

THE ROLE OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS
IN THE BUDGETING PROCESS OF
RURAL OKLAHOMA SCHOOL
DISTRICTS

By .

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CHAPTER I

PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY

Background for the Study

The role of the elementary principal and the quality of our nation's elementary schools have received increased attention in recent years. A study by Gilbert Austin (1979) indicated that one of the most important elements of an effective school is the leadership of the principal. In reviewing studies of effective schools in New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, he found that strong leadership by the principal was the leading factor in effective schools. Austin also found that strong participation by the principals in the instructional program, higher expectations by the principals for teachers and students, and a feeling on the part of the principals that they had more control over the functioning of the school were all factors that distinguished effective schools from others.

Recent national publicity (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) has questioned the quality of our public schools. The Commission members stated in their

report that

our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them (pp. 5-6).

However, during the preceding decade many states continually found it necessary to either lower their education budgets or to hold them at the previous year's level (Kirst, 1978).

Administrative authority has been eroded by a variety of external forces, including the expanded power of citizens, the greater independence of teachers, the increased power of students, and the collective bargaining practices of teacher organizations (Myers, 1974). No longer is it possible for principals, superintendents, or boards of education to unilaterally initiate curriculum change or plan budgets as they have in the past. They must now seek input from groups such as teachers' associations and parent committees when determining priorities for their districts. New program areas such as special education and gifted and talented programs, with all of their attendant federal regulations, are now virtually mandated at all school sites (Bacharach & Mitchell, 1983).

Education has entered the technological age with the advent of the computer and other electronic teaching aids (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Teachers now express a desire for these technological aids and are able to support and justify their use in the classroom (Goodlad, 1984).

The elementary principal, in the role of chief building administrator, is placed under a great deal of pressure by these constraints (Eisenhauer, Willower, & Licata, 1984). Moreover, the principal's everyday work activities are fast-paced, unrelenting, and composed of many brief, varied, fragmented, and interrupted segments (Kmetz & Willower, 1982). Yet, the principal must maintain the position of a visible and recognized leader in the school. John Goodlad (1984) found in his study that "without exception, the principals of the 'more satisfying' schools saw the amount of influence they had as congruent with the amount of influence they thought principals should have" (p.179).

When teachers need a teaching aid or wish to implement a teaching idea, the building principal is the first one to whom they look for help. If the request is not funded or placed in the budget for the coming year, then the principal may be perceived by the teacher as being ineffective (Harris, 1963). When parents request or demand improved instruction or an increased range of subjects, their first contact is most commonly with the principal of the school which their child attends (Bremer, 1975). Their perceptions of the principal's effectiveness in meeting their needs will form a personal judgment of how well the principal is performing the job of instructional leader of the school (Jacobson, Reavis, & Logsdon, 1963).

Despite these problems, educators still aspire to the position of elementary principal. Some intend to use the

position as an intermediate step to the positions of assistant superintendent or superintendent of schools while others have selected the position as their true career goal (Jacobson et al., 1963).

Since job satisfaction is one of the main reasons people change jobs (Bacharach & Mitchell, 1983), then perhaps boards of education and superintendents need to become more aware of which job responsibilities give principals feelings of accomplishment and success. Although many studies have been done on the job satisfaction of teachers, there is a paucity of research on that of principals (Bacharach & Mitchell, 1983).

In a recent study in Canada involving administrators at all levels (Friesen, Holdaway, & Rice, 1983), the following seven job aspects were identified as being relevant to the overall job satisfaction of principals.

1. The work itself,
2. Occupational status and prestige,
3. Interaction with district administrators,
4. Interaction with teachers,
5. Interaction with students,
6. Salary and benefits,
7. Working conditions (p.44)

The study showed that, for many of the principals studied, one of the main sources of satisfaction involved interpersonal relations. Although this disagrees with Herzberg's finding for production employees (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959), for the principal the central work focus is on people. This corresponds to Herzberg's

identified job satisfaction factor, the work itself (Friesen et al., 1983).

If it is true that one of the major factors in the operation of an effective elementary school is the job satisfaction of the principal (Dunathan & Saluzzi, 1980), then in order to maintain that positive job satisfaction certain needs of the principal must be met. One of these needs appears to be the feeling of having meaningful input into school and district decision making and planning processes. A study of decision making and job satisfaction of elementary principals (Planner-Hardy, 1983) found that the elementary principal's perceived influence in district-wide decisions showed a high positive relationship with job satisfaction. A study of 120 principals in the Chicago area (Small, 1979) found that the principals who had influence in the decisions of their superiors and who were able to get their ideas across were more satisfied with their jobs.

Statement of the Problem

This study involves an examination of the actual and desired roles of elementary principals in rural Oklahoma schools in the budgeting process of their schools and districts. Also examined are the role of these principals in the budget process as perceived by their superiors, the effect of meaningful input on their job satisfaction, and the principals' perceived satisfaction with the amount of

their involvement in the budgeting process. The basic research questions are:

1. To what degree are elementary principals involved in their districts' budgeting process?
2. Is the elementary principal's perceived role in the budgeting process in agreement with the desired role?
3. How do elementary principals and superintendents differ in their perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the district's budgeting process?

Definition of Terms

Most of the terms that are used in this study are common in their usage. However, the following terms are given more precise, or legal, definitions for a better understanding of the concepts presented in this study.

Principal

A principal shall be any person other than a district superintendent of schools having supervisory or administrative authority over any school or school building having two or more teachers (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1984, p.35).

Rural elementary school

A rural elementary school is any school in Oklahoma which contains students in two or more grades kindergarten through sixth, is in an independent school district, and lies outside of the Tulsa and Oklahoma City standard metropolitan statistical areas.

School Budget

A school budget is a formalized statement of the anticipated expenditures and revenues of the school district for a stated period of time. It is one of the devices through which the school administration, the board of education, and the people of the community reach agreement as to what constitutes a satisfactory educational program (Morphet, 1957).

Budgeting Process

The budgeting process is the method by which the school budget is initiated, prepared, adopted, and administered. The budgeting process, therefore, includes the persons and procedures involved in carrying out the budget from the planning stages to the end of the fiscal year (Ovsiew & Castetter, 1960).

Limitations

The sample for this study was limited to 50 school districts. Since the budgeting process is not characterized by a high degree of standardization, principals in other school districts may or may not play roles in the process similar to those described in this study. Different statutory and regulatory mandates in states other than Oklahoma may affect the budgeting process in ways which change the assigned roles of administrators in those states.

The instrument used in this study was developed by the researcher. While it was reviewed by a panel of professional educators, it was not subjected to extensive field testing to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument.

Summary

Chapter I has included the background and the purpose for this study as well as the limitations and definitions of important terms. Chapter II contains a review of relevant literature including a history of the position of elementary principal, the job satisfaction of elementary principals, and their role in the budgeting and control of schools.

In Chapter III is presented the methodology including the sample and population, instrumentation, and other procedures of the study. As will be reported in that chapter, this study was conducted by obtaining information through a survey sent to 50 rural elementary school principals and from a series of interviews which were conducted with elementary principals and with their superintendents.

Chapter IV contains the results of the survey and a summary of information collected in the interviews. Excerpts from the interviews are presented and discussed. Chapter V consists of a summary of the findings of the study and the conclusions, recommendations, and implications made by the researcher.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter contains a review of literature concerning the historical role of principals, the concepts of job satisfaction, and budgeting and control of the schools. The review is organized into the following topics: the history of elementary principals, the current status of elementary principals, job satisfaction, budgeting and control, and a summary.

History of Elementary Principals

As our American society, and the schools which both reflect and shape it, has undergone major changes through the years, so has the the role of elementary school principals (Houts, 1975). The stereotyped notion of elementary principals has either been one of a puppet whose strings are attached to the central office from where the principal is manipulated and directed by the superintendent (Gowler, 1980) or that of a person "with a master's degree and two losing seasons" (Johansen, 1984, p. 1). However, studies of the school as an administrative unit have indicated that the key to whether things work or not in the

school is the leadership of principals (Houts, 1975). Houts also said that

the principal is the only person who faces both inward toward the school and outward toward the larger school system and the public . . . [and] is the key link between the school and the community (p. 64).

The developmental history of the position of elementary school principal is not well documented (Jacobson et al., 1963). Although formal schooling has been with us for many years, the elementary principals' position is a recent addition. The position of high school principal can be traced back to James Strum of Strasburg, Germany, who, in the 16th century, conducted a survey of the educational needs of his community and built his Gymnasium (high school) to meet those needs (Ensign, 1923). However, the elementary principals' position has just developed in the last century (Jacobson et al., 1963).

