FACTORS INFLUENCING THE TEACHER HIRING DECISIONS OF OKLAHOMA PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Hiring of Teachers in Oklahoma's Public Schools

William Castetter has written that the most crucial single element in the education process is "the people charged with the task of effecting desirable changes in children and youth."[1] This statement serves to underscore the importance of the teacher selection process as a means of hiring teachers to accomplish these changes. Castetter defines personnel selection as a "decision making process in which one individual is chosen over another to fill a position on the basis of how well characteristics of the individual match the requirements of the position."[2] Bolton mentions that the decision to select a teacher from among a number of applicants is "the culmination of a series of preliminary decisions which constitute the selection process."[3] However, the teacher selection process is not as simple as the above statements seem to suggest.

The problem of hiring competent teachers to instruct our children is as old as the education profession itself. It is a problem that defies actual solution and therefore

must be dealt with by school administrators on a continuing basis. The problem is compounded by the fact that there is no one way, or even a small number of ways, to hire teachers. Davis and Nickerson indicate that many kinds of selection procedures and ways to use them exist today.[4] Olson reinforces this by pointing out that "the literature on teacher selection contains as many different opinions and criteria related to the process as there are authors."[5] Redfern asserts that "this variability is to be expected since control of public schools in the United States is so highly centralized and local in nature."[6] Bolton summarizes the problem with the following statement:

> So crucial is the selection of a teacher to the quality of the educational program that it seems obvious that this decision should be made only with the utmost certainty regarding its utility. Yet, this is an anomaly of the selection process in education--and of selection in general--that such decisions are frequently intuitive and arbitrary. Contemporary administrative literature contains many theories of widely diverging complexity and quality which purport to improve the selection process. However, the fact remains that very little empirical data exists to either substantiate or disprove these theories; and consequently, the process remains, in many aspects at least, a highly subjective one.[7]

Recent evidence gathered in Oklahoma by the writer indicates that public school administrators throughout the state vary in their approach to hiring decisions. Twelve Oklahoma public school administrators were randomly selected and interviewed by the writer concerning their hiring procedures. The questions asked the administrators

were taken from an interview format developed by Bolton in Selection and Evaluation of Teachers.[8] Specifically, the questions pertained to information that the administrators required of all teacher applicants, their interviewing processes, and how they decided which applicants were best qualified for an offer of employment. Their responses to these questions provide an introduction to the hiring of teachers in Oklahoma's public schools.

In terms of information required of teacher applicants, all respondents indicated that they require transcripts of college work completed. Eleven of the twelve administrators interviewed require a completed application form. Six administrators want resumes, five request placement credentials while two ask applicants to write a letter of application. One school district requires applicants to take a writing/spelling skills test as well as a ten problem math test. Another requires the completion of a "local questionnaire."

In reality, combinations of the above are required by the administrators. These combinations include: (1) Application Form/Transcript(s); (2) Application Form/ Placement Credentials/Transcript(s); (3) Application Form/ Placement Credentials/Resume/Transcript(s); (4) Application Form/Resume/Letter of Application/Transcript(s); (5) Resume/Transcript(s); (6) Application Form/Resume /Letter of Application/Transcript(s); (7) Application Form/Placement Credentials/Resume/ Transcript(s)/Local

Questionnaire; (8) Application Form/Placement Credentials/Resume/Transcript(s)/Writing and Spelling Skills Test/Ten Problem Math Test.

The administrators were asked three questions as a means of describing the process that they used in interviewing teacher applicants. These questions included: (1) How do you structure the interview and to what extent? (2) Is there any difference in the interview of experienced and nonexperienced teacher applicants? (3) What questions do you find most beneficial in acquiring information about applicants?

The interviews with the administrators revealed a range of structured to unstructured interviewing of teacher applicants. A rural superintendent has ten questions that he asks each applicant. After the interview is completed, he makes a set of notes or uses a rating scale to assess the interview. An urban superintendent pointed out that the principals and the assistant superintendent in his district develop and prepare structured interview procedures and ask all applicants certain basic questions. An urban assistant superintendent has eight structured questions that he asks beginning teachers to answer.

Some of the administrators opt for a combination of structure and flexibility. A deputy superintendent indicated that he has a set of questions that he will ask all applicants. He does, however, change them a little to

fit the position. An assistant superintendent of an urban district mentioned that his interviews involve getting acquainted first and then asking questions regarding the applicant's philosophy and experiences. A female rural superintendent likes to ask open-ended questions that would involve how a teacher would organize a class for learning purposes.

The completely unstructured interview was also much in evidence as the result of the administrators' responses. A high school principal described his interviews as "very casual and long enough to satisfy the needs of both himself and the applicant." One rural superintendent mentioned that his interviews are "very informal and relaxed (if such is possible)" while a dependent school principal likes to conduct an unstructured interview that is primarily organized as a visitation and response.

Differences in the interviewing of experienced and nonexperienced teacher applicants were noted in some administrator responses while other administrators reported very little in the way of differences. A rural junior high school principal asks beginning teachers for more information about their abilities and their motives for wanting to teach while the urban assistant superintendent queries experienced teachers concerning their actual experiences. The female superintendent indicated no differences but qualified her remark by pointing out that

she has somewhat different expectations of the answers to questions. She believes that beginning teachers tend to be somewhat hesitant in answering questions while experienced teachers are less hesitant in doing so. Other responses included a rural superintendent who mentioned that there were no substantial differences and another rural superintendent who asserted that he does not intentionally create differences.

Administrator responses were varied as the respondents described the nature of questions asked that they consider beneficial in acquiring information about teacher applicants. A rural superintendent likes to ask questions that reveal the strength of personal traits such as knowledge, reliability and stability. The deputy superintendent asks questions that are designed to get applicants to think before they answer them. He also likes to ask questions that require an answer of more than one word or a short sentence. An urban superintendent prefers questions that provide answers involving an applicant's attitude toward teaching children and the applicant's philosophy of education. The dependent school principal's questions pertain to goal descriptions that are relevant to education and life. An urban assistant superintendent asks questions that determine whether an applicant likes students and teaching as well as whether they want to teach or how well they have taught. Another rural superintendent uses questions that are designed to

pinpoint a prospective teacher's strengths and weaknesses. The female superintendent likes to use open-ended questions such as "Tell me anything about yourself and your previous experience that you think I should know?" A third rural superintendent believes that questions pertaining to previous teaching experience, student teaching, philosophy of teaching, training, areas of certification and references provide reliable information about applicants. An urban assistant superintendent feels that questions revealing an interest in people and teaching are useful to him as he gathers information on applicants to decide which ones are best qualified.

In deciding which applicants are best qualified, an urban assistant superintendent believes that good grades, successful experiences, excellent references and the recommendation of the principal are highly important. A rural superintendent looks for the person that he feels would enjoy working in his school district and has good recommendations from past teaching or intern teaching experiences. The deputy superintendent indicated that he looks primarily for character and ability. He is also interested in classroom performance, knowledge strength and evidence of ability to be an effective teacher. Another rural superintendent considers the goals and objectives established for the position and tries to select the best candidates who meet these criteria. The dependent school principal believes that those applicants

who make him feel will benefit the students and the community are the best qualified. A third rural superintendent looks for evidence of involvement with people in terms of work experience and volunteer work. However, in making determinations as to the best qualified applicants, he stated that he gets a "gut" feeling one way or another.

An assessment of the most qualified applicants eventually results in a decision to hire or not to hire. In terms of when to make, reject, or delay an employment offer, a rural superintendent pointed out that three candidates are selected after all interviews are completed. After an interview committee has provided input, a decision is made as to the candidate who will be offered the position. The deputy superintendent makes an offer when he is satisfied that the top applicant has been interviewed. He usually interviews five or six applicants for most positions. An urban superintendent makes an offer after carefully checking each applicant's references. Another rural superintendent indicated that the candidate he selects has an informal interview with the board of education before a decision to hire the candidate is made. An urban assistant superintendent mentioned that a decision is made after the principal has interviewed the candidates and makes a recommendation to him. A third rural superintendent stated that he never makes an offer until he has reviewed an applicant's

credentials, checked references and interviewed the individual. He utilizes this procedure because he believes "that it is more difficult to get rid of a bad choice than it is to make a poor choice." This observation definitely underscores the importance of making a good choice in the hiring of teachers.

