

THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE



OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT
OF BLUEPRINT 2000**

IN

FIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND NINETEEN SCHOOLS EVALUATED

April 30, 1996

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability was established by the 1994 Florida Legislature to play a major role in reviewing the performance of state agencies under performance-based budgeting and to increase the visibility and usefulness of performance audits. The Office was staffed by transferring the Program Audit Division staff of the Auditor General's Office to the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. The Office is a unit of the Office of the Auditor General but operates independently and reports to the Legislature.

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April 30, 1996

The President of the Senate,
the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
and the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee

I have directed that a Supplementary Report be made to accompany the Report of the Implementation and Impact of Blueprint 2000. The results of the review are presented to you in this report. This supplementary report was made as a part of an ongoing program of performance auditing as mandated by Section 11.51(1), Florida Statutes.

Respectfully yours,

John W. Turcotte
Director

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April 30, 1996

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**SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT
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Introduction, Scope, and Methodology

Introduction

Since the 1983 school year, Florida's total public school full-time equivalent student count has increased from 1,627,888 to a projected 2,369,871 for 1996-97, a 46% increase. By the year 2000, the Legislature intends that Florida will establish a system of school improvement and educational accountability based on the performance of students and educational programs [s. 229.591, F.S.]. In 1991, the Legislature created Florida's system for school improvement and accountability, referred to as Blueprint 2000, the latest in a series of school improvement efforts dating back to the early 1970s. Blueprint 2000 is based on the philosophy that communities and schools collaborate to prepare children and families for children's success in schools. Its primary purpose is to return the responsibility for education to those closest to the students, that is, the schools, teachers, and parents. The Legislature's intent is that the state will no longer dictate to local schools and districts the processes or programs to be followed. Instead, under Blueprint 2000, schools will demonstrate that they have made progress toward the state's educational goals following their own school improvement plans. Schools, with the assistance of district or school advisory councils comprised of local stakeholders such as administrators, parents, teachers, and business and community representatives determine what their specific needs are and develop a school improvement plan that details the initiatives schools will implement to make progress toward achieving the state's education goals.

Scope and Methodology

This report reviews the implementation and impact of Blueprint 2000 and provides in-depth information for five selected school districts (Alachua, Monroe, Orange, Sarasota, and Washington) and 19 schools within these districts. The information pertains to the school improvement process, school improvement plans, school advisory councils, and school improvement initiatives.

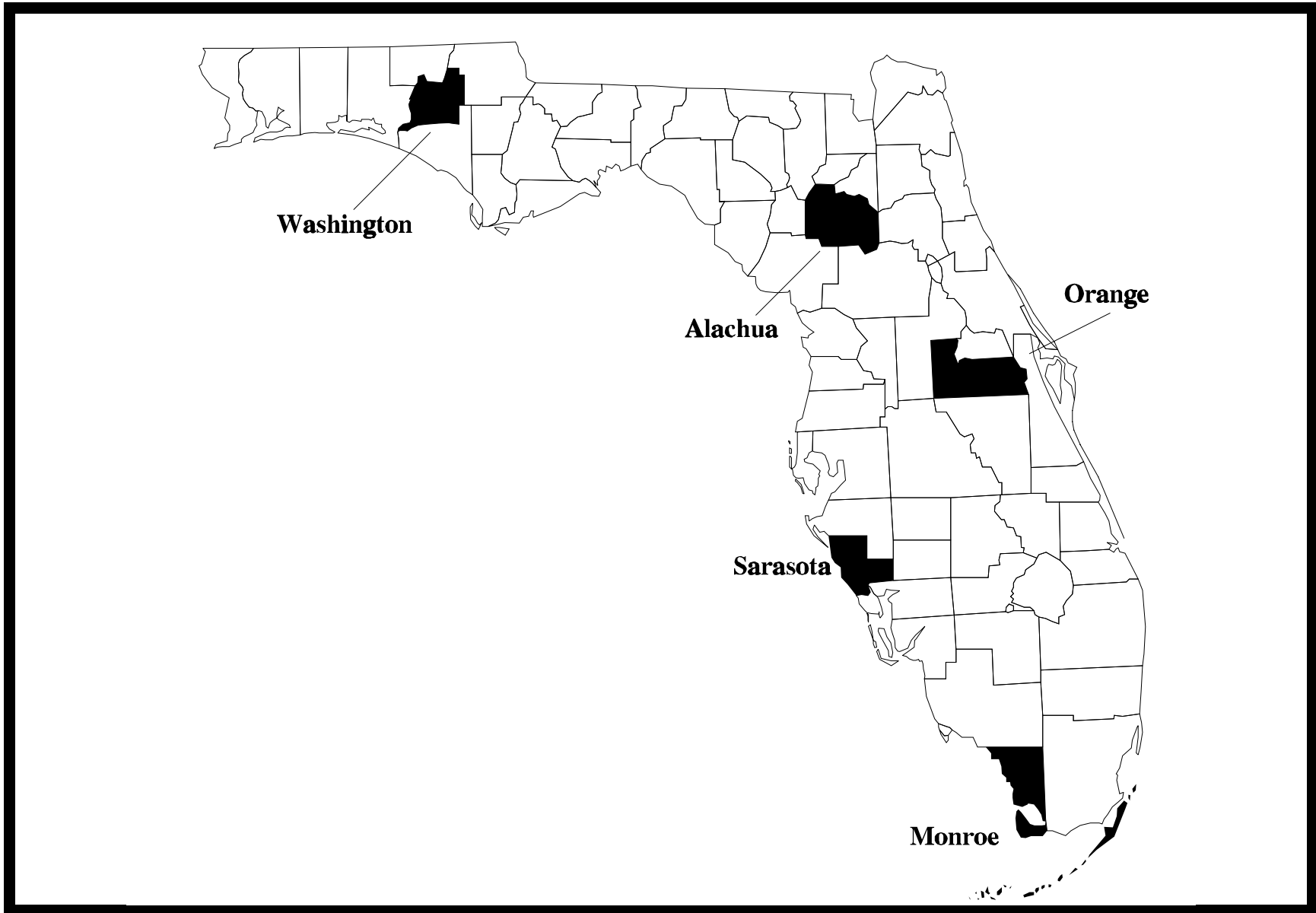
This is the third in a series of studies that reviews the implementation of Blueprint 2000. In a separate report, we provide general conclusions on the implementation and impact of Blueprint 2000 based on our field visits.¹ We visited these schools in September and October 1995, and interviewed school board members, superintendents, district administrators, district staff, principals/directors, school advisory council chairs, and teachers. In addition, we conducted teacher and school advisory council focus groups to gather further information on their perspectives.

Report Organization

The district and school profiles contain specific information about the implementation and impact of Blueprint 2000 collected during our field visits to the Alachua, Monroe, Orange, Sarasota, and Washington school districts. Preceding each school profile is district background information; a summary of the district's Blueprint 2000 implementation efforts and impacts on the students, teachers, and school administration; and brief highlights of various school improvement initiatives. The school profiles provide information on the school improvement process, stakeholder perceptions on the school improvement process, school improvement plans, impact of school improvement initiatives, and examples of school improvement initiatives.

¹ Report 95-53 provides general conclusions on the implementation and impact of Blueprint 2000. In addition, in February 1994, the Office of the Auditor General published four reports pertaining to Blueprint 2000: Report Nos. 12243, 12244, 12245, and 12246. These four reports are based on fieldwork conducted during the 1993-94 school year and review the implementation of Blueprint 2000 by state agencies and in five selected school districts. In October 1994, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability also published two reports; Report Nos. 94-08 and 94-09 focus on the mid-year review process of five additional school districts and 22 schools during the 1993-94 school year.

Exhibit 1
School Districts Visited



Source: Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.

SARASOTA COUNTY BEGINS ON PAGE 149

Sarasota County School District

In September 1995, we reviewed the impact of Blueprint 2000 in the Sarasota County School District. Located in southwest Florida, Sarasota County has a population of approximately 296,002 and is the 14th largest county in the state. Approximately 90% of residents are white, 9% are African American, and 1% are of other racial backgrounds. Approximately 2% of all Sarasota County residents are Hispanic. Half of the households in Sarasota County have an annual income of \$29,926 or less compared to \$27,483 for the state. In addition, 7% of the population in Sarasota County lives below the poverty level; Sarasota County has the lowest poverty rate in the state. Sarasota County residents are among the most educated in the state of Florida; approximately 21% of persons 25 or older are college graduates.