Residents of the English colonies in America had many laws concerning the subject of educating children. A 1701 Massachusetts school law decreed that any town neglecting to provide a schoolmaster would be fined a penalty of ten pounds. Various types of schooling, such as the Dame school and private tutors, were tried as towns grew in size and as more people living in the countryside desired better education for their children (Johnson, 1963).

The duties of the early day schoolmaster were often extremely varied. George Washington's father bought a bondman to serve as his son's first schoolmaster. Besides

serving as young George's teacher the bondman also served as church sexton, and he was often called upon to dig a grave. He was described as a "slow, rusty old man by the name of Hobbie" (Johnson, 1963, p. 33).

In Pennsylvania the Quakers' attitude toward education became the foundation for elementary schools of the present. The Quakers were not supportive of higher education, but favored elementary education with emphasis on reading, writing, and arithmetic. They were also interested in moral training and favored equal education for both boys and girls. The Quakers also did important work in providing education for the poor and minorities (Davis, 1933).

In the late 1800's, small, one-room schools came into existence as the population moved westward. Most of these schools were operated by one person who taught all of the grades and also managed the school. Sometimes schoolmasters had the help of a committee of local clergy and town officials (Johnson, 1963). Often these schoolmasters or schoolteachers farmed or cleaned houses to help support themselves (Davis, 1933). In early Oklahoma, as in most of the country, the problems of life, not school, demanded first attention among the settlers. To provide shelter and food to last through the coming winter was more important than attending a school (Nunn, 1941). However, in many remote areas of the country, people began to see the schoolhouse as more than a place to educate children. It became a social center for the community and hosted such

diverse activities as dances and prayer meetings (Davis, 1933).

On May 8, 1890, an act of Congress established the Territory of Oklahoma. During its first official meeting, the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature set up a Board of Education and established the position of county superintendent (Nunn, 1941). County superintendents are important in the history of elementary schools because their position was a predecessor of modern-day elementary principals. The early county superintendent's job included visiting each school in the county, making quarterly and annual reports to the state superintendent of schools, conducting teacher proficiency examinations, and interviewing prospective teachers. In the area of budgeting, the county superintendents had to certify the assessed valuation of the county and apportion the school funds among the townships and cities of the county (Nunn, 1941).

As the elementary school increased in size and complexity, most superintendents appointed a head teacher or principal teacher to carry out some of the administrative duties in each of the separate schools. The term "principal teacher" was soon shortened to just "principal." Even today, in many small schools, the principals' regular administrative assignments include some part-day teaching (Jacobson et al., 1963).

One of the first elementary schools on record as having an administrative principal was Quincy Elementary School in Boston. In 1847, John Philbrick was appointed principal of the school and all departments were placed under his control. Philbrick later became the Boston school district's superintendent (Jacobson et al, 1963).

By the turn of the century, most cities had accepted the elementary principalship as a professional and necessary position. New duties such as general management of the building and grounds, the right to transfer and assign teachers, and the power to promote or retain students now became part of the elementary principals' job. Principals were also expected to enforce high standards of student morals and health and to order educational and maintenance supplies for the school (Jacobson et al., 1963).

Elementary Principals Today

Changes in our society have made the job of elementary principals much harder (Houts, 1975; Kirst, 1978), yet much of the present body of research attests to the importance of principals in developing effective schools (Friesen et al., 1983). Principals have always had to deal with their communities and teachers, but the concept of community has undergone radical changes and collective bargaining has complicated the principal-teacher relationship (Houts, 1975).

What duties do today's elementary principals have that those of years ago did not face? One new duty is that of supervisor of social services. We now want our schools to provide breakfast, hot lunch, before-school child care, after-school child care, recreational activities, a transportation system, free counseling service, summer school, enrichment classes for the gifted, special education classes for the handicapped, and an elaborate testing system to properly place each child. Recently the schools have been further required, under penalty of law, to report any suspected abuse of children to the authorities (Barth, 1980; Houts, 1975).

The knowledge explosion has also affected the elementary schools. The amount of knowledge in all fields has grown so vast that the ability to learn it all is impossible. Now the principals, as instructional leaders, must provide leadership in deciding what part of this large body of knowledge is of most importance to the students. Given the limited time and capacity of the schools, and the increased specialization of knowledge, today's principals are indeed facing a challenge (Bellack, 1974).

The role of principals as politicians is given greater importance today. A higher number of voters without children in school, combined with more aggressive political lobbying by special interest groups, requires that principals become effective political leaders if they are going to compete for the education dollar (Kirst, 1978).

Principals still must be master short- and long-range planners, but they must also be skilled in the art of political mediation in order to achieve the compromises that will allow them to administer their schools (Campbell, 1978).

Job Satisfaction

The term job satisfaction does not have a single, commonly used definition as reported in the literature. Often morale, attitude, and job satisfaction are used interchangeably by the writers. While morale and attitude should not be considered synonymous with job satisfaction, they may be components that lead to the more general concept of job satisfaction (Blum, 1956).

The hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1954) has strong implications for analysis of job satisfaction. These needs, arranged in the order they usually develop in an individual, are: physiological needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization. According to Maslow, as each need is met it ceases to become a need and the individual then becomes aware of and motivated by the next higher level of need.

Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959) established two sets of factors for job satisfaction. One set of the factors was labeled "hygienes" and included interpersonal relations, supervision, working conditions, salary, status security, possibility of growth,

and personal life. These are referred to as extrinsic job factors. The other set of factors was termed "motivators" and included achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement. These are the intrinsic factors of the job. According to Herzberg et al. (1959), the absence of the hygiene factors will cause an individual to be dissatisfied with a job but their presence will not increase satisfaction. In a similar manner, the presence of motivators will bring about job satisfaction but their absence will not necessarily cause dissatisfaction.

The conventional theory that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are on opposite ends of a single continuum was also not supported by a study on teacher job satisfaction conducted by Sergiovanni (1967). He found that the satisfaction factors tended to focus on the work itself and the dissatisfaction factors tended to focus on the conditions of the work. Therefore, elimination of the dissatisfiers would not necessarily result in increased job satisfaction.

Stress or strain can produce job dissatisfaction when an unusually large amount of energy must be expended to bring individual need expectations in line with institutional expectations. Getzels and Guba (1957) reported that "satisfaction is a function of the degree of congruence between institutional expectations and individual need-expectations" (p. 209). When individual and institutional need expectations are similar there is little

effort or stress. However, if the employee must expend a great amount of energy to compensate for a discrepancy between these expectations, then dissatisfaction with the job is very likely to occur.

In a study of job and career satisfaction of men who were school principals, it was found that there were two major psychological needs for intrinsic job satisfaction (Gross & Napior, 1967). These were the need for autonomy and the need for self-actualization. Gross and Napior also reported that role performance using independent action, creativity, task accomplishment, and consistency was the way most of the subjects satisfied these needs.

The human resource theory (Steers & Porter, 1979) indicates that workers want recognition and fulfillment as well as the chance to maximize their potential in a meaningful job. This theory has four basic assumptions. The first assumption is that the worker really wants to contribute to the job and the second is that work does not have to be dull and uninteresting. The third and fourth assumptions are that employees can make effective decisions concerning their work and that meaningful tasks and self-direction can increase the level of an employee's job satisfaction.

Budgeting and Control

The history of American education has been characterized by broad swings of purpose and direction since

its inception. A persistent struggle has been over who controls the schools (Bremer, 1975). The organizational structure of the American education system has moved from a genuine decentralized system to a rigidly centralized organization. The trend now appears to be returning to a decentralized mode.

Until about 1920, most schools were under local community control and some large urban areas had literally hundreds of neighborhood boards of education (Lindelow, 1981). Along with the widespread municipal corruption during this time, many politicians used the schools as part of the spoils systems and granted many jobs and contracts in exchange for political favors (Kirst, 1978). Between 1920 and 1970, reforms attempted to insulate the schools from community politics and to centralize their administration. The watchwords of the reform movement, according to Kirst, were "centralization, expertise, professionalism, non-political control, and efficiency" (p.157).

In recent years the control of public education has shifted back to a concept of decentralized or school-based management (Parker, 1979). According to Parker, school-based management has gone by many different names such as shared governance, responsible autonomy, school site management, and decentralized management. Whatever term is used, the basic philosophy is that of a return of the decision making process to the building level.

Budgeting in a school system carries an importance that is not always obvious on first appraisal. The school budget reflects more than the quantity of money that goes into the education of students. The budget also reflects the quality of management provided by the school administration (Dersh, 1979). A budget that is not properly developed and managed may indicate that the rest of the school district is also disorganized.