Statement of the Problem

The preceding responses by a very small random sample of Oklahoma public school administrators are indicative of what teacher hiring processes are like in the state's public schools. It is incumbent upon school officials to select and employ the best instructional talent available. How is this being accomplished in Oklahoma at the present time? Also, improvements in teacher hiring processes should always be considered and implemented for the benefit of the state's public school children.

This descriptive study was conducted to gather data relative to current hiring practices and procedures used by public school administrators in Oklahoma. With this in mind, three major research questions were developed.

Research Questions

The study focused on the following research questions:

1. What value(s) do Oklahoma public school administrators place upon teacher selection devices and processes in making teacher hiring decisions?

2. What factors influence Oklahoma public school administrators to select or not to select teachers?

3. Are some factors that influence teacher hiring decisions unique to independent and/or dependent public school districts in Oklahoma? Rural and/or urban public school districts in Oklahoma?

Significance of the Study

Although recent studies have been done on a national basis to determine those factors that influence public school administrators to make teacher hiring decisions, the writer believes that a study with an Oklahoma data base would provide useful information that describes public school teacher hiring practices in the state. It is believed that this information will assist administrators in reviewing their hiring practices and, if necessary, improve upon them for the purpose of making better hiring decisions. It is also intended that the data gathered be used by college and university placement offices in Oklahoma as a means of assisting teachers who are seeking employment in the state. Knowledge of teacher hiring practices in Oklahoma would certainly benefit both beginning and experienced teachers alike.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by the following:

1. The number of randomly selected independent and dependent public school districts chosen to participate in the study.

2. The number of questionnaire/surveys that were returned by the selected public school districts.

3. The number of administrators who were randomly selected for interviews.

4. The omitting of private and parochial schools in Oklahoma from the study. They are not governed by some of the hiring guidelines that affect the public schools and consequently their hiring practices may tend to differ somewhat.

5. The exclusion of practices used to hire public school administrators in Oklahoma. These, in some ways, tend to differ from those used to hire teachers.

6. The descriptive nature of the study.

Definition of Terms

Independent School District. In Oklahoma, a K-12 school district administered by a superintendent.

Dependent School District. In Oklahoma, a K-6 or K-8 elementary school district headed by a principal and administered by a county superintendent.

Placement Credentials. Personal, educational and experiential information pertaining to an applicant that

is maintained by a college or university placement office. The information also includes letters of reference/ recommendation written on behalf of the applicant. This information is made available to prospective employers either at their request or at the request of the applicant.

Transcripts. Records of academic course work completed by applicants at colleges and universities. Transcripts also indicate dates of graduation, degrees awarded, and grades received.

Course work Information Sheet. Used in lieu of transcripts by some college and university placement offices to provide information concerning an applicant's academic background.

Resume. A brief written statement of an applicant's qualifications for positions. It is usually used by an applicant to establish an initial contact with an employer.

Personal Data Sheet. Used in lieu of resumes by college and university placement offices to provide information concerning an applicant's personal, educational and experiential background. The applicant's signature at the bottom of the sheet is a personal authorization for the placement office to release the applicant's credentials to any interested employer.

Letter of Inquiry. Formal written statement whereby an applicant seeks information concerning the possibility of position openings.

Letter of Application. Formal written statement whereby an applicant states an interest in a position opening and announces an intention to seek the position.

Letters of Reference/Recommendation. Letters written by individuals for the purpose of supporting a person's application for a position or positions.

Character References. Letters of reference/ recommendation that tend to attest to an applicant's personal and moral fitness rather than professional qualifications.

Confidential (Closed) References/Letters/ Recommendations. Letters of reference/recommendation written in confidence; for these the applicant has waived the right of access.

Nonconfidential (Open) References/Letters/ Recommendations. Letters of reference/recommendation written with the knowledge that an applicant has retained the right of access. The right of access, unless waived, is granted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

Organization of the Study

In Chapter I the introduction to the study provides a brief description of teacher hiring in Oklahoma's public

schools. This is followed by a statement of the problem, the research questions, the significance and limitations of the study, and a definition of terminology. A review of the literature is provided in Chapter II. The methodology utilized in the study is discussed in Chapter III. Chapter IV focuses upon a presentation and an analysis of the data collected. A summary, conclusions, and recommendations are featured in Chapter V.

Summary

In the introduction to this study, teacher hiring in Oklahoma's public schools was described from the vantage point of comments made by twelve randomly selected administrators who hire teachers in their respective school districts. The interviews with the administrators provide a capsule view of the situation.

To provide more depth and to determine how teacher hiring is being conducted in Oklahoma, a random sample of independent and dependent school districts was selected to receive a questionnaire/survey concerning factors that influence teacher hiring decisions. The data gathered from this population serve to describe teacher hiring in Oklahoma's public schools.

ENDNOTES

[1]William B. Castetter, The Personnel Function in Educational Administration (New York, 1986), p. 5.

[2]Ibid., p. 221.

[3]Dale L. Bolton, Variables Affecting Decision Making in the Selection of Teachers (Washington, D.C., 1968), p. 8.

[4]Donald E. Davis and Neal C. Nickerson, Jr., Critical Issues in School Personnel Administration (Chicago, 1968), pp. 31-32.

[5]Kenneth Dale Olson, "Teacher Selection Utilizing the Project EMPATHY Interview and the Educational Practice Belief Inventory Instruments," (unpub. Ed.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1981), p. 15.

[6]George B. Redfern, "Desirable Policies and Procedures for Teacher Selection," in Harry B. Gilbert and Gerhard Lang, Teacher Selection Methods, (New York, 1967), p. 61.

[7]Bolton, p. 8.

[8]Dale L. Bolton, Selection and Evaluation of Teachers (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 179-180.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature for this study is primarily based upon national studies conducted by or under the auspices of the Association for School, College and University Staffing (ASCUS) and some of its affiliates. These studies deal specifically with employer preferences in teacher hiring, the hiring of school administrators, credential practices, and employer preferences for letters of reference. Some important non-ASCUS studies feature an examination of the contents of teacher credential files and also examine the issue of confidential versus open references. A review of these studies is important because some of them were used as a basis to develop the questionnaire/survey that was utilized to gather data for this study.

Teacher Hiring Preferences

In 1978 ASCUS published a study entitled What Employers Consider Important in Hiring Teachers.[1] A questionnaire was mailed to school administrators on a nationwide basis. The results were limited to the

forty-five school administrators who returned the questionnaire. The study sought to identify those factors that school administrators considered important in hiring beginning and experienced teachers. The administrators were provided with a list of sixteen factors and asked to rate each on a scale from one ("not important") to six ("highly important") for beginning and experienced teachers.[2] The following factors were rated by the school administrators:

(1) Personal qualifications of the individual including maturity, initiative, interest, enthusiasm, poise and the ability to work with people

(2) Nature and extent of professional courses in education including educational psychology, methods of teaching and student teaching

(3) Scholastic qualifications of the individual as shown by grades in college courses and grade point average

(4) Nature and extent of liberal arts courses relating to the major field of study or teaching field

(5) Experiences in campus activities, especially leadership and participation in extracurricular life

(6) General liberal arts courses completed by the individual designed to provide a broad cultural background

(7) Past employment

(8) Comments by professors in the placement credential file

(9) Comments by past professional employers in the placement credential file

(10) Comments by past non-related (nonprofessional employment) employers in the placement credential file

(11) Interests of candidate in directing extra-curricular activities

(12) Ability of candidate to teach in a second area

(13) Quality of candidate communications (e.g. resume, letter, application)

(14) Professional credentials of candidate--contains concise, crisp summary statements of qualifications

(15) Professional credentials of candidate--contains more lengthy and detailed documentation concerning qualifications

(16) Interviewing skills of candidate[3]