Stakeholders identified characteristics that they believe should be considered in examining school improvement initiatives in the Sarasota County School District. Sarasota County is perceived by many as a highly cultural, affluent community. The county represents a variety of economic, racial, and cultural groups. Reflecting this diversity, students attending Sarasota County schools represent numerous nationalities and abilities. For example, the school district serves a large number of both gifted students and students with special learning needs.

Implementation of Blueprint 2000 in Sarasota County

During our visit to Sarasota County we found that schools are involved in numerous projects they believe will result in needed school improvements. However, two primary factors appear to affect Sarasota's school improvement efforts. First, during our visit the school district was undergoing tremendous upheaval and transition due to budget shortfalls that appear to affect how stakeholders view Blueprint

2000. As a result of these shortfalls, under the direction of its former superintendent, the district developed mission and vision statements and established district priorities for realigning resources. As part of its restructuring, the school board adopted district staffing ratios that lowered the number of students per teacher. To meet the required staffing ratios without increases in funding, several schools in the district eliminated teaching positions in art, music, and physical education. Budget cutbacks and the elimination of teachers in the arts and physical education are perceived by some to have tightened the freedom schools had with their budgets. In addition, some teachers, in particular, are frustrated because they believe schools in Sarasota do not have enough money to make the improvements the state wants.

Second, while district administrators envision their role as supporting schools and allowing them to move at their own pace towards more measurable improvement objectives, we found that some schools may need additional direction, especially in the area of evaluation. For example, in an attempt to demonstrate they are making improvements, teachers at one school spend a considerable amount of time keeping track of each strategy in their plan, rather than measuring outcomes. They complain of being exhausted and frustrated with the amount of time they spend in these activities to prove to the state they are improving. While teachers at the school indicate they have received several sets of instructions on how to evaluate their school improvement objectives, they are still unclear on how they should evaluate their school improvement activities. In 1995, the school district made changes that may improve the direction schools are provided. For example an additional staff member will be involved working directly with schools in developing their school improvement plans. In the past, one staff member was primarily responsible for working with all schools in the district. These changes will enable one staff member to assist elementary and middle schools and another to assist secondary schools.

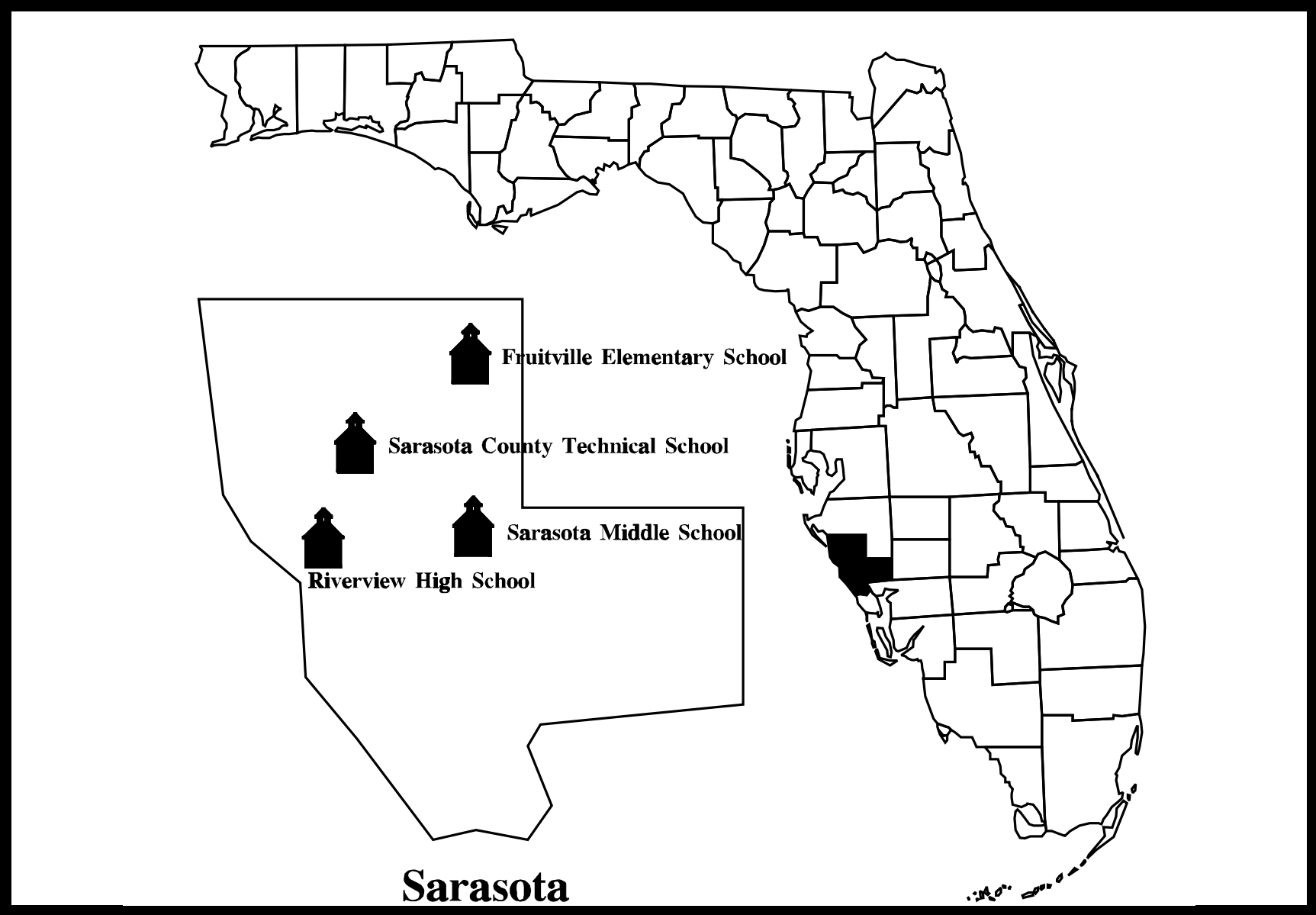
District and School Demographics

Sarasota County School District is the 18th largest school district in the state with 30,431 prekindergarten through 12th grade students and 36 schools. Based on the latest information available from the Department of Education, approximately 84% of students are white, 11% are African American, and 4% are Hispanic compared to state averages of 59%, 25%, and 15%, respectively. One indicator often used to measure the poverty rate of a school district is the percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunches. In 1994, the

average percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunches in Sarasota County schools was 21%. The median percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch in the state in 1994 was 43%. In 1994, the mobility rates in Sarasota County (i.e., percentage of students who transferred into or out of the school during the school year) were 26% for elementary schools 23% for middle schools, and 23% for high schools. The 1994 state median mobility rates were 36% for elementary schools, 31% for middle schools, and 33% for high schools. In addition, 4,179 kindergarten through 12th grade students attended non-public schools in Sarasota County in 1994-95.

We visited four public schools in Sarasota County: one elementary school, one middle school, one high school, and one vocational-technical center. Sarasota County Technical Institute is the largest school we visited with 5,086 students and Fruitville Elementary School is the smallest school with 708 students. We also visited Sarasota Middle School with 1,383 students and Riverview High School with 2,150 students. See Exhibit 12 for demographic information on the students attending each school we visited. See Exhibit 13 for student performance data for each school.

Exhibit 11
Location of Schools Visited in Sarasota County



Source: Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.

Exhibit 12

1995 Student Information							
School	Number of Students	Percent Eligible to Receive Free/Reduced Lunch	White	African American	Hispanic	Other	Mobility Rate of Students
Fruitville Elementary	708	41%	86%	11%	3%	1%	34%
Sarasota Middle	1,383	19%	97%	1%	1%	1%	19%
Riverview High	2,150	15%	89%	8%	2%	1%	24%
Sarasota County Technical Institute*	5,086	N/A	91%	5%	3%	1%	N/A

Note: Information for free/reduced lunches and mobility rates is based on 1994-95 school year data. * Number of students represents full time equivalents (FTEs).

Source: Based on information provided by the Department of Education and individual schools.

Exhibit 13

Student Performance Data						
School	94 NRT Reading or HSCT Communication Scores	95 NRT Reading or HSCT Communication Scores	94 NRT or HSCT Mathematics Scores	95 NRT or HSCT Mathematics Scores	94 Florida Writing Scores	95 Florida Writing Scores
Fruitville Elementary	64%	60%	49%	61%	14%	31%
Sarasota Middle	70%	67%	63%	61%	48%	54%
Riverview High	88%	94%	84%	88%	71%	88%

Note: For reading and mathematics in elementary and middle schools, data reflects percentage of students' scores above the 50th national percentile on Reading Comprehension and Mathematics Concepts/Applications subtests on national referenced tests (NRT). Data for high schools consists of passing scores on the Communications and Mathematics sections of the High School Competency Test (HSCT) for first time test takers during the fall administration. Writing scores reflect the percentage of students scoring "3" and above on a scale of 0 to 6 on the Florida Writes assessment. This table includes student performance data for elementary, middle, and high schools visited.