The education of any given child has far-reaching consequences because education collectively has a profound effect on the economy and on the national welfare (Johns & Morphet, 1979). Therefore, it is important for a district to provide good budget planning as well as opportunities for more persons to become involved in the budgeting process. A school district that wishes to develop efficient budgets must use some form of budget development design. A well developed and managed school budget consists of a number of important steps. The following list is given by Johns and Morphet (1979).

1. Determine the purpose of educational programs.
2. Develop an educational plan to achieve the purpose agreed upon.
3. Prepare a budget document to forecast the expenditures and revenue necessary to implement the educational plan.
4. Present, consider, and adopt the budget.
5. Administer the budget.
6. Appraise the budget. (p. 448)

In reviewing school budgets and their development, Hymes (1983) described the following five budget methods as

being widely used today. These methods are used alone, in combination with each other, or with line-item budgets.

The first of these is program budgeting. Under this plan a district establishes program priorities and forms budgets based on a selected curriculum. This type of budgeting allows a district to show what the tax dollar is buying and may allow for the raising of additional funds when the public desires a certain curriculum change.

The second type is zero-based budgeting. This is not the same as zero-growth budgeting. Each year the district's budget must be formulated from a base of zero. Each item on the budget must be justified and all non-essential services are eliminated.

The third type is school-site budgeting. Each school or attendance site is assigned an allocation of funds. The principal may work with the staff and the parents to determine the needs of their building and then decide how the money is to be spent. One of the advantages of this system is that it tends to equalize resources among attendance sites in a district.

The fourth type Hymes describes is formula budgeting. This process is based on central office assignments rather than requests from the building site. Budgeting thus is a mechanical process based on the number of students and/or teachers, and funds for each building or function are derived by the application of a formula. This practice gives the central office much control and forces the

building principal to calculate costs from a fixed pool of dollars.

The last type is index budgeting. This method is often used by a state to establish budget limits but it could also be used by a district for the same purpose. Under this budgeting system a specific year is declared as a base year and all budgets can only be increased by a given factor to correct for inflation or proven population increase.

One type of budgeting process that is not mentioned by Hymes, but is used by many small school districts, is the executive budget (Jordan, McKeown, Salmon, & Webb, 1985). Under this budgeting process, the superintendent considers the total "needs" of the district and develops and manages the budget entirely from the central office. Because of the lack of broad involvement by parents and other school personnel in developing this type of budget, the district's educational program is often not well understood or supported.

The purpose of a budget is to organize fiscal information in such a way that it is convenient for the school district's administrators to use. Whatever type of budgeting process that is chosen by a school district, those in charge should make sure it is appropriate and gives them the type of information that allows them to make the best possible educational decisions (Mikesell, 1986).

The boards of education are the ultimate budgeting authority in many of the school districts in the nation.

However, the members are usually lay people and must rely on the superintendents and principals to provide them with school budgets they can understand (Hymes, 1983).

Summary

This chapter contains a review of literature concerning the historical and current roles of elementary principals, the importance of job satisfaction, and the concepts of budgeting and control of the public schools. If elementary principals are to be more than the middle-management employees as some superintendents see them, and become the effective leaders of their schools as the public expects (Houts, 1975; Smith, Mazzarella, & Piele, 1981), then it is important to identify those functions of the principals' job which can develop in elementary principals the satisfactions and skills needed to make them effective leaders. Steps must then be undertaken to change the principal's training and role to encompass those skills and satisfactions (Campbell, 1978).

One function that might affect the job satisfaction of elementary principals, should they choose to remain in that position, or aid them if they decide to become superintendents, would be their role in the budgeting process of the school district. The following chapter describes the methodology for the study of that function, while the data are reported in Chapter IV and reviewed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the sample studied, the instruments used, the design and procedures of the study, and the statistical analysis of the data.

The Sample

The sample selected for this study was 50 schools selected from a list of 314 rural elementary schools located in Oklahoma. As noted previously, the term "rural elementary school" includes those schools which contain two or more of grades kindergarten through six, are located in independent school districts which had an average daily attendance of less than 800, and are not located in the standard metropolitan statistical areas of Tulsa and Oklahoma City. The size range (in average daily attendance) of the 314 schools' districts was from 85.56 to 795.84. The information used to compile this list of rural elementary school districts was obtained from the Oklahoma Educational Directory 1986 issued by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (1986b). The selection of the actual schools comprising the sample was done by applying a table of random numbers to the list of the rural school districts which

contained a rural elementary school (Jaccard, 1983). The population of schools was arranged according to district size, from lowest average daily attendance to the highest average daily attendance.

Instrumentation

There is some agreement among researchers regarding the functions that the building level administrator should perform in the budgeting process (Carnes, 1984; Ovsiew & Castetter, 1960). The areas most often mentioned as part of the principals' budgeting duties are the selection of instructional equipment, textbooks, media center material, and educational supplies.

A questionnaire was developed to determine the amount of involvement by the elementary principals in the budgeting process of their districts and their satisfaction with that involvement. A copy of this instrument is included in Appendix A. The design was modeled after an instrument developed by Ronald Small (1979) and was based on the principals' role in the budgeting process as described by Ovsiew and Castetter (1960). Information concerning some items was obtained through interviews with principals and superintendents. Demographic information was also obtained as part of the questionnaire.

A preliminary version of the survey was submitted to a panel of researchers and current practitioners for their comments and evaluation. The panel consisted of four

professors of education at state universities in Oklahoma and six elementary principals in Oklahoma. A cover letter included a request that the panel members comment on the appropriateness and clarity of each item. All ten members of the panel responded. Most comments and suggested changes were of an editorial nature and were incorporated into the final instrument. In addition, two items received comments questioning their suitability as items in a survey on budget involvement. These items, which were removed from the final instrument, dealt with a ranking by importance of the various tasks of elementary principals and a determination of which career goals were of greatest importance to the principals.

The final version of the survey consisted of three parts. The first part requested demographic information from the respondent such as age, gender, years of experience in the present district, years of experience in other administrative positions, number of pupils, and number of teachers supervised. The second part requested information concerning the number of graduate-level courses in accounting, in school finance, and in school business management as well as opinions on issues relative to the budgeting process. The third part of the survey presented 20 areas of a budget in which elementary principals might be involved in varying degrees. Respondents were requested to indicate their involvement on a scale from 1 to 5. The possible responses were (1) I do not participate, (2) I only

collect information, (3) I suggest alternatives, (4) I recommend a decision, and (5) I make the final decision. Respondents were also asked to indicate, for each item, if they were satisfied with their level of involvement, desired less involvement, or desired more involvement.

Data Collection

This study first used a survey to collect data from the sample. As noted above, the questionnaire focused on the principals' role in the budgeting process as described by Ovsiew and Castetter (1960). A packet was mailed to each of the elementary principals in the sample. This packet contained a copy of the survey, a cover letter, a stamped self-addressed envelope, and instructions. A self-addressed post card was also included for the respondent to check and return separate from the survey. The card had three items that the respondent could check. One was that the survey had been completed and returned, a second indicated unwillingness to participate, and the third was to request a copy of the results of the survey. The questionnaire as well as the remaining materials used in the packet are included in Appendix A.

Follow-up of the questionnaire was made first by mail and second by telephone. These contacts were made three weeks and six weeks following the initial mailing. The first contact consisted of letters to the 22 non-respondents asking them to please respond (Appendix B). The second

contact involved 20 telephone calls to those who had not responded to the first reminder.

A selected group consisting of five elementary principals who responded to the survey, as well as their superintendents, were contacted for the interview phase of this study. Due to the geographic dispersion of the 50 schools in the sample, all of the principals and superintendents chosen to be interviewed were in districts located within a 75-mile radius of Oklahoma State University.

Two guides (Appendix C) were used for the interviews. The first consisted of twelve questions to be directed to the elementary principal. These questions were designed to examine the respondents' perceived role in the budgeting process and details regarding the preparation, evaluation, and presentation of budget information to their superiors. The second guide for the interviews was used with the superintendents and was designed to determine how they perceived the role of the elementary principals in the budgeting process. Included in this guide were questions to determine how well trained in budgeting matters the superintendents considered the principals to be and what kind of training might be considered desirable for future principals.

Analysis of the Data

The data for this study were collected in a one-sample survey at the ordinal level of measurement. When the surveys were returned the raw data were tabulated in rows and columns. When possible, the responses were reported in both numbers and percentages. Mean scores were calculated for the six sub-categories listed below.

1. Instructional materials includes items 1, 4, 5, and 15 (consumable workbooks, classroom instructional supplies, on-site library supplies, and art supplies).

