



*A Union of Professionals*

## **School Audit Process**

### **Getting the Right Information**

It is irresponsible and unacceptable to make major changes in--much less, to close down--schools that suffer from low academic performance without first investigating the causes of their continual failure.

Many states and/or school districts already have developed criteria for identifying low-performing schools. Most of these are based on student test data and/or the school's performance relative to its self-developed education plan, and may include other criteria to identify schools that have a "poor learning environment."<sup>1</sup> In some locales, the process is fair and has been applied impartially; in others it has not.

Relatively few states and/or school districts have developed fair and effective intervention procedures to investigate the causes of school failure and implement solutions. Crucial to the success of this process is the implementation of an on-site investigatory process, often incorporating a school "self-study" as well as a visit by an external "school intervention team."<sup>2</sup>

### **Review of the Investigatory Process in Selected Locales**

Although school improvement processes vary by locale, most have several elements in common, including timelines and procedures for identifying low-performing schools, a school audit procedure, a process for the review and implementation of an improvement plan, and specific actions that must be taken should the approved plan fail. The quality of the process also varies by locale, with some very detailed and well-constructed approaches that meet the goals of fairness and efficacy, and others that lack these qualities. One area of difference is the level of school staff and union involvement in the process. For example, AFT locals in Boston, Corpus Christi, Dade County, New York City, and Toledo have been closely involved in school improvement efforts.

In nearly half of the states, the improvement process is invoked when a school fails to meet district- or state-mandated performance criteria. However, school improvement efforts have also resulted from local decisions by school authorities, community or school-based initiatives, legal decisions, and in a number of cases at the behest of the local teacher union. Typically, a school is identified for intervention at the beginning of a new school year, often based on standardized test results from the previous spring.

Once identified, the schools become involved in an investigatory process ("school audit"). Audits are performed in a variety of ways, with varying degrees of thoroughness. In some areas--for example, Baltimore--the school is subject to a state on-site review, with findings incorporated into the local school board's improvement plan that is submitted to the state for approval.<sup>3</sup> In other state-mandated plans--for example, New York--school intervention teams include representatives from the state, district and school educational communities. In locales where the improvement process is district-based, a variety of arrangements are used to create the local intervention teams. In Boston and Toledo, for example, the selection of the intervention team is specified in the union contract. In Florida, and perhaps in other locations as well, no school visit takes place. Instead, each low-performing school's "advisory council" conducts a needs assessment and prepares a school improvement plan, which is submitted to the state for approval.

Depending on the state or district, the school audit process may last from several weeks to several months into the new school year. Both New York state and Boston have produced detailed manuals to describe and guide the work of the intervention teams. Boston's school intervention process takes nearly two months, and includes initial training and organization for the school intervention team, a review of documents to create a "school profile," preparations for the school visit (including the formulation of key questions and the development of a visit schedule), meetings with school administrators and faculty representatives, several school visits (which include extensive individual and group interviews of school staff), preparation of a draft report to be reviewed by the school, a meeting with the school's administrators and staff in order to review the draft, and the preparation of the final report."<sup>4</sup>

The New York state "Registration Review Process"<sup>5</sup> begins by early October with the identification of schools based on performance on tests administered in the previous year. The registration review includes: orientation for everyone involved in the process (including teacher union representatives who serve as member of the "Registration Review Team"); a school "Self-Study"; a registration review visit (sometime between November and late February of the following year); the preparation of the *Registration Review Report*; and the resulting preparation and approval, by July 31, of district and school-based improvement plans.<sup>6</sup> The district may act on the team's recommendation by increasing its support to the school, "restructuring" the school (i.e., making major changes in the way the school operates, including staffing changes), or "redesigning" the school (i.e., closing it, and reopening a "new school" in its place).

The school's self-study, which guides the work of the registration review team, is carried out by a "planning team" that reflects the school's various constituencies, including teachers and other school staff. It focuses on instruction; curriculum; assessment; school management and leadership; professional qualifications and professional development of staff; parent and community involvement; school discipline, safety and security; instructional supplies and materials; the physical plant and facilities; and the adequacy of the district's support for the school.

