columns.*)

	<u>School</u>	<u>District</u>	
a.	_____	_____	Reduced class sizes
b.	_____	_____	Reduced class loads
c.	_____	_____	Increased access to computer technology
d.	_____	_____	Increased planning time for teachers
e.	_____	_____	Improved programs and services for at-risk students (special ed., ELL, dropout, etc.)
f.	_____	_____	Increased special instructional programs (such as reading, mentoring/tutoring, English language)
g.	_____	_____	Increased the number of teachers with more experience or higher degrees
h.	_____	_____	Increased use of classroom aides
i.	_____	_____	Provided needed school materials or equipment
j.	_____	_____	Provided more professional development for teachers
k.	_____	_____	Improved building facilities or maintenance
l.	_____	_____	Other: _____
m.	_____	_____	Unsure

6. Please describe in greater detail at least one of the strategies you checked in question #5 above. (*Use the back of the survey if you need additional space.*)

7. Read the following statements and darken one bubble next to each one to show whether you agree or disagree with it. Use a scale from agree strongly to disagree strongly. *(If you cannot respond to an item, please leave it blank.)*

Practices		Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
District					
a.	District resource allocation decisions are aligned with the needs of my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b.	My district often engages in or attempts innovative practices to improve student performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c.	My district finds new ways to allocate existing resources to improve student performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d.	My district evaluates spending practices to make better spending decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School					
e.	Instructional staff at my school often engage in or attempt innovative practices to improve student performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f.	In the past five years new funds for resources have been available to my school to improve student performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g.	My school finds new ways to allocate existing resources to improve student performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h.	Instructional staff at my school use data to determine resource needs that will improve student performance. <i>Please indicate the source of data:</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. In your opinion, what barriers and challenges have been obstacles to achieving student performance improvements at your school during the last five years? *(Please check all that apply)*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large class sizes | <input type="checkbox"/> Large class loads |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited access to student data | <input type="checkbox"/> Limited planning time for teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited access to computer technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of experienced teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited school materials or equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of community resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor building facilities or maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of leadership at the school level |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ineffective district policies and mandates | <input type="checkbox"/> Ineffective state policies and mandates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient professional development | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of competitive salaries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient programs and services for at-risk students (special ed., ESL, dropout, etc.) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of special instructional programs (such as reading, mentoring/tutoring, English language) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |

9. Please describe how you, other instructional staff, or any other people have successfully addressed the challenges or barriers your school has faced in achieving student performance improvements. *(Use the back of the survey if you need additional space.)*

10. Which of the following factors influence how your district allocates resources (funds, people, programs, facilities) to schools? Use a scale from 1 (to a great extent) to 4 (not at all). *(If you cannot respond to an item, please leave it blank.)*

	To a great extent	To some extent	Very little	Not at all
a. School characteristics (location, population, # of students, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. School type (elementary, middle, high, alternative, magnet, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Student needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Staffing needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Laws and regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. District goals and priorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Fairness and equity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Availability or lack of funds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Other, please specify: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please include any additional comments you have as instructional staff on how best to allocate resources to improve student performance. (Use the back of the survey if you need additional space.)

Please tell us your Zip Code:

Thank you for participating in our research! Please mail the survey back in the attached self-addressed, stamped envelope by (insert date).