The results of this rating by the school administrators showed that the personal qualifications of the individual, past employment experiences, the ability to teach in a second field, the quality of candidate communications and the interviewing skills of the candidate were more regarded as hiring factors for both beginning and experienced teachers than the other factors

on the list. Factors that were lightly regarded were comments by past non-related (nonprofessional employment) employers in the placement credential file and experiences in campus activities, especially leadership and participation in extracurricular life. In the case of comments by professors in the placement file and experiences in campus activities, the administrators rated these as being more important to beginning teachers as hiring factors.[4]

The conclusions reached in the study showed that there was very little difference in terms of what employers considered important in hiring both beginning and experienced teachers. According to the study, the key factors for beginning and experienced teacher candidates alike are maturity, initiative, interest, enthusiasm, poise and the ability to work with people. The second key factor that the study cited as important in staff selection was successful previous employment. This was also true for both the beginning and the experienced teacher. The third key factor mentioned was the ability of a candidate to teach in a second area. This was labeled as an asset in a "tight" teacher market when openings are scarce.[5]

The study made the following recommendations:

(1) Institutions should provide adequate career planning to students throughout their years at the college or university. They should alert teacher candidates to the importance that

employers place upon personal qualifications in the selection of staff.

(2) Teacher candidates and experienced teachers should recognize the importance of doing a good job in their current position, whether it be a part-time job working your way through college or a full-time position upon graduation. The individual's commitment should be a commitment to excellence.

(3) Teacher candidates would be well advised to obtain a teaching minor as they prepare for a teaching career. A teaching minor will many times enhance the opportunities that will be available to the individual.[6]

A second study concerning teacher hiring preferences was completed under ASCUS auspices by Siera in 1982. Siera surveyed selected school administrators in school districts comprising the nine ASCUS regions of the United States. He found that 72.3 percent of the individuals responding to his survey were school district superintendents or personnel directors. Other respondents included personnel directors, assistant superintendents, and associate superintendents. In terms of the number of students in the districts, 48 percent of the responding districts had between 1,000 and 9,000 students while 43.8 percent had less than 1,000 students. Most of the responding districts were rural (69.7 percent) while

twenty-two percent considered themselves as suburban districts. Topics surveyed included sources through which teacher positions are advertised, teacher applicant contact practices, the role of placement credentials when considering the employment of teachers, employer preferences for letters of reference, factors related to the hiring of teachers and teacher supply/demand information.[7]

In gathering information on sources through which teaching positions are advertised, it was found that 93.2 percent of the school districts advertised positions with college and university placement offices while 46.2 percent advertised positions with newspapers. State employment services were a third popular source as 36.2 percent of the districts advertised through them.[8] The teacher applicant contact practices category was summarized by the fact that 74.9 percent of the districts surveyed stated that they welcomed unsolicited applications when no positions had been previously announced.[9]

The data concerning the role that placement credentials play in the hiring of teachers indicated the information that school administrators felt was important to be included in credential files and the value of references from certain sources. Student teaching and employment reports were considered by 71.4 percent of the respondents to be the most important information to be maintained in credential files. In terms of being "very important," these reports were followed by transcripts

(57.8 percent), resumes (54.6 percent), personal data forms (50.6 percent), character references (46.4 percent), course listings (31.8 percent), and academic (instructor) references (31 percent).[10] The most valuable references were those from previous education related employers (71.6 percent) and cooperating teachers in student teaching (71.6 percent). In descending order of value were references from college coordinators of student teaching (35 percent), previous non-education related employers (23 percent), high school teachers/administrators (21 percent), character references (13.6 percent), and college instructors (11 percent).[11]

Reference preferences showed that 71.3 percent of the school administrators surveyed preferred confidential references while three percent preferred nonconfidential or open references and 25.7 percent did not indicate a preference. The administrators indicated that in terms of format they liked a combination rating scale/anecdotal statement (78 percent) over an anecdotal statement by itself (15 percent) or a rating scale by itself (seven percent). A majority of them (54.1 percent) always check with reference writers before hiring a teacher while 38.1 percent of them said that they usually check references and 7.7 percent occasionally check them. The administrators also mentioned that they used credential files in some manner to arrive at hiring decisions. A large minority of them (39.9 percent) require credential files

from those candidates that they seriously consider based upon their application and/or resume. Approximately one-fourth of the hiring officials required the files before an interview while 9.4 percent required them after an interview but before the final hiring decision.[12]

The major factor related to the hiring of teachers concerned the procedures that school districts used in conducting hiring. The most popular procedure utilized was centralized screening of candidates with building principals selecting from a pool of qualified candidates (43.5 percent). Other school districts (31.2 percent) used a centralized screening procedure only in hiring teachers. A small number of districts (9.2 percent) allowed building principals to hire candidates independent of central office procedures.[13]

The data on teacher supply/demand showed that 34.6 percent of the administrators surveyed had more qualified applicants than positions available in their school districts. Another 31.6 percent of the districts had substantially more qualified applicants than positions available. A smaller number of districts reported that supply/demand was approximately balanced (19.2 percent) or that they had more positions than qualified applicants (11.5 percent). Only 3.2 percent reported that they had substantially more positions than applicants available. In terms of unfilled positions at the beginning of the school year, 85.5 percent indicated that they were not

able to fill all positions in time for the 1981-82 school year. A large minority of the administrators (47.44 percent) reported that they hired most of their teachers during June and July while 25.89 percent did most of their hiring in April and May. The period in which the least hiring occurred was from October until March where only 5.66 percent of the administrators said that they had hired any teachers. Subject areas where administrators had difficulty in hiring teachers were mathematics (49.7 percent), science (45.6 percent), special education (21.9 percent), industrial arts (20.3 percent), music (11.7 percent), English (9.7 percent) and foreign languages (8.8 percent).[14]

Siera summarized the results of his study as follows:

(1) School districts generally still rely heavily on the traditional placement file in the teacher selection process.

(2) References from previous educational employers and/or student teaching cooperating teachers are most highly valued.

(3) A great majority of administrators prefer confidential references.

(4) Two-thirds of the administrators experienced either receiving more qualified applicants than positions or a marked surplus of applicants over positions.

(5) Four-fifths of the administrators had experienced difficulty in securing teachers in one or more areas with math and/or science being mentioned as problem areas by almost half of the respondents.

(6) One in seven administrators reported that there were one or more unfilled positions in their districts at the start of the 1981-82 school year.

(7) There is a noticeable trend for hiring to be done later in the year than in the past. More than two-thirds of the hiring was done after the first of June, the time when most students graduate.

(8) There was consistency among the states in the responses with some exceptions. Those exceptions tended to fall into the area of supply/demand balance and in the time period during which teachers were hired.[15]

School Administrator Hiring Preferences

Although this writer's study is not concerned with school administrator hiring preferences, two studies concerning this topic are reviewed in this chapter because the writer borrowed from the methodology used in these studies to devise his own questionnaire/survey for use in

Oklahoma. Secondly, some of the findings mentioned in these studies are relevant to teacher hiring preferences.

In 1978 ASCUS published a study entitled Employment Factors Superintendents Use in Hiring Administrators for Their School Districts.[16] In an attempt to secure data of a descriptive nature only, two-hundred surveys were sent to randomly selected public school districts nationwide. A return rate of approximately twenty percent was realized and provided the basis for the findings. School administrators were asked to rate factors on a scale of six levels ranging from "highly important" to "no importance." They were surveyed on the following topics: sources of applicants; the importance of selected qualities when considering the employment of administrators; the importance of various screening factors in the administrator selection process; the importance of various segments of professional placement credentials when considering the employment of experienced and inexperienced administrators; the unimportance of selected characteristics displayed by administrative applicants in personal interviews; applicant contact practices; employer preferences for letters of reference; and factors related to interviewing, selecting and informing administrative candidates by employers.[17]

Findings were reported in the study as follows:

(1) College and university placement bureaus still are the single most important source of

administrative candidates, although promotion from within the district is also rated highly. Commercial agencies and newspaper advertisements are not very significant sources of candidates.