Source: Based on information provided by the Department of Education.

School Board and District Administration

The Sarasota County School Board and district administrators are involved in assisting county schools in their efforts to improve. School board members directed all schools in the district to include Blueprint 2000 goal 3, student performance, in their school improvement plans. Schools, however, may include additional goals based on their needs assessments. The Sarasota County School Board also adopted a policy requiring that at least half of a school's advisory council members be employed outside the school. While school board members report that they generally read school improvement plans, their reviews vary depending on the particular board member. For example, one board member we spoke to reviews plans so that she is generally familiar with their contents. She does not think it is appropriate to tell a school to change its plan after it receives buy-in from stakeholders. Another school board member reviews plans to make sure they are based on school needs and include definitions of adequate progress and clearly defined objectives.

District administrators in Sarasota County manage the school improvement process on a daily basis. Administrators we spoke to view their role as supporting schools and allowing them to move at their own pace towards more measurable school improvement objectives. One staff member believes that if systematic change goes too fast, there will be a backlash. District staff members report that they keep track of the focus of school improvement efforts, but do not judge what schools are doing or require schools to follow a particular format in developing plans. In reviewing school improvement plans, district staff report they make sure plans are based on a needs assessment and include elements required by state law, such as definitions of adequate progress. As part of their review, administrators also make sure that plans are generally consistent with district initiatives such as team teaching and inclusion of special needs students in classrooms with other students. While two staff members are primarily responsible for working with schools, one staff person assists elementary and middle schools and the other assists secondary schools. For example, one of the staff members meets with the secondary principals twice monthly. One of these meetings each month is devoted exclusively to discussing school improvement objectives and strategies, such as curriculum and scheduling changes. District administrators indicate that schools initially concentrated on implementation of projects and strategies and are evolving towards assessment of their efforts. They also believe schools in Sarasota County are making improvements in student performance even though some schools may not be able to provide hard evidence documenting these improvements.

According to district staff, the district is still grappling with the concepts of adequate progress and evaluation, thus the improvement objectives of some schools are still less measurable than those of other schools.

It should be noted that some school board members are concerned about school improvement in Sarasota. For example, school board members indicate they need more communication with district administrators, especially feedback concerning their reviews of school improvement plans. Furthermore, one school board member believes that the objectives in the school improvement plans are not clearly defined and sufficiently measurable. This member feels that schools in the district are too focused on implementing their plans rather than focusing on student impact. Another school board member believes that it is time for schools to show how they will make improvements in the areas of student performance.

School Improvement Process

School Advisory Councils. 1994-95 school advisory councils (SACs) in Sarasota County range in size from 11 to 15 members. Meetings are held on Monday evening or Tuesday afternoon, once a month. All SACs include administrators, teachers, and students. All SACs (except the one for the vocational-technical center) have parent representatives. Two of the schools have little or no representation by the business community. Only one school kept attendance records for the 1994-95 school year. However, records will be kept in the 1995-96 school year at the other three schools we visited. All members (except for business and community representatives) attend meetings regularly. Turnover is considered to be somewhat of a problem for implementation of school improvement at one school where parents and business representatives could not commit the time required. At other schools, turnover is not considered to be a problem.

Perceptions on the School Improvement Process. Stakeholders (district administrators, school board members, principals, teachers, and SAC members) indicate that one of the most positive contributions of Blueprint 2000 is that it provides a mechanism for change and focus. For example, Blueprint 2000 is perceived as providing a common direction, encouraging self-examination, and providing a framework for school improvement initiatives. In addition, stakeholders believe that Blueprint 2000 increases the involvement and awareness

of both community members and school staff. Teachers, SAC members, and principals cite few negative impacts associated with Blueprint 2000. However, they mention that Blueprint 2000 creates an increased workload primarily due to documentation of school improvement status and the increased pressure they feel because schools are being held accountable for demonstrating that they are making adequate progress towards their goals.

Stakeholders identified several factors that they believe help schools make improvements. At all schools, stakeholders identified the involvement and support of community members, school staff, and SAC members as a factor that helps them make improvements. Other factors include the support and leadership provided by the school district and school administrators; additional flexibility received when provisions of state or local statutes, rules and policies were waived; training, especially in technology; and increased funding and flexibility provided to schools to make decisions and to allocate resources as necessary.

Stakeholders identified several factors as hindering school improvement efforts of the schools we visited. There is a strong, common belief that lack of funds and funding cutbacks impede a school's efforts to improve. In 1994-95, the school board adopted a district staffing policy to reduce teacher to student ratios. The school board told school administrators to shift resources to meet the new district policy. Some schools, especially those with relatively small budgets and fewer teachers, eliminated art, music, and physical education classes and staff positions. The elimination of these positions is often mentioned as a barrier to school efforts to improve the education of students in Sarasota County. Other factors include lack of time, particularly to keep track of the implementation of numerous improvement strategies being implemented simultaneously and to receive additional training needed to make improvements. There is resistance among some teachers at the schools we visited who believe that either Blueprint 2000 does not apply to their school or that their schools do not need to improve. Some instructors at the vocational-technical center believe that Blueprint 2000 applies more to schools with kindergarten through 12th grade students than to vocational-technical centers whose main mission is to prepare students for the work force.

School Improvement Plans

Goals, Objectives, Strategies. Although the 1994-95 school improvement plans of the four schools we visited all include Blueprint 2000 Goal 3 Student Performance, Fruitville Elementary School and Sarasota County Technical Institute include additional state education goals as part of their plans. For example, Fruitville Elementary School also plans to improve school safety and adult literacy (Blueprint 2000 goals 5 and 7) while Sarasota County Technical Institute includes Blueprint 2000 goals 2 and 6, graduation rate and readiness for postsecondary education and employment and teachers and staff in their 1994-95 school improvement plan. The schools we visited most often specifically concentrate on improved reading, writing, and math skills and increased problem solving and critical thinking skills in their school improvement plans. Other specific objectives in the plans vary but include improved school safety, improved career preparedness, and reduced number of disciplinary actions. The following improvement strategies are described in two or more plans:

- New or modified curriculum;
- Parental/community involvement activities; publications/information dissemination;
- Teacher/staff training;
- Hire additional staff; and
- Planning, exploring, and assessing activities.

Trends in School Improvement Plans. To review trends across school improvement plans, we reviewed school improvement plans from 1993-94 through 1995-96. Each school's 1995-96 plan includes a definition of adequate progress as required by 6A-1099.81, F.A.C. One school's plans include adequate progress definitions in both 1994-95 and 1995-96. In addition, the plans we reviewed generally contain evaluation methods. However, the evaluation methods in the plans are generally vague or unclear regarding how the school intends to determine if the objectives are achieved. For example, often the evaluation methods include the completion of activities rather than a measurement of the desired outcome. In terms of goal areas addressed, two of the schools continue to focus solely on student performance, while one school expands its focus to more goal areas, and another narrows its focus to fewer goal areas.

Impact of Blueprint 2000

Students. Stakeholders (district administrators, school board members, principals, teachers, and SAC members) believe that schools are implementing many school improvement initiatives that are generally consistent with Blueprint 2000 goals and strategies. At the four schools we visited the most frequently cited improvements related to improving student performance are in various academic areas such as reading, writing, and math. Other improvements identified at two or more schools include increased computer competency skills of students; improved student responsibility, cooperativeness, maturity, adjustment and social skills; and improved school safety. While schools provided documentary evidence resulting from systematic evaluations to illustrate some of the improvements, in most cases, teacher observation is the primary indicator used to illustrate improvements. While some of the improvement initiatives are in the process of being implemented and it may be too early to measure their full impact, in some cases schools have not yet developed systematic methods of evaluating the impact of their efforts.

Teachers. Faculty members are involved in the school improvement process at the four schools we visited. Teachers have different levels of involvement depending on whether they are members of the SAC, members of committees that work on school improvement areas, or implementing strategies in their classrooms. Teachers at the four schools we visited generally do not believe that the time and efforts they spend planning and implementing school improvement activities have taken too much time from teaching activities. Teachers indicate that school improvement activities are usually held after school so no time is taken away from teaching students. According to teachers at these schools, in the past, the district had early release days when students were sent home early so that teachers could be involved in school improvement activities such as team meetings, training, or planning activities. However, due to budgetary restraints, during the 1995-96 school year the district has no early release days scheduled. Teachers at one of the four schools we visited in Sarasota County are angry and frustrated about the amount of time they spend keeping track of the implementation of their school improvement plan. They believe that the state is holding them accountable for implementing all the strategies they include in their plan so they spend considerable time and effort documenting that each of the strategies is implemented. For example, teachers track numerous strategies such as who receives training called for in their school improvement plan and when it is received. The teachers at this school are all members of the school

management team that works closely with the school advisory council in developing and implementing their school's improvement plan. They said that they have received several sets of instructions on how to evaluate their school improvement objectives since Blueprint 2000 was first introduced, but these guidelines are unclear.