The registration review visit is carried out by a team of eight to 12 individuals, led by a district superintendent. According to the state of New York, it "typically includes teachers, administrators, parents, a board of education member, a representative from the teachers' union and the administrators' union (when applicable) and a State Education Department employee."<sup>8</sup> Other education specialists may be added. In New York City, the review team is composed of a representative of the United Federation of Teachers, a NYC principal, a NYC parent, an instructional specialist from the NYC Board of Education, a State Education Department liaison, an upstate district superintendent, and several curriculum specialists from the team leader's school district.

The four-day visit is designed to "determine if the school is an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning; assess the school's total educational program and its effectiveness; identify classroom, school and district practices that must be changed to improve student achievement, and specifically recommend making those changes; and validate the school's self-study report." During the visit, the team receives briefings from school administrators, conducts interviews with teachers and other members of the school community, visits classrooms, reviews all relevant documents, and prepares its findings. On its last day, the team conducts an exit conference for school staff, which includes the team leader's report of findings and recommendations.

What distinguishes New York state's process is the thoroughness of its design and documentation. Members of the review team receive a 54-page *Guidebook for Reviewers* detailing the rationale for the visit, the procedures to be followed, and in several appendices, the questions to be asked and the information to be reviewed. As an example, the *Guidebook* provides a 26-page inventory of questions that are designed to assist the reviewer in judging whether effective programs exist in the areas of communication arts, mathematics, bilingual education, Title 1, early childhood (pre-K), library media, school health and wellness, and special education.<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that these inventories

place inordinate emphasis on the non-academic functions of the school. For example, 47 questions focus on effective school health and wellness programs--nearly equal the combined total of 50 questions asked about the quality of the communication arts and mathematics programs. Another problem is that there seems to be insufficient time during the visit to gather anecdotal information, review and absorb the documentary evidence, and produce a thorough analysis of the school's needs.

In many ways, the Boston "intervention process" presents a more comprehensive model.<sup>10</sup> One immediate benefit is that the union has equal representation on the six-member intervention teams. While there is no formal school self-study, school staff are given a significant voice through a review of the "School Profile," extensive interviews, and numerous opportunities to comment on the team's report. Another important feature of the Boston process is that its primary activities occur over a four-week period. This allows the team to gather and reflect upon the information needed to produce a well-considered set of recommendations.

Several other aspects of the Boston process are worthy of emulation. The team looks carefully at the rationale for intervention and uses it to focus their study. The *Intervention Team Manual* includes extensive cautions against the misinterpretation of certain performance data (attendance, suspensions, standardized tests, etc.), as well as the shortcomings of various data-gathering techniques (observations, interviews, etc.). The manual provides very good guidance on how to frame the core questions for the visit and recommends that team members meet with faculty representatives for suggestions on additional lines of inquiry. It also suggests some useful data collection strategies including "pair visits" to the school. And finally, the Boston process stipulates that the team report must be approved by majority vote, and includes a provision for dissent.

Once a report has been prepared and an improvement plan developed, schools enter an implementation and monitoring phase. Here again, there are differences in the levels of monitoring and support that are provided to schools, as well as the period of time that schools have to demonstrate improvement. In Boston, the school intervention team can recommend that the school improvement plan be implemented with no further monitoring, monitoring limited to six months, or monitoring limited to one year. After a year of intervention, if the six-person team (including three members designated by the union) deadlocks three-to-three on proposals for staff reassignment to improve an unsatisfactory school, the school is given an additional year to attempt improvement. For this second year of intervention, a new seven-person team is appointed or assigned, with the seventh member appointed by joint agreement of the superintendent and the president of the union.

In New York state, the school is given three years in which to implement an improvement plan and to demonstrate its effectiveness. During this time, support to the school is provided by the district superintendent who led the registration review team. This support may include an evaluation of district and school-based plans for improvement, advice to the school on its effort to improve school performance, and visits to the school--sometimes in conjunction with other education specialists--to provide ongoing support. If, at the end of the three-year period, the school has not improved, the New York Commissioner of Education will recommend to the state's Board of Regents that the school's registration be revoked (which in effect closes the school).

This analysis has focused on the Boston and New York audit procedures because they are among the most detailed, and because each has elements that should be included in a fair and effective school improvement process.<sup>11</sup> In particular, the Boston audit process is distinguished by the extensive involvement accorded to school staff and their representatives. This includes equal representation on the school intervention team, frequent opportunities on the part of staff to orient the team and to review its recommendations, a procedure for arriving at a final report that requires a majority vote, a separate procedure that allows for the preparation of "dissenting" sections to the report if requested by two team members, and a process for resolving a deadlocked vote that protects the rights and interests of staff and students at an affected school. The guiding document for the Boston process,

the *Intervention Team Manual*, is also commendable for its clarity, thoroughness and concern with respect to the rights of students and staff.