(2) Proper business form with relevant content were rated highest when letters of application were considered in relation to their importance to the employer considering them. Most respondents were highly supportive of neatly written and grammatically correct letters.

(3) Humanism rated as the most important of the selected qualities of the administrative candidate. Previous administrative experience was rated above average or highly important by more than eighty-five percent of the respondents. College grade point average did not seem to be as important as the other qualities. Almost nine out of ten administrators surveyed felt the personal appearance of the administrative candidate was important.

(4) The personal interview was rated as the most important of all of the screening factors that administrator employers emphasized in the selection process. Over ninety percent rated the personal interview as above average or highly important. Professional placement

credentials also rated very high as did the completed application form.

(5) In terms of the importance of various elements in the credential files of experienced administrators, special attention should be placed on the letters of reference from superintendents, principals, and other school employers. Those letters are unquestionably the most important ones in the credential files according to the respondents. Communications with personal acquaintances was a distant second, although substantial. Less than one-third of the respondents rated letters of reference from college faculty members as being above average or high in importance. The lowest ranking was given to the importance of the undergraduate grade point average and that of the graduate program was rated only slightly higher.

(6) When considering placement credential files of inexperienced administrative candidates, letters of reference from college faculty members were considered more important than was the case for experienced administrators. They still were not nearly as highly rated as were those letters of reference from school administrators. Grade point averages were rated somewhat similar for

both experienced and inexperienced candidates. In both instances, letters of reference from professional people other than educators were allocated very mediocre ratings of importance.

(7) More than nine out of ten employers of administrative candidates cited four characteristics which were extremely important for the candidate. They were (1) appearing to be genuinely interested in the position, (2) having good verbal skills, (3) appearing self-confident and poised and (4) having the ability to respond to questions concerning administration of schools. The data also suggested a neat and well-groomed appearance as well as being fortified with background information concerning the district in which employment is sought.

(8) In terms of applicant contact practices, the majority of the employers did not object to receiving letters of application which had been written by hand rather than typed. An overwhelming majority of the employers did not object to the initial contact of the applicant being made by telephone nor did they generally object to being contacted by telephone after an interview was completed.

(9) About one-third of the respondents indicated that it really did not make any difference whether letters of reference in credential files were open or closed. Of the remaining two-thirds, there was no question but what the employers were in favor of closed files for administrative candidates.

(10) In terms of who interviews the administrative candidate, the superintendent, personnel director and selection committee were mentioned by over one-half of the respondents. It was a different matter in the final selection of the administrative candidate where only the superintendent was listed by a majority of the respondents. It then fell off sharply to less than one of four indicating the school board being the final selector in a practical sense. [18]

In a 1984 ASCUS sponsored study entitled Entry-Level Administrative Positions and How They Happened, Kohler and Tucker reported their attempt to determine how newly appointed school administrators obtained their positions.[19] A questionnaire was sent to all 128 school districts located on Long Island, New York, for the purpose of determining the number of appointments in six entry level administrative positions in their districts from July 1, 1981 to June 30, 1983. Sixty-one responses were received from the school district population. Ten of

the responses indicated that no one was appointed to any of the entry level positions being surveyed while fifty-one indicated that one or more appointments had been made to such positions. In all, 286 appointments were reported. [20]

A cross section of school districts reporting appointments was selected to include at least three positions in each of the selected job categories, as well as a diversity of school districts in terms of economics, size and social profile. The superintendent's office of each school district selected was called and permission was obtained to interview the appointing administrator and the newly appointed administrator. Only the responses of the appointing administrators will be reviewed here to describe what influenced them to make their hiring decisions. [21]

The responses of the appointing administrators included answers to the following questions:

(1) What qualities were you looking for in the person for this position?

(2) Why was this person chosen over the other applicants? [22]

Successful professional experience was regarded by fifty-six percent of the respondents as the most important quality of applicants for entry level administrative positions. Other qualities mentioned were prior administrative experience, success in teaching,

outstanding performance in some professional role and a strong academic background in the area in which the administrator would be working or supervising. One-half of the respondents emphasized the importance of professional expertise in specific or a combination of areas related to the present needs or goals of the school district. Personal qualities were not mentioned as much at first by respondents but were eventually discussed in terms of specific candidates. In descending order according to their importance, the personal qualities most frequently mentioned were leadership, intelligence, adaptability, willingness to work hard, good interpersonal relations, good sense of organization, creativity, maturity, awareness of student needs, warmth, loyalty, potential for growth, initiative, ability to learn quickly and the ability to add "spark" to a program. [23]

The most important reason pointed out by the respondents for choosing an applicant over other candidates for a position was professional experience. Eleven of the eighteen administrators interviewed indicated that this was a highly significant factor in their decision to hire the applicant. Other influencing factors were administrative ability, professional knowledge, curriculum background, teaching ability, teaching certification in more than one area related to the position to be filled, and a strong background in extracurricular activities. The personal qualities that

were regarded as hiring factors in descending level of importance were physical energy, intelligence, leadership, personality, loyalty, creativity, initiative, attitude and self-confidence. [24]

In their conclusion to the study, the authors indicated that they had "found a great deal of agreement among appointing administrators with respect to the kinds of candidates they are seeking." [25] They continued by stating:

> There seems to be a strong preference for experienced people with strong and varied backgrounds in education. Prospective candidates would do well to prepare themselves broadly and to develop expertise in as many educational areas as possible, since there is evidence that candidates are often selected because of particular strengths which coincide with needs of hiring districts. [26]

Placement Credentials Content and Practices

In 1969 Dropkin and Castiglione published a study entitled "Teacher Credentials: Item Preferences of Recruiters."[27] It was their belief that little was known at that time about the items in teacher credential files that school administrators considered to be useful in helping them to make hiring decisions. They maintained that "the preferences of teacher personnel recruiters should play an important role in the development of an "ideal" set of credentials since they have developed their criteria for selection and want certain kinds of information." [28]

The authors developed a survey that was designed to gather data that would help them to answer three major questions concerning credentials. The question of interest to this writer concerned the credential items that were considered indispensable or very useful by teaching personnel recruiters in the public schools. To answer this question, the authors asked respondents to rank order credential items in descending order from indispensable-very useful to what was perceived as being not very useful. This was done for both inexperienced and experienced teachers. For inexperienced teachers, the results were as follows:

(1) Letter of Reference--Cooperating Teacher
(2) Letter of Reference--Student Teaching Supervisor
(3) Student Teaching Location--Type
(4) Undergraduate Transcript with Grades
(5) List of Graduate Courses with Grades
(6) List of Graduate Courses
(7) List of College Honors
(8) List of Extracurricular Activities
(9) List of Courses in Major Only
(10) Letters of Reference--College Faculty Members
(11) List of Teacher Certificates
(12) Undergraduate Grade Point Average
(13) College Faculty Rating Scales
(14) List of All Undergraduate Courses
(15) Candidate's Essay

(16) Previous Non-teaching Experience

(17) List of Courses in Education Only

(18) General Character Reference

(19) Letters of Reference--Non-school Employees

(20) Letters of Reference--Clergymen

For experienced teachers, the results were as follows:

(1) Previous Teaching Experience

(2) Letters of Reference--School Employer (Principal)

(3) List of Graduate Courses with Grades

(4) List of Teacher Certificates

(5) List of Graduate Courses

(6) Undergraduate Transcript with Grades

(7) Letter of Reference--Cooperating Teacher

(8) Letter of Reference--Student Teaching Supervisor

(9) List of Extracurricular Activities

(10) Undergraduate Grade Point Average

(11) Student Teaching Location--Type

(12) List of Courses in Major Only

(13) List of College Honors

(14) List of All Undergraduate Courses

(15) Candidate's Essay

(16) College Faculty Rating Scale

(17) Letters of Reference--College Faculty Members

(18) General Character Reference

(19) Previous Non-teaching Experience

(20) List of Courses in Education Only

(21) Letters of Reference--Non-school Employers

(22) Letters of Reference--Clergymen [29]