School Administration. Blueprint 2000 is not perceived as having a significant impact on how resources are allocated to schools by the school board or how schools in Sarasota County allocate their resources. However, several points should be made to understand the impact of Blueprint 2000 on school administration. First, the Sarasota County School Board adopted a shared decision-making model prior to Blueprint 2000. Under this model, school management teams comprised of faculty and staff work with the school administration in allocating resources. School administrators indicate that under shared decision-making schools have the flexibility to shift resources. For example, one administrator reports that she was able to use funds allocated for a home liaison position to hire a behavioral specialist. Another administrator states that even though Blueprint 2000 has not had a significant impact on how resources are allocated, it helps the school to direct resources to needs identified in their school improvement plan. Second, it is perceived by many that budget cuts over the past few years make budget flexibility more difficult. For example, one administrator reports that the school's budget was cut by 8% in 1994-95, which amounted to \$500,000. In 1994-95, the school board adopted a district staffing policy to reduce teacher to pupil ratios that caused some schools to eliminate art, music, and physical education classes and staff positions. Budget cuts and changes to the district staffing ratio appear to impact how teachers, in particular, view resource allocation, Blueprint 2000, and school improvement in general.

Highlights of School Improvement Initiatives. The four schools we visited in Sarasota County are implementing various projects to improve. This section provides brief highlights of a few of these improvements:

- **Blueprint 200 Goals 2 and 3, Graduation Rate and Readiness for Postsecondary Education and Employment and Student Performance: Improved Employment and Employability Skills.** Sarasota County Technical Institute (SCTI) created a program to ensure the approximately 300 students who attend with special needs (such as the handicapped) are provided services they require to complete their chosen technical programs and are employed. The Special Needs Program, based on models from Leon County (Florida) and the University of Wisconsin, is designed to provide career counseling and individual educational counseling, accommodations for testing, instructional modifications for technical programs, tutoring, identification of adaptive equipment, and cooperation with community agencies for transition for employment. In addition to providing support services, the SCTI has focused its efforts on modifying its buildings to accommodate students with special needs. As of September 1995, 49 adult students and 70 high school students were enrolled in the Special Needs Program with 35 additional students pending enrollment; approximately 250 students have been served since 1993. The program coordinator conducted surveys of students who received special needs support services. The survey indicates that students rated the quality of services received as "very good." The coordinator indicates that without the program, many special students would not have attended SCTI. SCTI is presently developing methods and collecting baseline data to better evaluate the overall success of the program.
- **Blueprint 2000 Goal 3, Student Performance: Improved Student Performance and Discipline.** The SPECTRUM Program was created at Fruitville Elementary School to teach students how to learn, get along and work cooperatively, make good decisions, and become active learners. Students ages 5-12 may participate in the SPECTRUM Program upon parental request; as of September 1995, approximately 120 of 700 children attending the school were enrolled in SPECTRUM. Children of differing ages and abilities either work alone or in groups of two or more to complete classroom activities. The concept is that younger students will learn from older ones and older students will reinforce their own skills by helping younger ones. Teachers act as facilitators. The program uses assessment of work in progress and samples of student work to determine the progress of students. The program uses an alternative, six level report card that evaluates children on citizenship, study habits/effort, mathematics, social studies, science, writing, and reading and includes a student self-evaluation. Each level includes expected performance measures. However, more evaluation is needed to determine if differences on national achievement tests in reading, language, and mathematics are statistically significant and are not attributable to the characteristics of students participating in the program. In addition, SPECTRUM student discipline referrals to the principal's office are lower than those for all students at the school. Teachers indicate that they have also observed improvements in self-esteem, confidence, cooperativeness, and responsibility.
- **Blueprint 2000 Goals 3 and 4, Student Performance and Learning Environment: Increased Academic Performance.** The Renaissance Program, created by Jostens Corporation and used in over 7,000 schools in America, was initiated at Riverview High School in 1994. The initiative is designed to improve academic motivation and performance via a program of

recognition/incentives provided through business/community partnerships to students who are academic achievers. As part of Renaissance, students earn gold, silver, or white T-shirts and I.D. cards, depending on their GPA. This program entitles these students to merchant discounts, free parking, and other incentives/bonuses. Comparing student grade point averages for similar quarters for 1993-94 and 1994-95, there has been at least a 5% increase in the number of students receiving a 3.0 - 4.0 G.P.A. each quarter since the Renaissance Program began.

- **Blueprint 2000 Goal 3, Student Performance: Improved Student Performance.** Multi-Age grouping, initially piloted for the 1993-94 school year, is offered as a choice to students and parents at Sarasota Middle School. Under multi-age grouping, students of various ages and grade levels (6th, 7th, and 8th grades) are placed in the same classroom and work together on projects and assignments. School administrators state that due to factors such as the success of the Multi-Age pilot program, student interest, and demand by Sarasota Middle School parents, two additional Multi-Age teams were implemented for the 1995-96 school year. One of the purposes of the initiative is to provide a continuous progress system in which students are not restricted by grade levels. Students from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes are grouped together for instructional activities. By implementing multi-age teams, Sarasota Middle School hoped to focus on the various developmental areas and challenges of the middle school age child. Those we interviewed indicate that students in the program have benefitted in areas such as improved attendance, improved social skills, improved discipline, and improved test scores. Sarasota Middle School has collected and evaluated data in regard to Multi-Age Team students. Attendance data from a random sample of Multi-Age students was compared with data from a random sample of students on single grade teams. The data indicates that a sample of team students missed less than 50% of the school days missed by single-grade team students during the 1993-94 and 1994-95 school years. Although overall student standardized test scores improved and discipline referrals decreased, teachers indicate that it is difficult to attribute academic or social growth directly to the program. Teachers observe that students' social skills and general behavior are improving.

School Profiles

The following school profiles contain specific information about the implementation and impact of Blueprint 2000 at each of the schools we visited in Sarasota County School District. Each school profile provides information on school advisory councils, school improvements cited by stakeholder groups, school improvement plans, and stakeholder perceptions on Blueprint 2000.

Sarasota County School District

School Profiles

Fruitville Elementary School

Sarasota Middle School

Riverview High School

Sarasota County Technical Institute

FRUITVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROFILE

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS, AS IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders identified certain school characteristics which should be considered in examining improvement initiatives at the school. These characteristics include:

- Fruitville has had three new principal over the past three years;
- About 2/3 of the students at Fruitville live in neighborhoods surrounding the school. Families in these neighborhoods generally earn middle-class to upper middle-class incomes. Many of the children's parents and grandparents attended the school;
- About 1/3 of the students are bused. These students are primarily from lower income, African-American families. The school liaison visits parents of these children to get them more involved in school activities; and
- The school has a number of students from migrant families and families employed by the circus. These children enroll at the beginning of the year but generally stop attending school about March to join their families. This may contribute to Fruitville's high mobility rate of 34%.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN 1995

- 708 students
- 40 teachers

FRUITVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROFILE

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS	
NAME OF GROUP FUNCTIONING AS SAC	School Advisory Council (SAC)
MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION OF 1994-95 SAC ACCORDING TO MEMBERSHIP LIST PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL (N=11)	Administrators: 1
	Teachers: 3
	Support Staff: 1
	Parents: 4
	Business/Community: 1
	Students: 1
SAC MEETINGS	SAC meetings were held on Tuesday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. The SAC met approximately once per month.
SAC MEMBER ATTENDANCE	Records of members attending SAC meetings were not kept during the 1994-95 school year. However, according to the principal, SAC attendance will be recorded for meetings held during the 1995-96 school year.
NEW SAC MEMBERS IN 1995	Compared to the 1994-95 SAC, 5 of 10 members of the 1995-96 SAC had not previously served on the school's advisory council. There was a difference of opinion on the impact of turnover on the SAC's ability to develop and implement the school improvement plan. One administrator indicated that it was particularly difficult to keep parent and business community members on the SAC. Several reasons were cited for members leaving prior to their terms expiring or not returning the next year including: parents may leave because their children are promoted and leave the school; families move out of the school's attendance zone; the issues, such as sports or safety, that the member wanted addressed are addressed and the person leaves; personal reasons, such as child care needs; and some members are overwhelmed with the complexity of educational issues and feel that educators are the "experts."
(continued)	

FRUITVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROFILE

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF

Faculty members are involved in the school improvement process through their membership on several school faculty committees. The school has a participatory management team (PMT) consisting of approximately 10 elected instructional and non-instructional staff members. The PMT discusses and makes decisions on school issues relating to instruction, technology, and facilities, all which impact school improvement. Lead teachers also meet and discuss instructional issues. The PMT provides input on the school improvement plan to the SAC and approves the final plan.

FRUITVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROFILE

PERCEPTIONS ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

MOST POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLUEPRINT 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides a mechanism for change and a mandate to do things differently; ■ Increased involvement; and ■ Increased communication among teachers.
NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF BLUEPRINT 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Burdensome in time and paperwork requirements.
FACTORS THAT HAVE HELPED THE SCHOOL IMPROVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parental support - parents want to see Fruitville Elementary improve; ■ Principal helped by giving teachers time to develop the school improvement plan, encouraging new ideas, and believing in the concept of Blueprint 2000; ■ Teacher training, especially in technology and writing; ■ District administration encouraging schools to come up with new ideas, accepting them, and providing needed waivers to school board policies; ■ Monetary grants for writing projects; and ■ Seeing the success of the programs helps to encourage teachers to continue their school improvement efforts.
FACTORS THAT HAVE HINDERED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some teachers at the school do not believe the school needs to improve and are still resistant to Blueprint 2000; ■ Budget cuts and lack of funding in Sarasota County have created an atmosphere of pessimism and frustration toward Blueprint 2000 and school improvement in general; ■ Time requirements of Blueprint 2000, particularly to cover everything at SAC meetings that needed to be covered; and ■ State requirements regarding the classification and testing of students by grade level made it difficult for the school to implement its multi-age classroom program which combines students from several different grade levels into one classroom.

FRUITVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROFILE

1994-95 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	
STATE GOALS INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Goal 3 (Student Performance); ■ Goal 5 (School Safety); and ■ Goal 7 (Adult Literacy).
OBJECTIVES INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	<p>The 1994-95 school improvement plan included three specific improvement objectives in the following general areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve reading, writing, and math skills; ■ Improve school safety; and ■ Improve adult literacy.
STRATEGIES INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	<p>The 1994-95 school improvement plan included ten improvement strategies or activities in the following general categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parental/community involvement activities; publications/information dissemination; ■ Develop/institute cross-grade articulation programs; ■ New/modified curriculum; ■ Teacher/staff training; ■ Improve physical facilities; ■ Purchase/use applied software; and ■ Planning, exploring, assessing activities.
ADEQUATE PROGRESS AND EVALUATION	<p>The 1994-95 school improvement plan includes evaluation procedures but does not include a definition of adequate progress.</p>
TRENDS IN PLANS	<p>The school expanded the focus of its school improvement plans into more goal areas over the last three years and included more strategies and objectives to achieve these goals. Specifically, the 1994-95 plan addressed three of the seven Blueprint 2000 state goals and the 1995-96 plan addresses five of the seven state goals: readiness to start school, student performance, school safety and environment, teachers and staff, and adult literacy. The school began including a definition of adequate progress and continued to include evaluation procedures in its 1995-96 plan.</p>

FRUITVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROFILE

IMPACT OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

WAIVERS

The school has received two waivers to implement the SPECTRUM Program (See description under "Impact of School Improvement Initiatives on Students") from the Sarasota County School Board: one for alternate report cards and one for curriculum requirements.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Under Blueprint 2000, the school board allocates resources to Fruitville Elementary School much the same as in the past. It was perceived that school administrators have always had the flexibility to use resources as needed. However, schools were given additional flexibility during 1995-96 to use funds allocated for a home liaison position to hire a behavioral specialist. In 1994-95, the school board adopted a district staffing policy of 24 students: 1 teacher. The school board told school administrators to shift resources to meet the new district policy. Schools with relatively small budgets and fewer teachers, such as Fruitville Elementary, eliminated art, music, and physical education classes and staff positions. Thus, some teachers perceived that the school board forced schools to cut art, music, and physical education classes.

ADDITIONAL FUNDS

The school has received several grants ranging from \$3,000 - \$5,000 to help implement writing projects. Sources include the Selby Corporation and other educational foundations. In 1995-96, the school received a \$1,100 Creative Classroom Grant from the Selby Corporation, which the school must match equally, and several Edge of Excellence minigrants of up to \$500 each.

DECISION-MAKING

Under Blueprint 2000, it was perceived that decisions are made basically the same as in the past. However, school administrators pointed out that the input of teachers, SAC members, and the community is (and was prior to Blueprint 2000) considered when making decisions.

FRUITVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROFILE

EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES			
School Improvement Cited	Examples of Initiatives	Description and Impact of Initiatives	Relationship to BP 2000 Goals
<p>Improved Student Performance</p> <p>Improved Discipline</p>	<p>SPECTRUM Multi-Age Program</p>	<p>The SPECTRUM Program was created by teachers at Fruitville Elementary School to teach students how to learn, get along and work cooperatively, make good decisions, and become active learners. Students ages 5-12 may participate in the SPECTRUM Program upon parental request; as of September 1995, approximately 120 children were enrolled in SPECTRUM. Children of differing ages and abilities either work alone or in groups of two or more to complete classroom activities. The concept is that younger students will learn from older ones and older students will reinforce their own skills by helping younger ones. Teachers act as facilitators. No textbooks are used. The program uses assessment of work in progress and samples of student work to determine the progress of students. The program uses an alternative, six level report card that evaluates children on citizenship, study habits/effort, mathematics, social studies, science, writing, and reading and includes a student self-evaluation. Each level includes expected performance measures.</p> <p>Data comparing scores of students on the American College Testing Comprehensive Assessment Testing Program National Achievement Test shows that students participating in the SPECTRUM Program are performing better than all students at the school in terms of the basic battery of reading, language, and mathematics. However, more evaluation is needed to determine if differences are statistically significant and are not attributable to the characteristics of students participating in the program. In addition, SPECTRUM student discipline referrals to the principal's office are lower than those for all students at the school. Teachers indicated that they have also observed improvements in self-esteem, confidence, cooperativeness, and responsibility.</p>	<p>Goal 3</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(continued)</p>

School Improvement Cited	Examples of Initiatives	Description and Impact of Initiatives	Relationship to BP 2000 Goals
Improved Writing Skills	Various Writing Strategies	<p>In the 1994-95 school year, the school placed a greater emphasis on improving the writing skills of students. Fruitville implemented several strategies such as including regular writing activities into the curriculum and integrating writing across subject areas and in all grade levels. Writing activities included writing stories about real or imagined events, descriptions, letter writing, summaries, and requiring written and oral reports in various subjects.</p> <p>Administrators indicated that in 1994, prior to the implementation of these strategies, 14% of students scored 3 or better on the Florida Writes test. In 1995, 31% of students had scored 3 or above on the test, an increase of 17%.</p>	Goal 3

SARASOTA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFILE

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS, AS IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders identified certain school characteristics which should be considered when examining improvement initiatives at the school. These characteristics include:

- Sarasota Middle School was built 3 years ago and has a student population comprised of diverse socioeconomic groups. Conflicts sometimes arise because of peer pressure;
- When the school moved to its new location several years ago, it began serving an almost entirely new population, i.e., reduction in minority and lower socioeconomic representation;
- Technically, 100% of the students are bused because of the school's location on an "unsafe" road. The school has three bus routes;
- Staff reductions due to district reorganization prior to the 1995-96 school year (e.g., loss of Art, Music, and Physical Education instructors); and
- Generally, parents are affluent, involved in school activities, and aware of trends in education.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN 1995

- 1,383 students
- 80 teachers

SARASOTA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFILE

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS	
NAME OF GROUP FUNCTIONING AS SAC	School Advisory Council (SAC)
MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION OF 1994-95 SAC ACCORDING TO MEMBERSHIP LIST PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL (N=15)	Administrators: 2
	Teachers: 4
	Support Staff: 1
	Parents: 4
	Business/Community: 2
	Students: 2
SAC MEETINGS	SAC meetings were held Monday evening at 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. The SAC met twice a month during the 1994-95 school year.
SAC MEMBER ATTENDANCE	No formal attendance records were maintained for the 1994-95 school year but, according to the principal, will be kept in the future. However, according to the SAC chair, about 9 of 16 members generally attended. Four of the five teachers generally attended. Business and community members did not generally attend on a regular basis because of conflicts with other commitments.
NEW SAC MEMBERS IN 1995	<p>Compared to the 1994-95 SAC, 8 of 14 members of the 1995-96 SAC had not previously served on the school's advisory council. According to the principal, high turnover of SAC members reflects changing administrators and an increase in the number of parents on the SAC. Turnover was not perceived as affecting the SAC's ability to develop and implement the school improvement plan. Reasons for SAC members leaving the SAC prior to their terms expiring or not returning the next year included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students graduated from the school; ■ Loss of interest; and ■ Conflict with other commitments.
(continued)	

SARASOTA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFILE

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF

Teachers and other staff members are involved in the development of the school improvement plan. At least one-third of the teachers who are not serving as SAC members serve on school improvement goal area subcommittees (e.g., positive school climate committee). Team leaders obtain input regarding improvement efforts from all faculty members and share this information with the appropriate subcommittee designated to address specific school needs.