The New York state *Registration Review Process* is equally well articulated. However, unlike the Boston process, New York's seems to place a great deal more power in the hands of the registration review team leader. This aspect of the process seems to deprive others, including school staff and their representatives, of the level of influence they deserve to have over school improvement efforts. In New York City, but not throughout the state, a representative of the teacher union is placed on the review team. In particular, the New York process appreciates the importance of a school's "self-study" and provides clear guidance on its conduct.

Of course, even well-designed plans need to be closely monitored in order to ensure fair and effective implementation. And, because the school improvement process is so complicated, teacher union representatives play a crucial role in orienting members about the process and providing continual support as it unfolds.

### **Guiding Principles for the School Audit Process**

The process employed to improve schools around the country will vary in response to local conditions, mandates, and contractual obligations. The AFT's "Redesigning Low-Performing Schools" resolution provides a useful guide for ensuring that the school improvement process is *fair* to students and staff, and *effective* in contributing to the school's improvement. In addition, the following principles can be used to help design or strengthen local school audit procedures. As with a medical examination, the school audit must get the right information, make the correct diagnosis, and prescribe the proper treatment to raise academic performance. To do this, the school audit process should adhere to the following guiding principles:

-- **The school audit should be a constructive process, diagnostic in nature and designed with the goal of improving the school.** As the manual guiding the Boston school audit teams points out, "Intervention is a process by which schools receive outside help in order to improve."<sup>12</sup> An approach that is negative in nature, and couched in language that threatens school closure for unsuccessful schools, should be avoided. The audit must provide for the proper orientation of all involved in the process, allow sufficient time to complete all the required tasks, and focus on identifying specific and general problems as well as suggested solutions. It must be clear from the outset that the district and the state are committed to providing the resources necessary to support the improvement plan arising from the audit process.

-- **School improvement should be viewed as a collaborative process to be engaged in among school staff and their representatives, educational authorities, and all other affected parties.** As the superintendent of Boston's schools pointed out, "The intervention process is a collaboration involving Central Administration, the level offices, and our teacher and administrative unions in a joint effort to assist teachers and administrators in improving the services available to our students." The collaborative nature of this process has been recognized in the contract language of various collective agreements -- for example, Boston, New York City, and Toledo -- which specify the composition of the school audit teams.<sup>13</sup>

-- **The process should provide a wide-ranging analysis of the causes of the school's failure, which should address questions of how well the school district and state have done in supporting the needs of the school.** Factors beyond the school's control, including low levels of financial support and lack of professional development opportunities in the district, may adversely affect the ability of the school to achieve academic excellence. District and state officials should be asked to evaluate themselves, and their performance.

-- **Schools should be judged using widely accepted criteria for identifying the causes of failure, not on arbitrary measures or personal whim.** Care should be taken in the study to identify specific problems (for example, a sudden influx of non-English-speaking students) in contrast to more widespread and systemic problems (for example, lack of an effective reading program) that are facing the school. Among the criteria that should be used are those which help to judge whether the school systematically promotes high standards.<sup>14</sup> The recommended solutions must address the identified problems and be grounded in research-proven programs and practices.

-- **School staff--and others affected by the outcome of the process--should be involved actively and extensively in the process.** Beyond merely receiving an orientation concerning the audit process, engaging in the school self-study, and responding to interviews by the school intervention team, school staff and their representatives should be involved in the orientation of the intervention team and have the opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations arising out of the school audit process.

-- **Due care must be taken to protect the rights of school staff and students during the conduct of the school audit.** This includes protecting rights to privacy and confidentiality. The purpose of the audit is to improve the entire school; it should be made clear to the staff, and followed in practice, that the goal of the audit process is not to pass judgment on the competence or performance of individual teachers.

In brief, the audit process is meant to answer two questions: *Why isn't the school "working"?* *What can be done to help it improve?* Conducted correctly, the audit should yield fair and useful answers to these questions.