The authors provided a further interpretation of the results by pointing out that the credential items appeared to have fallen into three major categories on the basis of their rank and content. Items ranked one to five involve reports of recently observed teaching behavior and the conditions under which that behavior took place. The second category involved items that dealt with the specifics of academic performance while the third category featured items that concerned general character reference and life experiences not directly related to teaching. [30] Dropkin and Castiglione concluded their study by stating:

> The data of this investigation suggest that hiring officers place greatest reliance on recent evaluation of a candidate's teaching behavior and related teaching conditions. The evaluation of candidates by college faculty is given relatively little weight. One might hypothesize that they see the faculty ratings as being based on criteria that are not especially relevant to on-the-job performance. [31]

As an addition to a MAASCUS (Middle Atlantic Association for School, College and University Staffing) project, Mumford sent a questionnaire to ninety school districts in the MAASCUS region to determine their views regarding the role of placement credentials in the teacher hiring process. Sixty school districts returned completed questionnaires. The data were reported as follows:

Question	Yes	No
(1) Should we eliminate the costly credentials service since it is of little use?	4	54
(2) Would you prefer all references to be confidential, i.e., not available to the student?	45	12
(3) Would you prefer references written by professionals who have seen the candidate in a teaching situation?	54	2
(4) Is an anecdotal reference preferable to a check on a rating scale?	31	25
(5) Do you prefer a combination of anecdotal and check-list ratings?	48	9
(6) Do you find references much more flattering since the Buckley-Pehl Amendment?	37	16
(7) Do you seldom see an unflattering reference these days?	51	3
(8) Do you normally check references with a phone call before hiring a teacher?	37	21
(9) Do you typically not bother with references from placement offices?	5	54
(10) Have you ever refused to hire or consider carefully a candidate who could not provide written references?	50	7
(11) Are written references more valuable concerning a candidate who comes to you from some distance, i.e., the West Coast, etc?	28	29
(12) Do you ever check back to references after a teacher has worked for your district to compare your evaluation with those of the college faculty member?	28	30
(13) Do you consider references written by college faculty to be predictors of future success?	25	26

Question	Yes	No
(14) Does your Board of Education typically ask about references--what their contents are or whether or not you have made a check by telephone?	21	38
(15) Has your Board of Education provided guidelines as policy concerned with the use of references in hiring staff? [32]	13	46

Of interest in this study are some of the comments, both pro and con, from school administrators regarding placement credentials and the hiring process. The following serve as examples:

> Some references from certain colleges are consistently good and others flattering--we do not use them.

> We don't consider an application complete unless we have the confidential credentials. We use the references as a means to screen the applicants for interviews.

> References are of no value. I prefer to speak personally with the persons listed as references if they have first hand knowledge of performance.

> I am a strong supporter of the credential file. While its abolition may save some money on your end, its existence saves money and time on my end. Also, the letters written by your faculty give sight into the quality of your program! [33]

Mumford grouped the findings in his study by providing answers to five summarizing questions:

(1) Do the school districts want to continue using credentials/references as a part of the hiring process?

By a wide margin they use these references; they appear to value them.

According to respondents, reference writers should be professionals who have actually seen the teacher in a teaching situation rather than a professor who has had the student in class.

A reference file held "Confidential" appears to have more value than an open file.

Persons who have a reference file seem to be favored in the hiring process.

(2) Has the Buckley Amendment had an impact on reference files?

Most respondents feel that references are more flattering since January 1, 1975.

(3) What is the position of Boards of Education regarding references (based on questions asked interviewers by Board members and by Board policies developed to guide district recruiters)?

By a large majority Boards of Education have not adopted policies regarding the use of references.

Most respondents report no questions from Board members in this regard.

(4) What form should references take?

Respondents are split on this matter with a slight preference for an anecdotal reference over a check on a rating scale.

(5) Is it a normal practice to check references by telephone?

Where possible this is done in a majority of cases although it is not usually done by a strong majority of respondents. [34]

Employer Preferences for Letters of Reference

Much of the recent research regarding school district employer preferences for letters of reference shows a preference for confidential over nonconfidential recommendations. Some of it points out that an increasing number of employers are also undecided about their preferences or do not express preferences. For instance, a study by Higbee in 1981 indicated that more than a majority of some Maryland school personnel administrators surveyed valued "more highly" letters of reference that were confidential rather than nonconfidential. The same study revealed that thirty-three percent of the administrators did not have a preference between confidential and nonconfidential references. [35] Another 1981 study by Jarchow which surveyed Iowa superintendents showed that sixty-seven percent of the superintendents somewhat or strongly agreed that candidates with confidential files are preferred over those with nonconfidential files. The study also mentioned that thirty-three percent of the superintendents somewhat disagreed or were undecided about preferring confidential files. [36]

Several studies conducted between 1975 and 1980 indicate the strong support for confidential recommendations for several reasons. A 1975 survey of Michigan hiring officials by Carey revealed that seventy-two percent of those responding to the survey preferred confidential references because such references tended to be more candid and valid than nonconfidential references.[37] The Wisconsin Association of School Personnel Administrators conducted a survey in 1975 dealing with desired credentials content for inexperienced teachers. The survey results indicated a preference for confidential references. Approximately one-half of the administrators indicated that the usefulness of references would be destroyed if confidentiality did not exist. [38] Raygor and Ludeman surveyed Minnesota superintendents and principals in 1978 and the results favored the use of confidential recommendations. Sixty-two percent of the superintendents and fifty-two percent of the principals expressed a preference for hiring teachers with confidential files because the references were useful screening devices. [39] Rosson and The Colorado Career Planning Association questioned Colorado school superintendents in 1978 concerning their acceptance of nonconfidential references. A large minority of them (forty-six percent) indicated that they had reservations about accepting such references and expressed their general dissatisfaction with the concept of nonconfidentiality. [40] A 1980 survey by Miller of public

high school hiring officials in Wisconsin showed that eighty-one percent of the respondents preferred confidential recommendations and did not like the Buckley Amendment which allows teaching candidates to choose nonconfidential recommendations. [41]

The research described above has been primarily descriptive in nature because questionnaires and surveys were used to secure preference information. Some researchers have utilized experimental techniques in their investigation of employer preferences for letters of reference. In 1975 Shipley developed a study in order to determine the effectiveness and value of confidential versus nonconfidential letters of reference by superintendents in Oregon and Washington. Thirty selected superintendents received one confidential and one nonconfidential letter of reference for each of five teachers. They were asked to evaluate the unknown candidate of each letter on the global variable "promise as a teacher." The results of the study pointed out a preference for confidential references but showed that the confidentiality status made little difference in candidate evaluations. The administrators were apparently unable to make a determination between confidential and nonconfidential references if they had no prior indication of the status of the references. [42]

Shaffer, Mays and Etheridge devised a study in 1976 to determine if hiring officials would favor a job

candidate whose credentials were confidential. Using students in the role of prospective employers, they developed a design in which the "prospective employers" were asked to respond to job candidacy and personal attributes of the candidate, enthusiasm of their letters of recommendations, and their choice of a credentials file. The content of the credentials files were varied. The results of the study favored those persons who chose confidential as opposed to nonconfidential files. [43]

A 1980 study by Enger sought to investigate the strength of confidential and nonconfidential references. Persons writing the references were asked to rate individuals on a four point scale. A random procedure resulted in half of the individuals requested to submit recommendations being sent confidential forms while the other half were provided with nonconfidential forms. Three weeks after returning the written recommendations, the procedure was reversed in that those individuals who wrote confidential references previously were sent nonconfidential forms with a note explaining the student's changing of reference status. Those who had written nonconfidential references were sent confidential forms. The results of the study indicated that the nonconfidential references received on the average higher recommendations. The ratings, however, were predominantly clustered at the upper end of the rating scale and did not discriminate appreciably. [44]

One of the more recent studies concerning confidential and nonconfidential placement files was conducted by Lewis and Korschgen in 1982. They sought to determine whether or not the status of recommendations affects the hiring decisions made by public school officials in Wisconsin. Their methodology featured the mailing of an authentic recommendation file to fifty percent of the public secondary school districts in the state. The recommendations were the same except one-third of the hiring officials received recommendations labeled confidential, one-third received nonconfidential labeled recommendations and one-third received recommendations that were not labeled. The administrators were asked to evaluate eight teacher qualities and then determine if they would invite the candidate to an interview as a result of the evaluation. They were also asked to rate the candidate's overall employability potential. Eighty-one percent of the administrators contacted completed and returned the evaluation. As a result of the study, the authors determined that there were no significant differences at the .05 level in the way hiring officials evaluated confidential, nonconfidential or non-descriptive recommendations. One of their major recommendations was to suggest that college and university placement offices change their recommendation forms to non-descriptive so that they would not be labeled confidential or nonconfidential. They also believe that students should be

encouraged to maintain their right of access to their files if further research confirms their findings. [45]

Summary

The basis for a study concerning the teacher hiring decisions of Oklahoma public school administrators can be found in ASCUS studies that describe employer preferences in teacher and administrator hiring, credentials practices and employer preferences for letters of reference. In addition, there are other studies that discuss the contents of teacher credential files and the issue of confidential versus open references.