SARASOTA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFILE

PERCEPTIONS ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

MOST POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLUEPRINT 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Helps create a climate more receptive to change;■ Keeps the school in line with the national school reform effort;■ Assists the school in setting high but realistic goals; and■ Provides a framework and focus for school improvement initiatives.
NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF BLUEPRINT 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Accountability and adequate progress requirements place additional pressure on administrators and teachers when coupled with other daily professional responsibilities;■ Public confusion has developed about what is actually going on in terms of Blueprint 2000; and■ Schools are struggling with understanding the assessment aspect of Blueprint 2000.
FACTORS THAT HAVE HELPED THE SCHOOL IMPROVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Strong leadership from district office staff;■ Commitment of the entire district to school improvement;■ District's methods of collecting and analyzing data to determine school's needs;■ Increased involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process;■ Some additional funds provided through Technology Incentive Grants;■ District waiver allowing flexibility in grading;■ Provision of training; and■ Willingness of teachers to work together and take risks.

(continued)

SARASOTA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFILE

PERCEPTIONS ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

FACTORS THAT HAVE HINDERED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- Lack of financial and human resources to fully implement desired improvement initiatives;
- Lack of release time for teacher training;
- Lack of flexibility in middle school certification requirements to allow teachers knowledgeable in several subject areas to teach out-of-field (e.g., teacher certified in math cannot teach science); and
- Disruption in school's staffing, due to district's 1995-96 budget cuts (e.g., loss of teachers in chorus, art, strings, Physical Education, and counseling).

SARASOTA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFILE

1994-95 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

STATE GOALS INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- Goal 3 (Student Performance).

EXAMPLES OF CATEGORIES OF OBJECTIVES INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The 1994-95 school improvement plan included three specific improvement objectives in the following general area:

- Improve problem solving and critical thinking skills.

EXAMPLES OF CATEGORIES OF STRATEGIES INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The 1994-95 school improvement plan included eight improvement strategies or activities in the following general categories:

- Implementation of specific academic projects; pilot projects;
- Teacher/staff training;
- Establish committees, study groups, planning groups; planning, exploring, and assessing activities; and
- Publications/information dissemination; provide training and/or material to parents.

ADEQUATE PROGRESS AND EVALUATION

The 1994-95 SIP did not include a definition of adequate progress but did include methods for evaluation.

TRENDS IN PLANS

In its school improvement plans the school focused on student performance (Goal 3) during all three years. The school increased the number of objectives it addressed from 3 to 5 and increased the strategies implemented from 10 to 15 in the 1995-96 SIP. Four of the new strategies were in the area of new or modified curriculum. In 1995-96 the school began including a definition of adequate progress in its SIP and continued to include evaluation methods.

SARASOTA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFILE

IMPACT OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

WAIVERS

The school received a district waiver allowing flexibility in grading for the 1995-96 school year. Instead of letter grades, the school was allowed to use comments describing performance in Physical Education, (e.g., Outstanding, Needs Improvement). The shared decision-making team believed this method of grading would be fairer to the students who have been participating in the PE program on a part-time basis since district budgetary cuts resulted in the loss of a PE faculty position.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The principal perceives the school had a degree of flexibility in resource allocation prior to Blueprint 2000 because of the district's involvement in site-based decision making. The principal refers to the school improvement plan when making resource allocation decisions. Resources are allocated according to student performance needs. For example, the school made efforts to ensure that necessary resources were provided to support the multi-age teaming concept, and funds were allocated to send staff to the Multi-age Conference in Atlanta for training.

FUNDS

Sarasota Middle School has received additional funds to support their improvement initiatives through several sources. The school received \$30,000 in D.O.E. Technology Incentive Grants for each of the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years to support their technological improvements. Teachers may also apply for individual grants for creative classroom improvement projects through two programs sponsored by the Selby Foundation, a locally-funded endowment for community and educational needs. For the 1995-96 school year, 15 teachers received a total of approximately \$4,000 in Selby Grants. Two teachers received a total of \$2,000 through the Edge of Excellence Grant Program. The school also received \$4,600 in Title VI Grant money for 1994-96.

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SARASOTA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFILE

IMPACT OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

DECISION-MAKING

Sarasota schools and staff have been involved in site-based decision making since the mid-1980s. The principal perceives that since Blueprint 2000 began, parents and business/community members have been much more involved in decisions affecting school improvement efforts. For example, through school effectiveness surveys, parents have an opportunity to provide input about the type of school they want Sarasota Middle School to be and the services it should provide for their children. This information is useful in assessing the school's needs and in prioritizing improvement initiatives.

SARASOTA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFILE

IMPACT OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES ON STUDENTS			
School Improvement Cited	Examples of Initiatives	Description and Impact of Initiatives	Relationship to BP 2000 Goals
Improved Student Performance	Multi-Age Teaming	<p>Multi-Age grouping, initially piloted for the 1993-94 school year, is offered as a choice to students and parents at Sarasota Middle School. Under multi-age grouping, students of various ages and grade levels (6th, 7th, and 8th grades) are placed in the same classroom and work together on projects and assignments. School administrators stated that due to factors such as the success of the Multi-Age pilot program, student interest, and demand by Sarasota Middle School parents, two additional Multi-Age teams were implemented for the 1995-96 school year. One of the purposes of the initiative is to provide a continuous progress system in which students are not restricted by grade levels. Students from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes are grouped together for instructional activities. By implementing a multi-age team, Sarasota Middle School hoped to focus on the various developmental areas and challenges of the middle school age child. Those we interviewed indicate that students in the program have benefitted in areas such as improved attendance, improved social skills, improved discipline, and improved test scores.</p> <p>Sarasota Middle School has collected and evaluated data in regard to Multi-Age Team students. Attendance data from a random sample of Multi-Age students was compared with data from a random sample of students on single-grade teams. The data indicated that a sample of team students missed less than 50% of the school days missed by single-grade team students during the 1993-94 and 1994-95 school years. Although overall student standardized test scores have improved and discipline referrals have decreased, teachers indicate that it is difficult to attribute academic or social growth directly to the program. Additional evaluation is needed to determine if increases in standardized test scores are attributable to the program. Teachers observe that students' social skills and general behavior are improving.</p>	Goal 3

(continued)

School Improvement Cited	Examples of Initiatives	Description and Impact of Initiatives	Relationship to BP 2000 Goals
Improved Technological Skills	<p>Various Strategies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Computer Technology Plan; ■ Technology Inservice Training; and ■ Campus Broadcasting Network. 	<p>Sarasota Middle School's Technology Plan is designed to enhance student performance using interactive instructional strategies; to increase teachers' and students' involvement with computers; and to prepare students to be lifelong learners with respect to technology. Before the implementation of school improvement strategies, each academic team had, on the average, one computer. Sarasota Middle School now has over 500 computers, and the campus is fully networked. Most teachers have completed at least 30 hours of technology inservice training. The plan establishes a computer-driven, computer-assisted instructional framework providing "one-on-one" instruction for middle school students. Middle school students learn to create their own data base, transfer information, and work on numerous programs. The students also operate a television station in which students use computers and other technological equipment to write, produce, and broadcast programs to the student body.</p> <p>Students' and teachers' computer proficiency can be evaluated by directly observing them operate technological equipment. Students can be observed in projects such as drill and practice activities, experimenting with various types of software, using computers to write papers, and using CD roms, laser discs, and video cameras. Samples of students' work generated on the computer (e.g., reflective journals) and teachers' products (computer-generated progress reports) reflect improved technological skills. Staff indicate that since 1993, there has been a steady increase in the number of students who use technology at school and in the number of learning activities which involve technology. Although it is anticipated that these skills will better prepare students for lifelong learning experiences, it may be too early to measure the long-term benefits of the program.</p>	<p>Goal 3</p> <p>(continued)</p>