2. Equipment includes items 2, 6, and 7 (playground and physical education equipment, computer equipment, and audio-visual equipment).

3. Administration includes items 3, 16, and 20 (office supplies for my building, principal's discretionary fund, and elementary principal travel fund).

4. Operation and maintenance includes 8, 11, and 13 (custodial supplies, salary for custodians, and physical improvements for the building).

5. Compensation includes items 9, 10, 12, and 17 (salary for office personnel, salary for teachers, salary for teacher aides, and substitute teacher pay).

6. Staff Development includes 14, 18, and 19 (mini-grants for innovative teachers, inservice funds, and teacher travel funds).

Mean scores were computed for analysis of the respondents' perceived degree of involvement in the budgeting process. The first step in calculating the mean scores was to obtain raw scores as the sum of the arithmetic values of the responses for each respondent in each of the various sub-categories. For example, a respondent reporting "I only collect information" on each of the four items included in instructional materials would have a raw score of eight (4 x 2) for that sub-category. These raw scores were recorded with the other demographic information on a separate card for each respondent. These cards were then sorted to allow the raw scores of all the respondents in a selected group to be totaled and divided by the total number of responses provided by respondents in the given group for that category of budget item. The resulting value is reported as a mean score.

Respondents were requested to indicate their desired level of involvement in the budgeting process by checking one of three choices on the third section of the survey instrument. The three choices, placed beside each budget area, were (A) less involvement desired, (B) satisfied with my involvement, and (C) more involvement desired. Responses were tabulated by summing the number of respondents who checked any selected budget item.

Summary

Chapter III has contained details of the sample studied, the instruments used, and the design and procedures of the study, including the methods of scoring and reporting the data.

The following chapter will include a report of the data and findings from the survey instrument and pertinent information from the interviews. Chapter V will contain a summary as well as the researcher's conclusions, recommendations, and implications.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Chapter IV contains the presentation and analysis of the data collected from the survey and the interviews. These data are reported in the same manner of organization as in the survey instrument. The first section contains a summary of the demographic data as reported by the respondents. In the second portion the results pertinent to the elementary principals' backgrounds and preparation for working with budget issues are presented. The third section contains the analysis of the data relevant to the elementary principals' perceived actual and desired roles in the budgeting process of their districts. The final part of this chapter includes a summary of the relevant material gathered through the interview portion of the study.

Demographics

A total of 50 survey packets were sent to principals in rural elementary schools in Oklahoma. Twenty-seven completed questionnaires, as well as one postcard indicating the respondent's unwillingness to participate, were returned on the initial mailing. One questionnaire and another postcard reporting a decision not to participate were

returned after the first follow-up letter. In response to the telephone contacts, 10 of the subjects said they had thrown the original questionnaire away but requested a second copy and promised to complete it. The replacement surveys were mailed the next day. Four principals in the sample could not be reached by telephone and, after several attempts, a final message was left with their secretaries. An additional 10 completed surveys were returned as a result of the telephone calls.

Completed questionnaires were thus received from 39 (78%) of the principals in the sample. Two principals returned the enclosed postcard indicating they did not wish to participate in the survey. No responses were received from the remaining nine subjects.

As shown in Table I, 28 of the respondents (71% of the total) were male and eleven (29%) were female. Eighty-seven percent of all of the principals responding were over the age of 40. Only two of the respondents were under the age of 31. The majority of men were in the 41-50 age group while the majority of women were in the 51-60 age group.

As defined in Chapter I, the rural elementary schools included in the sample were all located in districts of less than 800 students and contained two or more elementary grades. All were part of an independent school district and had at least a part-day elementary principal.

TABLE I
AGE AND GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Age Group	Gender		All
	Male	Female	
21-30	1	1	2
31-40	2	1	3
41-50	13	2	15
51-60	7	6	13
60+	5	1	6
TOTAL	28	11	39

As shown in Table II, the range of enrollments for respondents' schools was from 79 to 500. The mean was 197.6 students. The number of teachers ranged from 6 to 25 with a mean of 12.7 teachers.

In Oklahoma, as in other states, it is not unusual for principals in rural elementary schools to be assigned a combination of teaching and administrative duties. This part-day assignment for administrative duty was reported by 16 males and 6 females, a total of 56% of all principals responding to the survey.

TABLE II
SCHOOL SIZE OF RESPONDENTS

Size	Respondents	
	N	%
Number of students		
0-125	9	23
126-250	23	59
251-355	6	15
376-500	1	3
TOTAL	39	100
Number of teachers		
0-5	1	3
6-10	15	38
11-15	13	33
16-20	8	21
21-25	2	5
TOTAL	39	100

Prior to October 1, 1986, regulations in Oklahoma for provisional certification as an elementary principal required two years of teaching experience in an accredited elementary school, certification as a teacher in at least one area of elementary education, and the completion of a

masters degree. A standard certificate is granted with the completion of 16 additional hours of graduate coursework beyond provisional certificate requirements and one year of experience as an elementary principal. There are two instances in which a principal would not be required to meet these requirements. One exception is granted for those who have received a lifetime administrative certificate (no longer granted in Oklahoma, but accepted under a grandfather clause) while the other exception is granted to persons who are assigned administrative duties for less than one-half of the school day.

It is not surprising, then, that only two of the respondents had not completed a masters degree program. Additional coursework totaling at least 30 hours had been completed by 18 respondents, one of whom had completed the requirements for a specialist degree. None of the respondents had earned a doctoral degree. Only one respondent had earned a degree in educational administration outside of Oklahoma; 36 of the 39 respondents reported they had earned their administrative degree in Oklahoma while two reported that they did not have an administrative degree.

The respondents reported an average of 10 years of experience as elementary principals in Oklahoma. While the range of experience was from 1 year to 31 years, 4 respondents reported in excess of 20 years of experience, while 18 of the respondents had less than 5 years experience.

Most of the respondents (72%) had been an elementary principal in only one district and only one reported having served in more than three districts. Ten different respondents had previous experience in other administrative positions. Three reported experience as district superintendents, three as senior high principals, two as junior high principals, one as supervisor of guidance personnel, and another as a director of a regional service center.

Preparation and Involvement

In the second section of the survey instrument, the respondents were asked to provide information concerning their preparation for and involvement in selected management areas of the budget. Data requested included the respondents' perception of the adequacy of their preparation for involvement in the budgeting process and the amount and type of relevant coursework completed. Also included in this section were items pertaining to control over budget accounts and attitudes toward the concept of on-site budgeting.

Table III provides an indication of how the respondents perceived their preparation in the areas of budget and management. While nearly two-thirds (64%) of the male respondents perceived themselves as having received adequate preparation, the same proportion of females (64%) considered their preparation in these areas to be inadequate. Only one

of the respondents was reportedly well prepared in regard to the budgeting process. Overall, 41% of the respondents perceived themselves as inadequately prepared.

TABLE III
PERCEIVED PREPARATION OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

Level of preparation	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Well prepared	1	4	0	0	1	3
Adequately prepared	18	64	4	36	22	56
Inadequately prepared	9	32	7	64	16	41
TOTAL	28	100	11	100	39	100

Many respondents did not completely respond to the question concerning the number of graduate-level courses completed in accounting, school finance, and/or school business management. Table IV shows that, in specific subject areas, 29 respondents (74%) indicated that they had taken at least one school finance course, 14 (36%) had taken one or more school business management courses, and 9 (23%) had taken one or more graduate courses in accounting.

TABLE IV
 PREPARATION OF RESPONDENTS AS DETERMINED BY
 NUMBER OF GRADUATE COURSES COMPLETED

Subject	Number Of Graduate Courses Completed					
	1	2	3	4	5+	NR
Accounting	4	3	0	1	1	29
School Finance	18	7	3	0	1	10
School Business Management	8	4	1	0	1	21

Note: NR represents the number of missing or uninterpretable responses.

One of the current correlates of effective school leadership is that of on-site budgeting (Parker, 1979). This system of budget allocation purports to return the decision making to the local school or building level. With the concept of on-site budgeting, a school site is assigned a budget allocation. The principal, possibly involving teachers and parents in a team effort, is responsible for the development of priorities for actual expenditures.

In order to assess the attitude of rural elementary principals on the topic of on-site budgeting, a question on the instrument was used to determine their level of support for this concept. Table V shows that two-thirds of the sample reported that they would support the concept,

although most of the respondents answered "probably yes" rather than "definitely yes."