The literature concerning teacher hiring preferences shows that the key hiring factors for both inexperienced and experienced teachers are maturity, initiative, interest, enthusiasm, poise and the ability to work with people. Successful previous employment experience and the ability to teach in a second area are also important factors. In terms of administrator hiring preferences, professional experience was the most important reason for choosing an applicant over other candidates for a position. Other influencing factors included administrative ability, teaching certification in more than one area related to the position to be filled, and a strong background in extracurricular activities. The personal characteristics regarded as hiring factors were physical

energy, intelligence, leadership, personality, loyalty, creativity, initiative, attitude and self-confidence.

The contents of teacher credential files appear to fall into three major categories. These include reports of recently observed teaching behavior, specifics of academic performance and general character references. The most important category valued by hiring officials for both experienced and inexperienced teachers is that of observed teaching behavior and the conditions under which that behavior took place. Hiring administrators tend to use credentials as part of the hiring process and appear to value the references in credential files.

Recent research concerning confidential versus open letters of recommendation shows a preference for confidential references because teacher hiring officials believe that these references are more candid and valid as well as serving as useful screening devices. The research also indicates a growing number of employers are undecided about a preference or do not express a preference. The bulk of this research is descriptive in nature and for this reason some researchers have attempted to utilize experimental techniques in examining the issue of confidentiality versus nonconfidentiality. One experimental study found that there were no significant differences in the way that hiring administrators evaluated confidential, nonconfidential or non-descriptive recommendations. Such a finding should warrant further investigation on the part

of researchers who are concerned with the issue of the status of recommendations.

ENDNOTES

[1]Association for School, College, and University Staffing, What Employers Consider Important in Hiring Teachers (Madison, 1978), pp. 1-7.

[2]Ibid., pp. 1-5.

[3]Ibid., pp. 2-5.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 6.

[6]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[7]Steve Siera, Employer Preferences and Practices in Teacher Hiring, ASCUS Research Grant Project (Aberdeen, 1982), pp. 1-3.

[8]Ibid., p. 3.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 1.

[11]Ibid., p. 2.

[12]Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[13]Ibid., p. 3.

[14]Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[15]Ibid., abstract page.

[16]Association for School, College and University Staffing, Employment Factors Superintendents Use in Hiring Administrators for Their School Districts (Madison, 1978), pp. 1-13.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., pp. 2-5.

[19]Mince Kohler and William F. Tucker, Entry Level Administrative Positions and How They Happened, ASCUS Special Report (Madison, 1984), p. 1-12.

[20]Ibid., p. 2.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., pp. 3-6.

[23]Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[24]Ibid., p. 6.

[25]Ibid., p. 9.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Stan Dropkin and Laurence Castiglione, "Teacher Credentials: Item Preferences of Recruiters," Clearing House, 43 (April, 1969), pp. 474-478.

[28]Ibid., pp. 474.

[29]Ibid., p. 475-476.

[30]Ibid., pp. 476-477.

[31]Ibid., pp. 477-478.

[32]Donald W. Mumford, A Study of Credential Practices, MAASCUS Research Grant Project (Glassboro, 1980), p. 18.

[33]Ibid., p. 19.

[34]Ibid., p. 17.

[35]Jeanne L. Higbee, "Criteria for Hiring Beginning Teachers for Employment in Maryland Public Schools," July, 1981.

[36]Elaine M. Jarchow, "The Hiring Game," Clearing House, 54 (April, 1981), pp. 366-369.

[37]Michael P. Carey, "Placement Credentials as a Screening Device," Journal of College Placement, 37 (Winter, 1977), pp. 30-31.

[38]Wisconsin Association of School Personnel Administrators, "A Study of Desired Credential Content for Inexperienced Teacher Candidates," (Madison, 1975).

[39]Betty Ruth Raygor and Vernon L. Ludeman, "School Officials Prefer Closed Files in Hiring Process," Phi Delta Kappan, 59 (May, 1978), pp. 636-637.

[40]Jay Rosson, "Credentials: A Game Teacher Applicants Play," Journal of College Placement, 38 (Winter, 1978), pp. 28-30.

[41]John A. Miller, "The Selection Process for First Year Teachers: A Seminar Paper," 1980.

[42]Larry H. Shipley, "The Effectiveness and Value of Confidential Versus Non-Confidential Letters of Appraisal to Employing Officials of Public Schools in the Northwest and to Admissions Officials of Graduate Schools of Dentistry, Law and Medicine Throughout the United States," (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1976).

[43]David R. Shaffer, Pamela V. Mays and Karen Etheridge, "Who Shall Be Hired?: A Biasing Effect of the Buckley Amendment on Employment Practices," Journal of Applied Psychology, 61 (October, 1976), pp. 571-575.

[44]John M. Enger, "Confidential Versus Non-Confidential Placement File Recommendations," Journal of College Student Personnel, 21 (July, 1980), pp. 358-362.

[45]Tim R. Lewis and Ann J. Korschgen, A Study of the Impact of Confidential or Non-Confidential Placement Credentials on Selection Process of Employers in Education, ASCUS Research Grant Project (Madison, 1982), pp. 4-8.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate current teacher hiring practices and procedures used by public school administrators in Oklahoma and determine what factors influence these individuals as they make hiring decisions. In describing the methodology utilized in the study, this chapter is divided into the following sections: Population, Sample, Instrumentation, Data Collection Procedures and Data Analysis Procedures.

Population

Gay points out that "a defined population has at least one characteristic which differentiates it from other groups."[1] The population for this study is, in essence, all public school administrators in Oklahoma who make teacher hiring decisions. All of these individuals are employed by the independent (K-12) and dependent (K-6 and K-8) school districts of the state. These school districts are listed in the Oklahoma Educational Directory: 1985-1986. There are 459 independent and 153 dependent school districts listed in this directory that

constitute the public school district population of the state of Oklahoma.[2]

Sample

Bartz indicates that a sample is a "group of elements that is selected from the population and is smaller in number than the size of the population."[3] It was necessary to select a sample for this study because of the large size of the population. The sample was selected in a random manner in which each element in the population had an equal opportunity for selection. It was decided to select and send a questionnaire/survey to one independent school district in each of the seventy-seven counties in the state. This decision was made because this study is concerned with differences between rural and urban school districts regarding teacher hiring decisions. It was felt that all areas of the state should be geographically represented in the sample.

The seventy-seven selected independent school districts amounted to 16.8 percent of the total independent school district population. The seventy-seven districts were selected as the result of seventy-seven drawings in which the names of all the independent school districts in a county were placed in a box which was then shaken vigorously. One name was then drawn from the box and selected as the district that would receive the questionnaire/survey.