School Improvement Cited	Examples of Initiatives	Description and Impact of Initiatives	Relationship to BP 2000 Goals
Improved School Climate	Various Strategies Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Early Bird Specials; ■ Peer Mediation Program; ■ Conflict Resolution Alternatives for Teens (CRAFT); and ■ Gold/Silver Card Program. 	<p>During the 1993-94 school year, Sarasota Middle School developed a positive reinforcement action plan which contains various strategies for improving the school's climate. Students have participated in a number of positive school climate activities. The Early Bird Specials is a before school activities program designed to accommodate working parents and to provide social enrichment experiences for students. The Peer Mediation Program is a preventative approach to conflict resolution. Conflict Resolution Alternatives for Teens (CRAFT) classes are designed to prevent physical confrontations on campus. The Gold/Silver card program for grade point average recognition is designed to improve student motivation and performance via a program of recognition/incentives provided through business/community partnerships. Teachers observe that students are working more closely together over a period of time.</p> <p>The school administered identical climate surveys to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students and teachers in the spring of 1993 and again in the fall of 1994. The 1994 surveys indicate a higher number of positive responses in a number of critical school climate areas (e.g., students feel safe at school). An increase in the percentage of positive responses was demonstrated in all three grade levels as well as in the staff responses.</p>	Goals 3, 4

RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL PROFILE

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS, AS IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders identified certain school characteristics which should be considered when examining improvement initiatives at the school. These characteristics include:

- Comprehensive High School offering a broad range of subjects in all academic areas and many enrichment opportunities (e.g., first nuclear radiation lab in a United States high school);
- Primarily serves students from upper middle socioeconomic communities;
- Most (65-70%) students are in college preparatory programs;
- Serves almost all categories of ESE students;
- Large number of senior staff members;
- Strong business/community support; and
- Going through period of transition in leadership.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN 1995

- 2,150 students
- 114 teachers

RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL PROFILE

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS	
NAME OF GROUP FUNCTIONING AS SAC	School Advisory Council (SAC)
MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION OF 1994-95 SAC ACCORDING TO MEMBERSHIP LIST PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL (N=12)	Administrators: 2
	Teachers: 1
	Support Staff: 1
	Parents: 3
	Business/Community: 3
	Students: 2
SAC MEETINGS	SAC meetings were held at 2:00 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday each month. The SAC met 10 times during the 1994-95 school year.
SAC MEMBER ATTENDANCE	Although attendance records were not kept on a regular basis, the SAC Chair stated that about 7 of the 12 members attended meetings on a regular basis. It has been difficult for business/community members to attend on a regular basis. According to the principal, the main conflict has not been due to the time of day meetings are held, but to the conflicts with other commitments. The principal also indicated attendance records will be kept for future meetings.
NEW SAC MEMBERS IN 1995	Compared to the 1994-95 SAC, 5 of 13 members of the 1995-96 SAC had not previously served on the SAC. Turnover has not been perceived to be as much of a problem as absenteeism and the ability to get a quorum at the meetings. Reasons for SAC members leaving the SAC prior to their terms expiring or not returning the next year included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conflict with other commitments; ■ Involvement in other activities; and ■ Difficulty of finding a convenient meeting time for everyone.

(continued)

RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL PROFILE

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF

Teachers and other staff members participate in the development of the school improvement plan. According to the principal, levels of teacher involvement vary greatly. While some teachers spearhead school improvement committees or serve on SAC committees, others participate only in areas that directly impact their particular classroom. Teachers did not perceive that Blueprint 2000 has taken time away from teaching because they were involved in school improvement initiatives prior to the implementation of Blueprint 2000 and have always had to report on their progress. They do, however, spend a great deal of time after school working on various school improvement committees and task forces. The principal reported that this places an additional stress on teachers when combined with their other professional responsibilities.

RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL PROFILE

PERCEPTIONS ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

MOST POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLUEPRINT 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Raises the awareness level of the entire community; and ■ Provides a common sense of direction and encourages self-examination.
NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF BLUEPRINT 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of a systems approach in Blueprint 2000; ■ Lack of resources to support innovation; ■ Vagueness in the details related to the "how-to's" of school improvement; and ■ Appearance of treating all communities the same without regard to resources.
FACTORS THAT HAVE HELPED THE SCHOOL IMPROVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leadership of the principal; ■ Funding for staff development; ■ Release time for teacher training and inservice; ■ Site-based decision making; ■ Strong community support; ■ Staff involvement; and ■ Enhancement of what the school already had in place prior to Blueprint 2000, i.e., stakeholder participation and school advisory council.

(continued)

RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL PROFILE

PERCEPTIONS ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

FACTORS THAT HAVE HINDERED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- Lack of funding for school improvement initiatives (e.g., technology plan implementation);
- Lack of time to receive training (e.g., technological skills);
- General feeling that school has been doing a good job all along, before Blueprint 2000 efforts. Some faculty and parents are asking, "Why do we need to change?" ;
- Vagueness in the details related to the "how-to's" of school improvement;
- Lack of funding for school improvement initiatives;
- Creation of additional stress for both teachers and administrators (e.g., for teachers, requirement of after-school time for involvement in school improvement efforts);
- Perception of Blueprint 2000 as a "feel-good" proposal lacking in specifics; and
- Responsibility of SAC to make decisions without real authority.

RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL PROFILE

1994-95 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

STATE GOALS INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- Goal 3 (Student Performance)

EXAMPLES OF CATEGORIES OF OBJECTIVES INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The 1994-95 school improvement plan included ten specific improvement objectives in the following general areas:

- Improve reading, writing, or math skills;
- Improve academic skills of students other than reading, writing, or math;
- Increase problem solving or critical thinking skills of students;
- Increase student motivation, self-esteem;
- Improve student responsibility, cooperativeness, maturity, adjustment, or social skills; and
- Improve multicultural awareness, interaction, and cooperation.

EXAMPLES OF CATEGORIES OF STRATEGIES INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The 1994-95 school improvement plan included 31 improvement strategies or activities in the following general categories:

- New or modified curriculum;
- Other non-academic program development;
- Utilize integrated instruction approach/block scheduling; changes in the daily/yearly calendar/school schedule;
- Develop incentives and/or academic recognition activities; peer counseling/peer groups;
- Parental/community involvement activities; publications/information dissemination;
- Fund raising/seeking activities; teacher/staff training;
- Hire additional staff; and
- Planning, exploring, and assessing activities.

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RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL PROFILE

1994-95 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

ADEQUATE PROGRESS AND EVALUATION

The 1994-95 school improvement plan does not include a description of adequate progress and includes evaluation methods for one of the ten objectives.

TRENDS IN PLANS

In its 1995-96 school improvement plan the school included a definition of adequate progress for the first time. In addition, it also began including methods to evaluate each of the objectives. The school continued to focus on one of the state goals, Goal 3 student performance, and the ten objectives included in its 1994-95 plan. The school is continuing to use the same 30 strategies to implement the plan, although many of the strategies have progressed from the planning to implementation stage.

RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL PROFILE

IMPACT OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

WAIVERS

The school received a waiver of district policy to allow the provision of multi-credit course offerings, an improvement initiative identified in the SIP. In 1993, the school requested and received a waiver that allowed students lacking one or less course credits but enrolled in summer school or an adult education program to participate in graduation ceremonies. In 1994, Riverview reapplied for the waiver, but it was denied because students at other schools in the district did not have an equitable opportunity.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The principal reported that the district provided additional funds and allocation flexibility to help develop and implement school improvement plans. For example, schools have flexibility in allocating resources for textbooks they select to support their curriculum. The district allocated additional money for teacher release time, research, and inservice. The principal described Blueprint 2000 as a guiding force for determining how resources should be used.

FUNDS

The school received \$13,000 through the Riverview High School Foundation, a non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance learning at Riverview. Among the many programs supported by the Foundation is teacher enhancement funding to assist teachers in traveling to bring back new knowledge and aids to their classroom. Business partners also provided approximately \$3,000 in funds and in-kind contributions such as T-shirts and merchandise coupons to help support the Renaissance Program, an initiative designed to provide incentives for student academic performance.

DECISION-MAKING

The staff believes that stakeholder participation in site-based management has facilitated the school improvement process. Although site-based decision making was in place at Riverview prior to Blueprint 2000, the principal reported that decision responsibilities are now spread out among various committees, creating a broader base of accountability.