TABLE V
SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT OF
ON-SITE BUDGETING

Level of Support	Respondents	
	N	%
Definitely yes	5	13
Probably yes	20	51
Definitely no	10	26
Probably no	4	10
TOTAL	39	100

In an attempt to ascertain if the elementary principal has authority in budget management, the survey instrument included the question "Do you have any accounts over which you have broad control?" Table VI reports the results of this question. It shows that two-thirds of the respondents replied "no" and one-third of the respondents replied "yes." Several principals listed in-house fund raisers as the source of the revenue for this account. The most common

name for this account was "activity fund," a term which is not well defined in Oklahoma.

TABLE VI
CONTROL OF BUDGET ACCOUNTS AS
REPORTED BY RESPONDENTS

Response	Respondents	
	N	%
Yes	13	33
No	25	64
No response	1	3
TOTAL	39	100

Perceived and Ideal Roles of
the Elementary Principal

Perceived Role

One function of the final section of the survey instrument was to determine the degree of their actual involvement in the budgeting process as perceived by the elementary principals. The respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale of one-to-five, their perceptions of their involvement in the budgeting process. These perceptions are reported in Table VII. The responses were

keyed as follows: (1) I do not participate, (2) I only collect information, (3) I suggest alternatives, (4) I recommend a decision, and (5) I make the final decision. Respondents were asked to respond by checking one selection for each question.

Overall, the choices "I do not participate" and "I recommend a decision," which represent substantially different degrees of involvement, were used most frequently. These accounted for 531 of the 780 possible responses, 68% of the total. The intervening responses, "I only collect information" and "I suggest alternatives," were used 83 and 89 times respectively. On very few items was the response "I make the final decision" used. This last choice, which indicated the greatest degree of involvement, was used for 39 of the 780 possible responses (5%), usually in the areas of supplies and materials.

As noted in Chapter III, the 20 budget areas used in the final section of the questionnaire were divided into six sub-categories. Mean scores, with a possible range of 1.00 through 5.00, were calculated for sub-categories and various demographic groupings of the respondents. Tables VIII through XII report these comparisons.

As shown in Table VIII, the mean scores for the perceived involvement of the respondents in the six

TABLE VII
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RELATIVE TO PERCEIVED
ROLE IN THE BUDGETING PROCESS

Budget Areas	Degree of Participation					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
1. Consumable workbooks for classroom	2	8	1	20	7	1
2. Playground and P.E. equipment	1	6	4	26	2	0
3. Office supplies for my building	2	7	3	19	7	1
4. Classroom instructional supplies	3	4	6	19	5	2
5. On-site library materials	6	9	4	14	3	3
6. Computer equipment	7	9	5	16	2	0
7. Audio-visual equipment	10	3	6	18	2	0
8. Custodial supplies	28	3	2	4	1	1
9. Salary (raise) - office personnel	26	2	3	6	0	2
10. Salary (raise) - teachers	23	2	6	6	0	2
11. Salary (raise) - custodians	29	0	1	6	0	3
12. Salary (raise) - teacher aides	22	1	4	6	0	6
13. Physical improvements for building	5	3	15	16	0	0
14. Mini-grants for innovative teacher	23	4	2	6	1	3
15. Art supplies	11	4	2	16	4	2
16. Principal's discretionary fund	20	0	3	7	3	6
17. Substitute teacher daily pay rate	26	4	5	2	0	2
18. Staff development (inservice)	14	4	10	9	2	0
19. Teacher travel funds	23	5	3	6	0	2
20. Elementary principal travel fund	18	5	4	10	0	2
TOTAL	299	83	89	232	39	38

* Note: The values represent the total number of respondents indicating that degree of perceived participation in each budget area. "NR" represents the number of missing or uninterpretable responses.

sub-categories are reported by the respondents' age groups. Principals appear to have a great deal of involvement in the ordering of supplies and materials. However, little involvement is indicated in the areas of compensation and staff development. Age of the respondent does not appear to be a major factor as the mean scores for all budget areas show a range of only 2.11 to 2.76. Respondents in the 31-40 age group reported the greatest involvement in the budgeting process.

TABLE VIII
PERCEIVED DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE
BUDGETING PROCESS BY SUB-CATEGORIES
AND AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Budget Sub-categories	Age of Respondents				
	21-30 n=2	31-40 n=3	41-50 n=15	51-60 n=13	60+ n=6
Inst. Materials	3.00	3.00	3.38	3.49	3.50
Equipment	3.67	3.11	3.20	3.24	3.19
Administration	2.33	3.11	2.82	2.46	2.94
Operation/Maint.	1.33	2.38	2.25	1.97	2.47
Compensation	1.20	2.33	1.81	1.56	1.96
Staff Development.	1.33	2.63	1.20	2.11	1.78
All Budget Areas	2.11	2.76	2.44	2.47	2.64

The degree of perceived involvement in the budgeting process of male and female principals did not vary to a great degree. Shown in Table IX are two areas of the sub-categories where some difference was manifested. In the areas of operation/maintenance and compensation, males perceived a greater involvement than did females. However, females perceived themselves to be more involved in the area of staff development than did males.

TABLE IX
DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE BUDGETING
PROCESS BY SUB-CATEGORIES AND GENDER
OF THE RESPONDENTS

Budget Sub-categories	Gender		All n=39
	Male n=28	Female n=11	
Instructional Materials	3.25	3.29	3.33
Equipment	3.27	3.22	3.25
Administration	2.72	2.79	2.74
Operations/Maintenance	2.24	2.03	2.19
Compensation	1.98	1.19	1.78
Staff Development	1.82	2.03	1.88
All Budget Areas	2.55	2.43	2.53

The size of elementary schools in Oklahoma varies a great deal, ranging from under 30 students to over 600 students in average daily attendance (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1986a). The smallest school in this sample had 85 students and the largest had 500 students. Despite this range in size, the mean scores for perceived involvement of the respondents in all budget areas only varied by .41, as shown in Table X.

TABLE X
PERCEIVED DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT
IN THE BUDGETING PROCESS
BY SUB-CATEGORIES AND
SCHOOL SIZE OF
RESPONDENTS

Budget Sub-categories	Number of Students			
	0-125 n=9	126-250 n=23	251-375 n=6	376-500 n=1
Inst. Materials	3.19	3.83	2.83	4.00
Equipment	3.11	3.63	2.83	4.00
Administration	2.58	2.82	2.61	4.00
Operation/Maint.	2.37	2.14	1.94	2.33
Compensation	1.81	1.81	1.78	1.00
Staff Devel.	2.56	1.48	1.88	1.00
All Budget Areas	2.60	2.62	2.31	2.72

Compensation was the sub-category with the least involvement by principals in all categories of school size. Instructional materials and equipment ranked as high involvement areas regardless of the school size.

As might be expected, those respondents who reported a full-day administrative assignment indicated a higher degree of perceived involvement in all areas of the budgeting process than did those respondents who reported a part-day administrative assignment.

TABLE XI

PERCEIVED DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE
BUDGETING PROCESS BY SUB-CATEGORIES AND
LENGTH OF ADMINISTRATIVE DAY

Budget Sub-categories	Administrative Assignment	
	Part-day n=22	Full-day n=17
Instructional Materials	3.18	3.53
Equipment	3.13	3.33
Administration	2.27	3.18
Operation/Maintenance	2.17	2.59
Compensation	1.42	2.08
Staff Development	1.98	2.22
All Budget Areas	2.36	2.82

The largest differences in mean scores, as shown in Table XI, are in the two sub-categories of administration and staff development.

The length of time employed in their current districts was not reported by the respondents as affecting their perceived involvement in the budgeting process. As shown in Table XII, the mean scores for all budget areas as well as the mean scores for the individual sub-categories were very consistent.

TABLE XII
PERCEIVED DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE
BUDGETING PROCESS BY SUB-CATEGORIES
AND EXPERIENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Budget Sub-categories	Years Employed			
	1-4 n=14	5-8 n=13	9-12 n=4	13+ n=8
Inst.Materials	3.47	2.80	3.36	3.03
Equipment	3.08	3.41	2.75	3.00
Administration	3.08	2.67	2.17	3.13
Operation/Maint.	2.51	2.11	2.09	2.63
Compensation	1.69	2.36	1.33	2.03
Staff Development	2.28	1.84	2.08	2.29
All Budget Areas	2.69	2.53	2.30	2.69

Ideal Role

Respondents were requested to indicate their desired level of involvement in the budgeting process by checking one of three choices on the third section of the survey instrument. The three choices, placed beside each budget area, were (A) less involvement desired, (B) satisfied with my involvement, and (C) more involvement desired. Responses were tabulated by the number of budget items for which more involvement was desired by the respondents.

