

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF REFORM INITIATIVES IN
RELATIVELY SMALL MISSOURI SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify commonly implemented school reform initiatives in Missouri school districts and determine the degree of relationship between those commonly implemented efforts and student academic success. The population for this study consisted of 81 Missouri school districts with populations of 500-2000 students. Data were analyzed to determine, collectively and by grade level (a) commonly implemented reform initiatives in the school's represented in this study; (b) the amounts of fiscal and human resources invested in the implementation of those initiatives; (c) the stages of implementation of the initiatives; (d) the perceived levels of impact of the initiatives on academic success of the students in those schools; (e) if any significant relationships existed between full years of implementation, personnel hours, dollars spent, average daily attendance, persistence to graduation, superintendent's perceived impact, percent of students passing communications arts or mathematics as measured by the MAP assessment; (f) if those relationships were noticeably different across the major grade levels of elementary, middle and high schools.

The study identified 297 initiatives. The ratio of fiscal investment and personnel hours committed to the implementation and support of elementary grade related reforms was 3:1 over all other grade levels. Significant correlations were found between years of full implementation and superintendent perceived impact, personnel hours and dollars spent and percent passing communication arts and percent passing mathematics. No significant correlations were found between any of the study variables and student achievement in communication arts or mathematics.