The selection of the dependent school districts to participate in the study was accomplished in a different manner. It was determined that an equal percentage (16.8 percent) of dependent school districts should participate in the study. Out of 153 dependent school districts in the state, 16.8 percent of them amounted to twenty-six districts. It was not possible to select one from each county because some counties in Oklahoma do not have dependent school districts. Using Table L in Appendix 2 of Bartz's Basic Statistical Concepts, twenty-six dependent school districts were randomly selected to receive the questionnaire/survey.[4]

The twelve administrators who were interviewed and whose comments are featured in Chapter I of this study were selected as the result of being those administrators who walked into the University Placement Office at Oklahoma State University on June 12-13, 1986, to list position vacancies. They were attending a summer meeting of the Oklahoma Association of School Administrators and the Oklahoma Association of Secondary School Principals. After listing their position vacancies, each administrator was asked by the writer to participate in an interview concerning their teacher hiring practices. The writer had no idea beforehand as to the identity of the administrators who would be coming to the office to list position vacancies. The sample was entirely fortuitous.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to gather data for this study. One was a questionnaire/survey and the other was an interview guideline. The questionnaire/survey was developed and organized into eleven major categories that pertained to some aspect of public school teacher hiring. In all, there were seventy-three individual items. This instrument was a combination of items selected from the following ASCUS studies that were reviewed in Chapter II of this study: (1) What Employers Consider Important in Hiring Teachers;[5] (2) Siera's Employer Preferences and Practices in Teacher Hiring;[6] (3) Employment Factors Superintendents Use in Hiring Administrators for Their School Districts.[7] The items contained in the interview guideline used in interviewing the twelve administrators were taken from Bolton's Selection and Evaluation of Teachers.[8]

To determine their appropriateness and validity for use in Oklahoma, both instruments were submitted to members of the writer's doctoral committee and to the Director of University Placement, Oklahoma State University. In addition, they were reviewed by school personnel administrators from Kansas and Texas. Revisions were made to both instruments as the result of the comments and suggestions made by these individuals. Pilot studies with five randomly selected Oklahoma school administrators representing both independent and dependent

school districts were conducted for both instruments. Final revisions were made to the instruments to insure understanding, clarity, comprehensiveness and ease in completion.

Data Collection Procedures

The collection of data was accomplished with the use of an eleven category (seventy-three items) questionnaire/ survey (Appendix C) that was sent to seventy-seven independent school districts and twenty-six dependent school districts selected randomly from 459 independent school districts and 153 dependent school districts listed in the Oklahoma Education Directory. An interview guideline sheet (Appendix E) was used to interview twelve school administrators who walked into the University Placement Office to list position openings and afterwards consented to be interviewed concerning their teacher hiring practices. Their comments were recorded on the guideline sheet and featured in the introductory chapter (Chapter I) to this study.

The questionnaire/survey was sent to administrators in each of the selected independent and dependent school districts who were regarded as those responsible for making teacher hiring decisions in their respective districts. These individuals are indicated as "School District Contacts" on a list maintained by University Placement, Oklahoma State University. A cover letter of

introduction (Appendix B) and a self-addressed, stamped envelope accompanied the questionnaire/survey. The administrators were asked to complete and return the questionnaire/survey within two weeks after the initial mailing. Upon expiration of the two week time period, a post card reminder (Appendix D) was sent to those administrators who had not returned the questionnaire/ survey asking them to take a few minutes to complete the instrument and return it as soon as possible.

Data Analysis Procedures

The questionnaire/survey and the interview guideline sheet were designed to gather data that would provide answers to the study's research questions. These questions focused upon the factors that influence Oklahoma public school administrators in making teacher hiring decisions, the values that they place upon teacher selection tools and processes in aiding them to hire teachers, and hiring factors that are unique to independent, dependent, rural and urban school districts in Oklahoma.

To analyze the information obtained from the questionnaire/survey, demographic data were recorded concerning the number of independent and dependent school districts who did respond to the questionnaire/survey. Other information recorded pertained to the positions of the individuals completing the instrument, the size of the

student population of the districts and whether the districts considered themselves rural or urban. Ten tables (Tables I-X in Appendix A) were developed around a format which featured data being recorded, organized and interpreted according to an urban-rural and independent-dependent arrangement. Numbers and percentages of urban, rural, independent and dependent school districts responding to each item within each category were recorded and calculated. Comparisons of the numbers and percentages were then made within each category in order to determine findings.

In some questionnaire/survey sections, the respondents were asked to rate the overall importance of the items listed. The data show that all items in these categories were generally regarded as either highly important, above average in importance, or average in importance to the respondents. To achieve a rating of highly important, an item had to have a percentage rating of fifty-one percent or higher in the highly important category. To achieve a rating of above average in importance an item had to have a percentage rating of fifty-one percent or higher in the above average importance category or have a percentage rating of fifty-one percent or higher in the highly important and above average importance categories combined. To achieve a rating of average in importance, an item had to have a percentage rating of fifty-one percent or higher in the

average importance category or a percentage rating of fifty-one percent or higher in the highly important, above average importance, and average importance categories combined.

The questions on the interview guideline sheet were organized into three categories. The first category consisted of responses that were counted and recorded as numbers. The second and third categories consisted of responses to open-ended questions. These were analyzed for similarities and differences and featured in Chapter I of this study. The interview data were also used to supplement the questionnaire/survey findings in Chapter IV.

ENDNOTES

[1]L. R. Gay, Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application (Columbus, 1976), p. 67.

[2]Oklahoma State Department of Education, Oklahoma Educational Directory: 1985-1986 (Oklahoma City, 1985), pp. 59-135.

[3]Albert E. Bartz, Basic Statistical Concepts (Minneapolis, 1981), pp. 148-149.

[4]Ibid., pp. 420-423.

[5]Association for School, College and University Staffing, What Employers Consider Important in Hiring Teachers (Madison, 1978), pp. 1-7.

[6]Steve Siera, Employer Preferences and Practices in Teacher Hiring, ASCUS Research Grant Project (Aberdeen, 1982), pp. 1-3.

[7]Association for School, College and University Staffing, Employment Factors Superintendents Use in Hiring Administrators for Their School Districts (Madison, 1978), pp. 1-13.

[8]Dale L. Bolton, Selection and Evaluation of Teachers (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 179-180.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter is designed to provide an analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaire/surveys that were returned by those Oklahoma public school districts participating in this study. The purpose of the questionnaire/survey was to obtain information concerning those factors that influence Oklahoma public school administrators in making teacher hiring decisions. The data from the personal interviews which were used as part of the narrative in Chapter I to provide a brief introductory description of public school teacher hiring practices in Oklahoma are used in this chapter to supplement applicable data from the questionnaire/surveys.

The questionnaire/surveys were mailed to seventy-seven randomly selected independent school districts (one in each of the seventy-seven counties in Oklahoma) and twenty-six randomly selected dependent school districts listed in the Oklahoma Educational Directory: 1985-1986.[1] They were mailed to those individuals who were understood to be the persons who made teacher hiring decisions in their respective districts. These individuals are listed

as contact persons for their school districts on a roster maintained by University Placement at Oklahoma State University. From the questionnaire/surveys mailed, a total of forty-one were received from the independent school districts within a period of two weeks while a total of twelve were received from the dependent school districts within the same time period. A follow-up post card contact resulted in an additional eleven questionnaire/surveys being returned from the independent districts and five being returned from the dependent districts. In all, fifty-two questionnaire/surveys were returned by the independent districts for a 67.5 percent response rate while seventeen of the questionnaire/surveys were returned by the dependent districts for a 65.4 percent response rate. Thus, the findings from the questionnaire/survey are based upon approximately two-thirds of the independent and two-thirds of the dependent districts originally surveyed returning completed questionnaire/surveys.

The twelve individuals who were interviewed were persons who walked into the University Placement Office at Oklahoma State University on June 12 and 13, 1986, to list position vacancies in their school districts. As teacher hiring officials, they were attending summer meetings of the Oklahoma Association of School Administrators and the Oklahoma Association of Secondary School Principals. After listing their position vacancies, each administrator

consented to an interview by the writer. The questions asked by the writer were based upon an interview format devised by Bolton in Selection and Evaluation of Teachers.[2] The interviews were designed to take a minimum of time yet yield supplementary data that would provide strength for this study.