Reported in Table XIII are the principals' responses which indicate the degree of involvement they would desire to have in the budgeting process of their districts. None of the respondents indicated a desire for less involvement. For most of the respondents, their perceived involvement and their desired involvement appear to be the same. No more than six (15.4%) of the respondents indicated a desire for more involvement in any one budget area. The budget areas in which the respondents least desired more involvement were consumable workbooks for classroom, custodial supplies, and salary (raise) - custodians. Only one respondent indicated a desire for greater involvement in each of these budget areas.

TABLE XIII
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RELATIVE TO DESIRED
ROLE IN THE BUDGETING PROCESS

Budget Areas	Desired Role				
	*	A	B	C	NR
1. Consumable workbooks for classroom	0	33	1	5	
2. Playground and P.E. equipment	0	28	4	7	
3. Office supplies for my building	0	31	3	5	
4. Classroom instructional supplies	0	29	5	5	
5. On-site library materials	0	30	4	5	
6. Computer equipment	0	29	5	5	
7. Audio-visual equipment	0	30	4	5	
8. Custodial supplies	0	32	1	6	
9. Salary (raise) - office personnel	0	31	2	6	
10. Salary (raise) - teachers	0	31	2	6	
11. Salary (raise) - custodians	0	32	1	6	
12. Salary (raise) - teacher aides	0	31	2	6	
13. Physical improvements for building	0	31	3	5	
14. Mini-grants for innovative teacher	0	27	5	7	
15. Art Supplies	0	30	3	6	
16. Principal's discretionary fund	0	25	6	8	
17. Substitute teacher daily pay rate	0	31	2	6	
18. Staff development (inservice)	0	32	2	5	
19. Teacher travel funds	0	30	3	6	
20. Elementary principal travel fund	0	30	3	6	

* Notes: The values represent the total number of respondents indicating that degree of desired participation in each budget area. "NR" represents the number of missing or uninterpretable responses. The following scale is used, (A) Less involvement desired, (B) Satisfied with my involvement, and (C) More involvement desired.

The budget item chosen by the respondents as being one for which they would most desire greater involvement was the principal's discretionary fund. Greater involvement was also desired by five respondents in each of the following budget areas: classroom instructional supplies, computer equipment, and mini-grants for innovative teachers.

The data concerning the respondents' desired participation were analyzed in relation to the age of the respondents. As shown in Table XIV, there was no one under the age of 50 who selected more than five budget areas in which more involvement was desired.

TABLE XIV
DESIRED DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN
THE BUDGETING PROCESS BY
AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Age in years	Number of Budget Items for Which More Involvement Was Desired			
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
21-30 (n=2)	2	0	0	0
31-40 (n=3)	3	0	0	0
41-50 (n=15)	15	0	0	0
51-60 (n=13)	11	1	1	0
60+ (n=6)	4	0	2	0
Total	35	1	3	0

Those respondents over age 50 were more likely to indicate a desire for more involvement in the budgeting process. No respondent selected all the budget areas.

Table XV contains a summary of the responses, categorized by gender, of desired involvement in the budgeting process as reported by the respondents. Only four respondents, three males and one female, indicated a substantial desire for more involvement in the budgeting process by selecting that response for more than five of the budget areas.

TABLE XV
DESIRED DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN
THE BUDGETING PROCESS BY GENDER
OF THE RESPONDENTS

Gender	Number of Budget Items for Which More Involvement Was Desired			
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
Male (n=28)	25	0	3	0
Female (n=11)	10	1	0	0
All	35	1	3	0

As shown in Table XVI, size of the school had very little effect on whether the principal desired more

involvement in the budgeting process. Ninety percent of the principals selected less than five budget areas in which they desired more involvement. Those who did indicate they wished more involvement were not clustered by any one school size.

TABLE XVI
DESIRED DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN
THE BUDGETING PROCESS BY
SIZE OF SCHOOL

Size of school	Number of Budget Items for Which More Involvement Was Desired			
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
0-125 (n=8)	7	0	1	0
126-250 (n=6)	6	0	0	0
251-375 (n=24)	22	1	1	0
376-500 (n=1)	0	0	1	0
Total	35	1	3	0

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with five respondents (10% of the sample) and with their superintendents. These interviews were conducted in the last two weeks of January,

1987. Some difficulty was encountered in scheduling the interviews because of the diverse and busy school schedules of the principals and their superintendents. Because of the dispersion of the districts in the sample, those administrators selected to be interviewed were located in districts within a 75-mile radius of Oklahoma State University. Even with these precautions, three of the interviews had to be rescheduled because of hazardous weather conditions.

A list of questions was used in conducting the interview but digression was allowed by the interviewer in order to keep the interviews on a comfortable plane. Because of time constraints on the administrators, not every question was used in each interview. Most of the elementary principals interviewed were very cooperative and freely volunteered information. Superintendents appeared to be more guarded in their answers and digressed from the questions more often. Pertinent answers were recorded and are summarized below.

The most important question for this study asked the principals and the superintendents to describe their perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the budgeting process. Most of the principals perceived themselves as not being actively involved in that process. Typical answers from principals were as follow.

"My role is relatively insignificant as far as the budget is concerned."

"I don't have much to do with the budget and I am satisfied."

"My role [now] is only by input, but our new superintendent has promised us we will have three budgets at our building next year."

Answers by superintendents usually started out by saying they involved all of their principals, but they would complete the statement by qualifying that involvement. Some of the responses they gave are noted below.

"The elementary principal takes all of his teachers to one of the big supply stores in Oklahoma City and they buy any supplies they need for next year."

"Every spring we sit down and talk about their wants and needs for next year."

"We provide a dollar figure for each grade to spend and the teachers request it through the principal."

"What they did was a gathering of information."

"The building principal is involved to the degree I wanted him involved . . . [in working with elementary principals] I always got the feeling that they just as soon wouldn't be involved in [the budgeting process] . . . which satisfied me just fine."

One question which dealt with the perceived influence of the elementary principal was "Do you feel that your budget suggestions are usually listened to by your superiors?" Most principals answered in the affirmative. Typical responses are reported below.

"No problem; the board is receptive to our needs."

"I have a real good working relationship with the superintendent."

"Yes, no problem in that area . . . the board and superintendent trust us."

"I never know what we have in the budget but if we need it the superintendent will get it for us."

One principal, when asked if he would like to handle more of the budget, said, "No, I am completely satisfied as it is now, the superintendent takes care of us. If we had a dictator-type superintendent, I would want some control."

When asked about greater preservice training for principals in budget preparation and management, most superintendents felt such training would be an advantage. When asked about specific training, superintendents gave the following answers.

"It would be good if they could sit in on some working sessions and conferences with whomever is responsible for the budget in their district."

"He [the future principal] could get his feet wet by volunteering to handle special programs at his building, such as federal grants or special education funding."

"Principals definitely need to know about finances."

"I had been a high school principal for a long time, but I had never had the opportunity to learn about the budget [until I became superintendent] . . . If I died today

neither of my principals could take over this job without going nuts."

Summary

This chapter has contained analyses of the data collected by the survey returned by the respondents and the information gathered during the interviews. The survey data were analyzed in terms of demographics, preparation and involvement of the respondents in the budgeting process, and the perceived and desired roles of those elementary principals in that process. Selected quotes, pertinent to the role of the elementary principals in the budgeting process of their districts, their perceived influence on their superiors, and the training of future principals, were taken from the interviews conducted with superintendents and principals.

According to the data, the typical principal in a rural elementary school in Oklahoma is a 50-year-old male who has less than five years of experience in this, his first administrative position. He has completed from 15 to 30 hours of graduate courses beyond the masters degree, which he earned from an Oklahoma institution of higher education. This typical principal administers a school with 198 students and 13 teachers.

The respondents reported considerable involvement in the budgeting process relative to instructional materials and equipment but much less involvement in the areas of

compensation and staff development. Principals who were also assigned teaching responsibilities were less involved in the budgeting process than were full-time administrators. Female respondents were much more likely to consider themselves inadequately prepared to assume a role in the budgeting process than were their male counterparts. The respondents also reported considerable satisfaction with their perceived roles in the budgeting process.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Public schools have always been open to public criticism, but in recent years they have received increased attention. A number of studies (Austin, 1979; Houts, 1975; Smith et al., 1981) have alluded to the importance of effective leadership by the principal in those schools judged to be effective. However, few specifics are known as to how a principal earns the title of "effective."

Are effective principals born or made? In a dissertation study in Michigan, entitled The Pygmalion Principal: Are Effective Elementary Principals Born or Made? (Dignan, 1983), the subjects were sent a questionnaire requesting information on the self-perceptions of principal effectiveness and the identification of skills and routes the respondents used to gain access to the elementary principalship. This study found that elementary principals, when considering factors leading to effectiveness, chose experience first (34%), inservice second (29%), followed by on-the-job training (15%), and universities (14%). Less than half of the respondents were aware of the variables which characterize effective schools and principals.