School Improvement Cited	Examples of Initiatives	Description and Impact of Initiatives	Relationship to BP 2000 Goals
Integrated Curriculum	Multi-Credit Course Offerings Through "Performing Arts and the Media"	<p>"Performing Arts and the Media" is a multi-credit program which makes it easier for students to complete the 26 credits needed to apply for the Florida Scholars Program. The course, developed by the instructor, establishes a performance-based, non-timed, combined course offering encompassing three academic classes: Speech I, Acting I, and Mass Media II, and allows for cross academic area instructional techniques. It provides an integrated learning experience in which students acquire and apply knowledge in the same manner as the real-world setting.</p> <p>Evaluation is performance-based and emphasizes non-timed assessment to insure mastery. Samples of students' work from the class syllabus activities are included in students' video portfolios.</p>	Goals 2, 3

SARASOTA COUNTY TECHNICAL INSTITUTE PROFILE

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS, AS IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS

In speaking with stakeholders, they identified certain school characteristics which should be considered when examining improvement initiatives at the school. These characteristics include:

- The school provides training to students to make the transition from heavy, "smokestack" manufacturing, type jobs to more "high tech," high-wage oriented careers, light manufacturing, and service industries such as health, repair, and maintenance jobs;
- Approximately 300 students at SCTI are still in high school but attend SCTI for vocational/technical training;
- The three biggest programs at SCTI are still Health, Industrial, and Family and Consumer Services; and
- Courses are offered during the day, evening, and on Saturday. Students may enroll or exit programs throughout the year.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

- 5,086 full time equivalent students
 - Approximately 15,000 students in 1994-95 (unduplicated, full and part-time)
 - 65 full-time, certificated staff members
- The school also has over 400 part-time instructional staff members.

SARASOTA COUNTY TECHNICAL INSTITUTE PROFILE

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS	
NAME OF GROUP FUNCTIONING AS SAC	School Advisory Council (SAC)
MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION OF 1994-95 SAC ACCORDING TO MEMBERSHIP LIST PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL (N=12)	Administrators: 3
	Teachers: 2
	Support Staff: 1
	Parents: 0
	Business/Community: 3
	Students: 3
SAC MEETINGS	The SAC generally met once per month on Monday nights at 7:00 p.m. A total of 9 meetings were held in 1994-95.
SAC MEMBER ATTENDANCE	Based on attendance records provided by the schools, persons listed as members of the SAC generally attended 1994-95 meetings. It was perceived that all members, including most business/community members of the SAC, attended scheduled meetings.
NEW SAC MEMBERS IN 1995	Compared to the 1994-95 SAC, 1 of 10 members of the 1995-96 SAC had not previously served on the SAC. SAC member turnover was not perceived as affecting the school's ability to develop and implement their school improvement plan. Time requirements associated with SAC responsibilities, job changes, and student graduation/program completion were cited as reasons SAC members leave prior to their term expiring or decide not to return the next year.
INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF	Teachers were involved in the school improvement process through membership on the School Management Team (SMT), which is comprised of school staff who are elected for three year terms. The SMT obtains input from the SAC and other faculty and, based on this input, writes and revises the school improvement plan. SAC members are appointed. Every staff member is provided a copy of the final school improvement plan and must base their annual performance objectives on the plan.

SARASOTA COUNTY TECHNICAL INSTITUTE PROFILE

PERCEPTIONS ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

MOST POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLUEPRINT 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increased involvement of the business community in school affairs; ■ Provides a focus for school improvement; ■ Increased staff awareness on school improvements; and ■ Increased receptiveness of school administration to new ideas from teachers.
NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF BLUEPRINT 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increased work load due to the need to document the status of school improvement projects for accountability purposes.
FACTORS THAT HAVE HELPED THE SCHOOL IMPROVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The flexibility schools in the district already have to make decisions concerning resources and staffing; ■ Equipment and monetary donations from corporations; ■ Retrofitting grant received from the state to update technology at the school; and ■ Staff development.
FACTORS THAT HAVE HINDERED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The perception that Blueprint 2000 applies more to kindergarten through 12th grade public schools than to vocational-technical schools; and ■ Staff time and effort was perceived by some as excessive. It appeared that teachers at this school spent a considerable amount of time documenting school improvement activities, compared to other schools we visited.

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1994-95 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	
STATE GOALS INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Goal 2 (Graduation Rate and Readiness for Postsecondary Education and Employment); ■ Goal 3 (Student Performance); and ■ Goal 6 (Teachers and Staff).
OBJECTIVES INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	<p>The 1994-95 school improvement plan included six specific improvement objectives in the following general areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve career preparedness; ■ Increase problem solving, critical thinking skills; ■ Increase computer and technical competencies of students; ■ Increase computer competency of teachers/staff; and ■ Improve academic skills of at risk students or special needs students.
STRATEGIES INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	<p>The 1994-95 school improvement plan included 16 improvement strategies or activities in the following general categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agreement/cooperation with other agencies; ■ Develop and/or conduct surveys; ■ New modified curriculum; ■ Teacher/staff training; ■ Needs identification/assessment activities; planning, exploring, and assessing activities; and ■ Hire additional staff.
ADEQUATE PROGRESS AND EVALUATION	<p>The 1994-95 school improvement plan includes descriptions of adequate progress and evaluation procedures.</p>
(continued)	

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1994-95 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

TRENDS IN PLANS

The institute's 1993-94 and 1994-95 school improvement plans are identical - both identify three school goals and both address three of the seven Blueprint 2000 goals. Specifically, both address Blueprint 2000 goals 2 (graduation rate and readiness for postsecondary education and employment), 3 (student performance), and 6 (teaches and staff). The school's 1995-96 improvement plan address only goals 2 and 3. The school included definitions of adequate progress in both the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school improvement plans, and continued to include methods for evaluation.

SARASOTA COUNTY TECHNICAL INSTITUTE PROFILE

IMPACT OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

WAIVERS

SCTI has requested no waivers for school improvement. SCTI administrators believed no waivers were needed to make improvements at their school.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Blueprint 2000 was not perceived to have made a significant impact on resource allocation. About two years prior to Blueprint 2000, the school district adopted a shared decision-making model which uses a school management team comprised of faculty and staff to allocate resources. Under shared decision making, SCTI has increased flexibility in how it may shift resources. Blueprint 2000 has helped SCTI to direct resources to needs identified through the school improvement process. It was noted by school administrators that budget cuts over the past several years have made the flexibility more difficult. For example, in 1994-95, the SCTI budget was cut by 8%, which represented approximately \$500,000.

ADDITIONAL FUNDS

In 1994-95, SCTI received a retrofit grant of \$450,000 from the Department of Education which has enabled the SCTI to install fiber optic cable and software to develop a database and network the computers on campus.

DECISION-MAKING

It was perceived that there have been no changes in the way that decisions are made as a result of Blueprint 2000. However, the shared decision-making model adopted by the school board approximately two years prior to Blueprint 2000 has increased the input of faculty and staff in decision-making, such as in the allocation of resources.

School Improvement Cited	Examples of Initiatives	Description and Impact of Initiatives	Relationship to BP 2000 Goals
Improved Employment and Employability Skills through Improved Success of Small Businesses	Business Incubator Program	<p>SCTI created a special program to improve the success of small businesses. The program provides a physical location off campus for office space at reduced rent. In addition, participants may use copiers, secretarial services, a FAX machine, telecommunications services, and computers. One of the objectives of the program is to reduce the financial burden on small businesses, thus enabling them to survive. Participants must enroll in small business management classes at SCTI and receive free business counseling services from S.C.O.R.E. (Senior Corp of Retired Executives).</p> <p>SCTI administrators indicated that 65% of businesses participating in the program survived the first year compared to a national average of approximately 20%.</p>	Goals 2, 3
Improved Employment and Employability Skills through Improved Training of Students in the Automotive Industry	Automotive Training Programs	<p>The automotive training programs at SCTI provide students with opportunities to learn the most up-to-date technology on foreign and domestic automobiles. The school has enhanced its program by entering into agreements with automobile manufactures, such as Toyota, to donate cars and other state of the art equipment. In exchange, these companies use SCTI facilities for meetings and send their employees to SCTI for training. Students in the program can elect to complete additional course work to earn an Associates of Science degree at the local community college.</p> <p>The project began in the 1991-92 school year, and two classes have completed the program as of Fall 1995. The school judges the success of the program based on the number of completers and placements. From 1992 through December 1995, 42 students have enrolled in the program, and 25 students have completed the program. In addition, all 25 completers of the program have been placed in automotive related jobs. Anecdotal feedback from industry representatives on SCTI industry councils suggests that students are now learning more directly applicable skills on the most current model vehicles, learning skills that are needed by today's automotive industry, and being hired by employers.</p>	Goals 2, 3