## **The School Self-Study**

To determine what changes need to be made to ensure high academic performance, schools must ask themselves many questions. Some are obvious, but perhaps overlooked; others are more difficult and probably have no good answers. Nevertheless, as the New York state review process points out, a school self-study is the beginning of the school improvement process. In this section, only a few key questions will be highlighted. A more complete listing may be found in various documents dealing with school self-studies.<sup>15</sup>

In general, the questions should elicit the information necessary to diagnose the cause of the school's poor academic performance and to suggest remedies. The self-study should offer the school staff the opportunity to communicate their own analysis of what is working and what needs to be improved in the school. After all, staff are the ones who daily face the frustrations of a failing environment, and who for a long time have probably been asking themselves the questions contained in the self-study. Besides this reflective quality, the self-study should provide outsiders the information needed to support the school's improvement process. Once again, like a good medical examination, the questions that form the self-study must allow the "patient" and the "doctor" to exchange information in a way that leads to the best treatment. This collaborative process requires asking the right questions.

The following is a list of areas that should be examined during the self-study: instruction; curriculum; assessment; school management and leadership; professional qualifications and professional development of staff; parent and community involvement; school discipline, safety, and security; instructional supplies and materials; the physical plant and facilities; and the adequacy of the district's support for the schools.<sup>16</sup> In asking questions about these areas, keep in mind that the elements which would help a low-performing school succeed are the same as those that produce excellent schools in any setting--high standards of conduct and achievement.



At a minimum, an effective self-study process should address four general areas:

--**First, an accurate school profile must be developed.** Schools must collect key performance indicators, including test scores, other measures of academic performance, dropout rates, demographic information, relevant documents, and illustrative materials. This information can illuminate potential problems. For example, the school's reading program may be burdened by a shifting population with an increased number of non-English-speaking students. Or, high rates of student absenteeism--perhaps indicating that the school is unsafe, or the students unmotivated--may contribute to low academic performance.

--**Second, the factors that promote effective schools should be reviewed, and the measure of their presence or absence in the school must be taken.** For example, if a key component of a school's success is an effective program of staff development, then the self-study needs to determine whether one exists, and to judge its quality.

--**Third, the effectiveness of the school's compliance with mandated requirements must be reviewed.** Schools should determine whether these mandated programs--for example; Title 1, LEP, and special education--are adequately implemented and supported. Questions that arise include: Is the school meeting its obligations? Is the district providing sufficient support to enable the school to meet its obligations?

--**Finally, after receiving the necessary information to make an informed choice, the school's staff should select a research-based plan of action to remedy the current problems.** While the staff may not have the answer to the school's low performance, their engagement in this process should help set the proper collaborative atmosphere necessary to make the difficult changes required to improve the school.

Each of the aspects of the self-study listed above requires its own set of questions, and answers.<sup>17</sup> Some of the major questions that need to be asked include:

--**Based on a review of the school's standing on state and district "key performance indicators," are there any particular indicators that appear to point to the causes of the school's low academic performance?** (For example, in reviewing results on standardized reading tests, is there a particular pattern established that indicates a weakness in the overall reading program?)

--**Have there been any recent demographic shifts that would help to account for the school's low academic performance?** (For example, has there been an increase of non-English-speaking students enrolled in the school?)

--**Does the school have clear academic standards that are known to students and staff? Does the school have high expectations for all students? Does it have the core curriculum and programs in place that could help students meet the expectations? Does the school have well-designed assessments that can detect problems before students fall too far behind?** (For example: Are all teachers oriented to the district's core standards documents? Do teachers receive ongoing support in their implementation? Does the current curriculum reflect a well-planned sequence of courses? Which assessments are used to guide the improvement of instruction? Are they the appropriate ones?)

--**What programs does the school offer to support low-achieving students? Are these programs effective?** (For example: Are these programs systematic? Are they based on well-supported research? Are these programs effectively implemented, coordinated, monitored, and assessed?)

-- **Does the school have well-defined and enforced standards of conduct?** (For example: Does the school have high levels of violence and classroom disruption? Are rules of conduct clear, understood by all students, and consistently enforced? What are the programs and procedures that help prevent student misbehavior? Are they adequate?)

-- **Has the school engaged in prior improvement efforts? To what end?** (For example: What accounted for the success or failure of previous efforts to improve the school's academic performance? What lessons were learned from these efforts?)