The school is a very complex social system, both for the students attending and for the faculty and staff who work there. No simple answer will tell us what we must do to have effective principals leading effective schools. Goodlad (1984) referred to this complex problem in the preface to A Place Called School.

Good principals no doubt make a difference but perhaps not enough to overcome some of the negative effects of large school size, thoughtlessly prescribed curricula, restraints imposed through collective bargaining, warring factions in the school board, teacher shortages, and on and on. Such conditions often cause good principals to leave or transfer. Perhaps this is why the most advantaged schools frequently are perceived to have good principals (p. xvi).

Since lack of job satisfaction is one of the main reasons people change jobs (Bacharach & Mitchell, 1983; Dunathan & Saluzzi, 1980), perhaps if we considered some of the aspects of the principalship that produce satisfaction for elementary principals, we might derive ways to retain more of the effective principals. One of the needs for positive job satisfaction appears to be the feeling of having meaningful input into school and district decision making and planning processes. A study of decision making and job satisfaction of elementary principals (Planner-Hardy, 1983) found that the elementary principal's perceived influence in district-wide decisions showed a high positive relationship with job satisfaction. A study of 120 principals in the Chicago area (Small, 1979) found that the principals who had influence in the decisions of their superiors and who were able to get their ideas across were

more satisfied with their jobs. Goodlad (1984) found in his study that

Without exception the principals of the more satisfying schools saw the amount of influence they thought they had as congruent with the amount of influence they thought principals should have (p. 179).

The literature shows that the position of the elementary principal is an emerging, expanding one. Only in the last 70 to 80 years has the position really developed (Jacobson et al., 1963). Early English colonies in America had many laws concerning the education of their children. In the 1800's the first schools were small one-room buildings often operated by one person (Johnson, 1963). During this period many states enacted legislation to establish the position of county superintendent. The county superintendents became the role-model for our present day elementary principals (Nunn, 1941). By the early 1900's most cities had accepted the elementary principal's role as a professional and necessary position (Jacobson et al., 1963).

The principals of today have many added duties over their counterparts of years ago. Today's principals must administer a growing list of social services (Houts, 1975) and they must be able to function well in the area of political mediation (Cambell, 1978) in order to secure their share of the decreasing education dollar. Once the district secures these funds, the principals must decide how to achieve the maximum value through wise budgeting. In recent

years the trend has been to return the decision making process to the building level (Parker, 1979).

Review of Methodology

This study focused on the role of elementary principals in the budgeting process of rural Oklahoma schools. Specifically, this study was concerned with the degree of involvement of elementary principals in the budgeting process and whether their perceived role in that process was congruent with their desired role. Also of concern was how elementary principals and their superintendents differed in their perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the budgeting process.

The sample for this survey included 50 rural elementary schools in Oklahoma. Those schools were selected from the population, defined as all elementary schools in independent school districts with an average daily attendance of less than 800 students located outside the Oklahoma City and Tulsa standard metropolitan statistical areas.

A questionnaire was constructed by the researcher and sent to the elementary principals in each of the 50 schools comprising the sample. A usable return of 39 questionnaires (78%) were returned by the respondents. On-site interviews were conducted by the researcher with five of the principals and with their superintendents. This number represented 10% of the original sample.

The questionnaire contained three sections. The first section addressed itself to the demographics of the principals and their assigned schools. The second section sought information about the respondents' formal preparation, control of budget accounts, perceptions of preparation, and support of the concept of on-site budgeting. The third section was concerned with the perceived and desired roles of the principals in the budgeting process.

Summary of Findings

The data presented in Chapter IV provide a composite profile of the elementary principals in the sample. This typical rural Oklahoma elementary principal is a 40- to 50-year-old male with less than five years of experience in this, his first administrative assignment. He has a masters degree plus 15-30 hours obtained in Oklahoma. He supervises an average of 13 teachers in a school of 198 students.

The responses on the questionnaires concerning the perceived and desired roles of the principals in the budgeting process of their districts indicated they were well satisfied with the degree of their involvement. In responding to the subject of perceived preparation for the budgeting process and management, 3% reported they considered themselves well prepared, 56% reported they considered themselves adequately prepared, and 41% reported they considered themselves inadequately prepared.

Their educational preparation in the area of budgeting was not extensive. Only 22% of the respondents reported having taken one or more courses in accounting, 46% reported having taken one or more courses in school business management, and 68% reported having taken one or more courses in school finance.

Conclusions

Three questions emerged from the review of the literature and the study of the current and developing role of the elementary principal in the budgeting process. Based on the findings reported in Chapter IV and summarized above, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions relative to the three research questions.

1. To what degree are elementary principals involved in their district's budgeting process?

From the data supplied by the respondents through the questionnaire and the interviews, it appears that elementary principals in most rural Oklahoma school districts are not deeply involved in the budgeting process. When they are involved, it is usually in the budget areas of instructional supplies or equipment. There is relatively little participation by principals in the compensation and staff development areas. This, however, may be in part because of the collective bargaining law in Oklahoma.

There were not substantial differences in the degree of involvement in the budgeting process among the respondents when age, gender, or size of school were considered. Full-time principals played a greater role in that process than did respondents with both teaching and administrative duties.

2. Is the perceived role of the principals in the budgeting process of their districts congruent with their desired role in that process?

The respondents indicated that their perceived role and their desired role were very similar. Ninety percent of the respondents indicated no desire to have more involvement in more than 5 of the 20 budget areas. In the interview section, one superintendent suggested that those principals who were not interested in becoming involved in the budgeting process would probably remain in their present positions, while those who expressed more interest in the budgeting process might be planning a future career move to a central office or superintendent's position.

3. How do elementary principals and superintendents differ in their perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the budgeting process of their districts?

The questionnaire was designed to obtain the elementary principals' perceptions of their roles in the budgeting process while superintendents' perceptions were obtained in the interviews. During these interviews, the superintendents' comments indicated that they considered the elementary principals primarily as a resource they could tap when information was needed on a budget item. None of the superintendents interviewed reported that they had any type of formal needs assessment or budget review which they used with their principals.

Recommendations

The analysis of data, summary of the study, and conclusions lead to the following recommendations for further research.

1. Because of the increased interest in public education and the identified importance of the principals leadership in effective schools, replication of this study in urban and suburban areas should be considered.

2. The interview process should be expanded to include more superintendents. This might provide more accurate results in determining the area of how the elementary principals' role is perceived.

3. A study should be conducted to determine the current in-service needs for elementary principals in Oklahoma relative to their role in the budgeting process.

4. A study should be conducted to ascertain why female elementary principals consider themselves to be inadequately prepared while male elementary principals consider themselves to be adequately prepared.

Implications

During this study the reseacher developed some general thoughts regarding the role of elementary principals in the budgeting process of their school districts. These implications have evolved through the review of literature, the formulation of the instrument, tabulation and analysis of the data, and the interviews with administrators.

As stated earlier in this study, the role of the elementary principal is not well-defined. This lack of role definition became more obvious during the interview portion of the study. The position of elementary principal is usually filled from the ranks of teachers or other administrators. The people who apply for the principalship may be motivated by various drives such as a desire for more salary, an opportunity to have input into the decisions of the district, or a feeling that it is an easier job than the one they currently possess.

Not all elementary principals are former elementary classroom teachers. At least two of the principals in this study were former physical education teachers who had primary responsibilities at the high school level. Others were former high school or junior high school principals.

At least one principal had previously been the supervisor of a special education program. In at least one of the districts, the superintendent was also serving as elementary principal. Certification requirements in Oklahoma only require that a person be certified to teach one elementary subject and have two years experience teaching that subject in order to be certified as an elementary principal. This researcher is concerned that those who reach the elementary principal's position by avenues other than that of a full-time elementary classroom teacher may not be able to fully conceptualize the scope and breadth of that position. The position of elementary principal must be seen as important, and as unique in skill requirements, as those of junior high or senior high principals.

The formal training to become an elementary principal is built on the basic pedagogical skills gained in the undergraduate courses and preservice experiences for preparation as an elementary classroom teacher. Supervision, curriculum development, history of education, school law, psychology of learning, and theories of management are some of the graduate courses typically required for the masters degree with a major in educational administration. When the aspiring principals actually acquire a position, these courses are designed to prepare them to assume the control of a school and to accept the responsibility of providing an effective learning experience for the students. Those who follow a less direct avenue to

the elementary principalship may not understand what is needed to provide the educational programs critical for today's students. More importantly, they may not possess the administrative skills and understanding of elementary education necessary to design and carry out those programs.