-- **Do school managers help promote academic excellence? Do they work to maintain an orderly and collegial atmosphere?** (For example: Have school-site administrators communicated a vision of high standards of conduct and achievement? Are there indicators--e.g., high rates of staff absenteeism, staff turnover, grievances, or disunity--that staff morale is low? Are there indicators--e.g., high levels of school violence and disruption, high rates of student absenteeism, and/or high dropout rates--that a school environment supportive of high standards has not been established? Do school-site administrators actively engage the instructional staff in efforts to improve the school? Does the school building reflect a school climate of indifference and neglect?)

-- **Do faculty members (teachers and classroom paraprofessionals) play an active decision-making role in efforts to achieve academic excellence?** (Are academic standards, curriculum, staff development, and other professional issues part of the school-based decision-making process?)

-- **Does the school provide adequate opportunities for professional development? Does the school's personnel policy work to attract and retain a qualified and experienced teaching force?** (For example: Do the professional development opportunities presented the staff support high standards of conduct and achievement? Do teachers receive training in implementing effective, research-supported teaching techniques for improving the academic performance of "at risk" students? Are adequate time, opportunities, and resources provided to support collaboration among professional staff? Do the school and district actively work to recruit and retain the best-qualified teachers?)

-- **Does the school effectively engage parents and the community in efforts to achieve excellence in the school?** (For example: How are the school's expectations concerning academic achievement and conduct communicated to parents? Are the current procedures adequate? Are parents actively engaged in the life of the school?)

-- **Are sufficient resources provided to the school to enable it to support high standards of conduct and achievement? Do the district and school provide adequate support for the effective implementation of district, state, and federally mandated education programs?** (For example: Are there sufficient financial resources provided to support a rigorous academic program; quality teaching, administrative, and support staff; sufficient and appropriate supplies, texts, and materials? Is the school building well equipped and maintained?)

-- **What are the main factors that have contributed to the school's lack of academic success? Describe and discuss ways in which these factors could be reduced or eliminated.** (For example: If reading scores are low in an elementary school, and this is due in part to the poorly articulated reading instruction currently in place, perhaps the school could adopt one of the comprehensive, proven, research-based reading programs currently available. Or, if a middle school is experiencing violence and disruptions, perhaps a more rigorous and consistently enforced standard for student behavior and conduct could be introduced on a schoolwide basis.)

While many more questions could, and should, be asked during a school self-study, those outlined above will help provide a basis for the reflection and analysis necessary to begin the process of school improvement. Acting without asking these questions, and paying close attention to how the school

staff answers them, risks implementing a process that will repeat past mistakes and fail to address real problems.

## **The External School Intervention Process**

The school self-study report should form the basis of the school intervention team visit. Having carefully reviewed the school's findings and recommendations, the intervention team should focus its study on identified, or suspected, areas in need of improvement. For example, the *New York Guidebook for Reviewers* provides a 26-page inventory of questions that are supposed to allow the reviewer to judge whether effective programs exist in the areas of communication arts, mathematics, bilingual education, Title I, early childhood (pre-K), library media, school health and wellness, and special education.<sup>18</sup>

As mentioned earlier, depending on the locale, the school intervention process can be conducted in a variety of ways. In Toledo, for example, the union has excellent contract-language provisions concerning the collaborative nature of school improvement; however, there is no systematic design for the school intervention process. This is in contrast to the detailed plans for school intervention visits provided by Boston and New York state.

The following are a set of guidelines to help design a fair and effective external school audit:

--**School staff and union representatives should be included on the school intervention team.** They should also be actively and extensively involved in the school visit. This will help to provide the team with important information on the school's operation as well as to emphasize the collaborative nature of the improvement process.

--**The school intervention team should be well briefed on its mission, and receive the necessary documents to conduct its study.** In particular, the team must carefully review the findings and recommendations of the school's self-study. New York state, for example, instructs its teams that the goals for their visits are to "determine if the school is an environment conducive to effective reaching and learning; assess the school's total educational program and its effectiveness; identify classroom, school and district practices that must be changed to improve student achievement, and specifically recommend making those changes; and validate the school's self-study report."

--**The schedule for the school intervention visit should provide adequate time to gather and reflect upon all necessary data.** The intervention team should spend as much time as possible in the schools. Team members should then have an opportunity to review and discuss their findings before writing their report.

--**The intervention team report and recommendations should be approved by a majority vote.** This will ensure that all perspectives have been heard.

--**The intervention team recommendations should focus on the implementation of research-based programs that have demonstrated success in settings similar to the school under study.** Experience has demonstrated that proven programs are more likely to provide the tools administrators, teachers, and students need to make their school better.

--**A detailed manual outlining all phases of the external review process should be developed.** Having such a document will increase the likelihood that school improvement will be conducted objectively.

Well-designed school improvement efforts are collaborative, provide a well-articulated process for improvement, support the process with detailed documentation, and provide for the orientation and involvement of staff and other members of the educational community.



**Footnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> According to New York State Education Department's, *The Registration Review Process: A Guidebook for Reviewers*, among the conditions that may fall under this category are: "high rates of student absenteeism, inordinate levels of violence, excessive suspension rates, violations of building health and safety standards, a high rate of teacher turnover, and excessive use of uncertified teachers or teachers practicing in subject areas other than those for which they were certified." (1-2) Similarly, Boston's *Intervention Team Manual: 1994-1995* lists the following indicators of the need for school intervention: "transfers of teachers or students, how schools are working with unique populations, school needs outside resources to change or hasten the change process, inability to work as a team, poor staff relationships, general parent dissatisfaction with school, and inability to maintain an educational environment conducive to teaching and learning." (I-6)

<sup>2</sup> Labels for these groups and processes vary. For example, the school self-assessment is labeled "Self-Study" in New York state, and "Campus Self-Evaluation" in Texas. Likewise, the external auditors are known as the "School Intervention Team" in Boston and Toledo, the "School Support Team" in Chicago, and the "Registration Review Team" in New York state.

<sup>3</sup> State of Maryland, 22:17 Md. R. 13A.01.04.07 (Effective 8/28/95).

<sup>4</sup> Boston Public Schools, *Intervention Team Manual: 1994-1995* (II-4).

<sup>5</sup> For more on the New York school improvement process, see the "District Profiles" section.

<sup>6</sup> New York State Education Department, *The Registration Review Process: A Guidebook for Reviewers* (7-8).

<sup>7</sup> The United Federation of Teachers (New York City) has negotiated the following contract language to address the possibility of "redesign," stating that if "sufficient numbers of displaced staff apply, at least 50 percent of the School's pedagogical positions shall be selected from among the appropriately licensed most senior applicants from the impacted school(s), who meet the School's qualifications."

<sup>8</sup> New York State Education Department, *The Registration Review Access: A Guidebook for Reviewers* (15).

<sup>9</sup> New York State Education Department, *The Registration Review Process: A Guidebook for Reviewers* (29-54).

<sup>10</sup> Boston Public Schools, *Intervention Team Manual: 1994-1995*.

<sup>11</sup> Copies of both of these documents are available from the AFT. Write to: Steven Fleischman, Assistant Director, AFT Educational Issues Department, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001.

<sup>12</sup> The language quoted is drawn from the Boston *Intervention Team Manual: 1994-1995*. This manual restates many of the guiding principles cited above and stands out as one of the best models for designing a school audit process.

<sup>13</sup> For example, Article XXV of the Toledo Federation of Teachers' contract states that: "Upon mutual agreement of the superintendent and Federation, a joint team appointed by the parties shall be given responsibility for the improvement of a school's operation. The team will construct guidelines for changes and monitor the results."

<sup>14</sup> Useful in this regard are a number of AFT publications on the subject, including: *Principles for Professional Development*, and *Setting Strong Standards*. As well, the AFT's "Bill of Rights and Responsibilities: Standards of Conduct, Standards of Achievement" should be consulted.

<sup>15</sup> The two most complete listings of questions to be asked in a school self-study are found in the New York State Education Department's *The Registration Review Process: A Guidebook for Reviewers* (9-13) and the State of Texas, "Introduction to the Campus Self-Evaluation" (2-12). As well, a series of suggested questions is offered in the Boston Public Schools' *Intervention Team Manual: 1994-1995* (III-14-15 and IV-1-4).

<sup>16</sup> New York State Education Department, *The Registration Review Process: A Guidebook for Reviewers* (2, 9-13).

<sup>17</sup> Useful reference may be made to the AFT's "Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Learning: Standards of Conduct, Standards for Achievement," which outlines a series of conditions that must exist in schools in order to promote excellence.

<sup>18</sup> New York State Education Department, *The Registration Review Process: A Guidebook for Reviewers* (29-54).