Elementary principals responding to this study indicated a reluctance to become involved to a greater degree in the budgeting process of their school districts. What causes this satisfaction with relatively minimum involvement is not readily apparent.

If the reluctance to become involved to a greater degree in the budgeting process is caused by insufficient training in the "how and why of budgeting," then an increase in the number and type of preparatory courses for the elementary principalship is indicated. This would include topics relative to general school finance, the budgeting process, business management techniques, and the school finance system of their particular states. The elementary principal who is under-trained in the budgeting process will not experience success when given budget responsibilities. A failure to adequately manage budget assignments may result in diminished confidence in the principal's leadership ability.

Superintendents appear to not actively involve principals in the budgeting process. Many superintendents may be developing the budget in the same way as did their former superintendents. Another possibility is that

superintendents are reluctant to relinquish the power afforded by executive control of the budget. Providing limited involvement in the budgeting process to the attendance site may produce more effective use of the education dollar, but this requires central office personnel who have confidence in the principal's abilities as well as their own.

If the elementary principal's lack of involvement arises from a belief that more involvement would only require more work in an already full professional day, then the principal needs to give serious thought to the importance of the budgeting process and its effect on the educational system. The reluctance to be involved in the budgeting process may preclude the principal from originating needed changes. Budget money may go more to those school departments that actively pursue it.

More than half of the elementary principals responding to the survey were part-day principals. Their lack of involvement in the budgeting process and their satisfaction with that involvement could be explained by the small amount of time they have for administrative duties. Some of these part-day administrative assignments can be justified by lack of funds or low enrollment. Other part-day administrative assignments were in schools of larger size and may have resulted from the belief that elementary schools need less administrative leadership.

Does the tenure system in Oklahoma cause a problem for elementary principals? While conducting the interviews, this researcher concluded that principals were often unwilling to pursue a greater role in the budgeting process because of the danger of alienating the superintendent or the school board. Under Oklahoma law, tenure is granted to a teacher after three years of service in a district, but upon signing an administrative contract principals forfeit that tenure and become subject to dismissal with minimal rights to a due process hearing. As teachers, they can champion a cause for educational improvement through the security of their tenured position. However, when teachers become principals they may become concerned with job security first and improvement of the schools second.

Rural elementary schools in Oklahoma appear to vary a great amount in respect to the educational opportunities offered students. The current depressed economy in Oklahoma has resulted in lowered funding for many schools. While some elementary schools still have large budgets and are able to offer excellent support to attract effective teachers, other schools suffer from a lack of funds. It is difficult for principals to become excited by the prospects of budget involvement when that involvement focuses on reduction in staff and support services.

Although the results of this study indicate that rural elementary principals are not highly involved in the budgeting process of their school districts and are

satisfied with that amount of involvement, this researcher would like to see a trend away from this position. In one district, the superintendent indicated during the interview that some budget reform was taking place and some control of the budget was being returned to the attendance site. The elementary principal involved was excited and willing to assume the additional responsibility. She perceived the added budget tasks as a positive chance to function more effectively in her role as principal.

The fundamental implication, in the opinion of this researcher, is that, in cases such as that mentioned above in which the elementary principal assumes a greater role in the budgeting process, principals are more likely to view themselves as professional educational administrators, able to understand the needs of the students and, through active participation in the budgeting process, to achieve greater ability to bring about positive change.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY

November 7, 1986

Dear Fellow Administrator:

The purpose of this survey is to study the involvement level of elementary principals in rural Oklahoma in the budgeting process of their schools and to determine their satisfaction with the amount of that involvement. This study is in conjunction with a Doctoral Dissertation at Oklahoma State University.

The first part of the study is the survey enclosed with this letter. This instrument should require less than 10 minutes to complete. Upon completing the survey please place it in the envelope and return. Also, please check the appropriate blank(s) on the enclosed post card and return it separately. All individual responses will remain confidential and none will be indentified by person, school, or school district.

For the second phase of the survey I will be interviewing 10 elementary principals and their supervisors. The purpose of this interview will be to explore in depth the role of principals in the budget planning, budget administration and budget evaluation of their schools. All individual responses will remain confidential and none will be identified by person, school, or school district. If you are selected for the second phase of this study I will contact you by telephone for an appointment.

Your participation in this study is sincerely appreciated. If you desire a copy of the results of this study please check the appropriate blank on the post card. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me after 7:00 p.m. at (405) 377-8806.

Respectfully,

Jess Andrews

SURVEY QUESTIONS
Part 1

1. Age ___ 21 to 30 ___ 31-40 ___ 41-50 ___ 51-60 ___ 60+
2. Gender ___ Female ___ Male
3. Number of students in my school ___
4. Number of teachers I supervise ___
5. I am a ___ full day ___ part day principal.
6. What degrees do you hold?

Bachelor's	___	+15	___	+30	___	+45	___
Master's	___	+15	___	+30	___	+45	___
Specialist's	___						
Doctor's	___						
7. Where did you earn your administrative degree (s):

In Oklahoma ___ Out of state ___
8. How many years have you been an elementary principal?

In your present district _____ years.
Total for all districts _____ years.
9. Have you ever served in another administrative position such as superintendent or secondary principal?

Yes ___ No ___
If Yes, how many years? ___
What position (s)? _____
10. In how many school districts have you served as an elementary principal?

1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5+ ___

11. How many graduate level courses have you completed in:
- Accounting
 - School Finance
 - School Business Management
12. Do you have any budgets or accounts (such as activity funds, block grants, student supplies, etc.) in your school over which you have broad control?
- Yes No
13. If the answer to 7 is "yes" - please explain.
14. Over all, in the areas of budget preparation and management, I think that I am:
- Particularly well prepared
 - Adequately prepared
 - Inadequately prepared
15. Do you support the concept of on-site budgeting where the principal is given a lump sum of budget money and is allowed to allocate it as he/she wishes to achieve the educational goals of their school?
- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably no
- Definitely no

___ I have completed and returned the survey.

___ I would like to receive a summary of the results of the survey.

___ BUG OFF!!! I have enough trouble running this school without helping some idiot compile worthless information no one will use.

APPENDIX B

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

December 8, 1986

Dear Fellow Administrator:


About three weeks ago I mailed you a survey concerning the elementary principals role in the district budgeting process. My card file indicates I have not received a return from you. This survey was not a general mailing to all elementary schools in Oklahoma, but to a scientifically selected sample. Your school therefore statistically represented several schools.

If you have not returned the survey, would you please take a few moments to complete and return it now. If you have already returned the survey, THANK YOU and please disregard this letter.

If you choose not to participate, please check the appropriate line on the postcard and return. This will remove you from my list for further mailings.

Thank you for your assistance in helping me to complete this survey.

Sincerely,



Jess Andrews
1921 W. 6th
Stillwater, OK 74074
405-377-8806

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW OUTLINE

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

1. Please describe the role of the elementary principal in the budgeting process as you perceive it.
2. Do you have formal needs assesment? If so please explain.
3. How do you involve your staff when forming your budget?
4. Do you use a formal budget evaluation system? If so please explain.
5. Can you choose to carry over funds in order to do long range planning?
6. Do you have a budget account that is not Pre-committed?
7. How do you implement a curriculum change from a budgetary viewpoint?
8. Do you feel that your budget suggestions are usually listened to by your superiors?
9. What do you consider your greatest problem when you are asked to prepare a budget item?
10. If there was one thing you could change about the budgeting system in your district, what would it be? (Others then to increase all your funds)
11. What change at the state funding level would be the most beneficial to the elementary principal when they are preparing their local budgets?
12. If you could go back in time, would you take more courses in finance and budgeting?

SUPERINTENDENT INTERVIEW

1. Please describe the role of the elementary principal in the budgeting process as you perceive it.
2. What is the budget calendar in regard to elementary principals?
3. Do you have a formal budget evaluation system? If so please explain.
4. How do you feel about the concept of sight based budgets?
5. Do you allow your principals to carry over any funds in order to do long range planning?
6. If there was one thing you could change about the budgeting system in your district, what would it be ? (Other than to increase funds)
7. How well trained in budget preparation and management do you consider your elementary principals?
8. How much training in budgeting would you suggest that future elementary principals take?
9. How much weight do you give to the budget suggestions presented by your elementary principals?
10. Do you feel that your elementary principals are satisfied with their involvement in the budgeting process?

VITA

Jess Paul Andrews

Candidate for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE ROLE OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS IN THE BUDGETING
PROCESS OF RURAL OKLAHOMA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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