Description of Questionnaire/Survey and Interview Respondents

Demographic data were collected for the purpose of describing and pointing out the characteristics of the sample as well as to determine its adequacy for this study. As mentioned previously, fifty-two independent and seventeen dependent school districts returned completed questionnaire/ surveys. Using the point on a map of Oklahoma where Interstate Highways 35 and 40 intersect, the state is divided into four quadrants. These quadrants were used for locating the independent and dependent school districts who returned a completed questionnaire /survey and to determine if all areas of the state were adequately represented by the sample. Seventeen of the independent districts who returned a completed questionnaire/survey are located in northeast Oklahoma; fourteen of the districts are located in northwest Oklahoma; twelve are located in southwest Oklahoma; nine are located in southeast Oklahoma. Eight of the dependent districts who returned a completed questionnaire/survey are located in

northeast Oklahoma; four of the districts are located in southeast Oklahoma; four are located in northwest Oklahoma; one is located in southwest Oklahoma. The imbalance that exists in favor of the eastern part of Oklahoma for the dependent districts is not surprising since the majority of the state's 153 dependent school districts are found in eastern (northeast and southeast) Oklahoma.

In terms of positions held by the respondents to the questionnaire/survey, forty-two of the independent district questionnaire/surveys returned were completed by superintendents; four were completed by personnel directors; one was completed by an elementary principal; one was completed by a superintendent's secretary. All of the seventeen dependent school questionnaire/surveys returned were completed by dependent school principals.

The respondents were also asked to identify themselves in terms of the number of students in their respective districts. All of the seventeen dependent districts and eleven of the independent districts reported having fewer than 250 students each. Ten of the independent districts reported student populations between 251 - 500; fifteen reported populations between 501 - 1,000; thirteen reported populations between 1,001 - 9,999; three districts indicated that they have more than 10,000 students each.

In completing the questionnaire/survey, each district was asked to indicate if the population it served was primarily urban, rural or other. They were not governed by any definition of urban, rural, or other in indicating their status on the questionnaire/survey. Of the fifty-two independent districts who responded, forty-three of them indicated that they were rural while nine pointed out that they were urban. Of the seventeen dependent districts who responded, fourteen of them indicated that they were rural and three stated that they were urban. No district classified itself in any other category except rural or urban. Total figures reveal that fifty-seven districts classified themselves as rural while twelve districts classified themselves as urban in terms of population served.

The twelve individuals who were interviewed represented eleven independent districts and one dependent district in Oklahoma. It was not intended that all quadrants of the state be represented because of the fortuitous way in which the sample was selected. However, six members of the sample represented independent districts located in northeast Oklahoma; two represented districts located in southeast Oklahoma; two represented districts in northwest Oklahoma; one represented a southwest Oklahoma district. The twelfth member of the sample represented a northeast Oklahoma dependent district. The positions of the persons interviewed

included six superintendents, three assistant/associate/ deputy superintendents, one high school principal and one junior high school principal. The dependent school official interviewed was the principal of that school.

In terms of the number of students in their districts, the dependent district had a student population of less than 250. Two independent districts reported student populations between 251 - 500; three reported populations between 501 - 1,000; five reported populations between 1,001 - 9,999; one indicated a student population of more than 10,000. Two-thirds (nine) of the districts, including the dependent district, stated that they were rural districts while three of them indicated that they served urban populations. None of the districts classified themselves in any other category except rural or urban.

Analysis of The Data

The findings presented in this chapter are based upon the data supplied by the respondents to the questionnaire/ survey and the personal interviews. They are analyzed with the three research questions presented in Chapter I in mind. In summary, these questions are:

1. What factor(s) influence Oklahoma public school administrators to select or not to select teachers?

2. What value(s) do Oklahoma public school administrators place upon teacher selection tools and processes in making teacher hiring decisions?

3. Are some factors that influence teacher hiring decisions unique to independent and/or dependent public school districts in Oklahoma? Urban and/or rural public school districts in Oklahoma?

All findings are described in the narrative below. The findings from the questionnaire/surveys are also shown in table form (Tables I - X in Appendix A).

Sources of Teacher Applicants

College/university placement offices and letters of inquiry from teacher applicants were found to be the two most important sources of teacher applicants for all categories of respondents to the questionnaire/survey. Urban school district respondents indicated letters of inquiry as their number one source while rural school district respondents favored college/university placement offices as their primary source. Other sources such as newspaper advertisements, personal contacts, and employees already in the district are less utilized by the respondents as sources of teacher applicants. None of the respondents indicated that they relied upon commercial agencies as sources of teacher applicants.

Teacher Applicant Contact Practices

Several teacher applicant contact practices were found to be highly suitable and acceptable to all categories of respondents to the questionnaire/survey. These include unsolicited applications, initial contacts by telephone, providing photocopied, machine duplicated or

professionally printed resumes with letters of inquiry/application, and providing a photograph with application materials. One difference was noted between the urban and rural school district respondents concerning the issue of providing photographs on a voluntary basis. Photographs, of course, cannot legally be made a requirement for application. A large majority of the rural school district respondents (eighty-six percent) favored providing photographs while only fifty percent of the urban school district respondents favored doing so. Other teacher applicant contact practices found to be somewhat less acceptable to the respondents because of higher minority percentages of disagreement with them include walk-in visits, handwritten, photocopied or machine duplicated letters of inquiry/application, and telephone contacts by applicants after an interview.

Screening Factors in the Teacher Selection Process

The personal interview was found to be the most important screening factor used by the questionnaire/survey and interview respondents in the teacher selection process. The letter of application was also perceived by the questionnaire/survey respondents to be a highly important screening factor although only two of the twelve administrators interviewed indicated that they require such a letter in the selection process. The application

form appears to have above average importance to the questionnaire/survey respondents; all but one of the interview respondents indicated that they require applicants to complete an application form. Placement credentials, as a screening device, appear to have above average importance to the questionnaire/survey respondents. Only five of the twelve interview respondents mentioned that they require applicants to provide placement credentials in the selection process. Information secured from personal acquaintances appears to be of average importance to the questionnaire/survey respondents. In terms of what is required from teacher applicants, the data show that the interview respondents require differing combinations of information which includes transcripts, resumes, completed application forms, placement credentials, completed questionnaires, and skills tests. According to the questionnaire/survey respondents, only two percent of the rural and two percent of the independent school districts indicated that they have separate application forms for experienced and inexperienced teachers.

The Role of Placement Credentials When Considering the Employment of Beginning/Inexperienced Teachers

Letters of reference from previous education related employers were perceived by the independent and dependent

school district respondents to the questionnaire/survey as being highly important in the placement files of beginning/inexperienced teachers. Other credential items in the placement files of beginning/inexperienced teachers tend to be perceived as having above average or average importance to the independent and dependent school district respondents. Those items with above average importance include the personal data sheet/resume, letters of reference from cooperating teachers in the student teaching experience, and college transcripts of academic work completed. Other items with above average importance to the respondents include course work information sheets/listings, character references, and letters of reference from college coordinators of student teaching. The items having only average importance to the independent and dependent school district respondents in the placement files of beginning/inexperienced teachers include letters of reference from high school teachers/administrators, letters of reference from previous non-education related employers, and letters of reference from college instructors.

The data from the urban and rural school district perspective reveal similar results as that for the independent and dependent school district respondents. Letters of reference from previous education related employers were perceived by the urban and rural school district respondents as being highly important in the

placement files of beginning/inexperienced teachers. The other credential items tend to be perceived as having above average or average importance. One apparent difference is that more of these items appear to have only average importance to the urban and rural school district respondents in comparison to the independent and dependent school district respondents. Letters of reference from cooperating teachers in the student teaching experience have above average importance to the urban and rural school district respondents in the placement files of beginning/inexperienced teachers as do college transcripts of academic work completed, the personal data sheet/ resume, and letters of reference from college coordinators of student teaching. The items having only average importance to the urban and rural school district respondents in these files include character references, course work information sheets/listings, letters of reference from previous non-education related employers, letters of reference from college instructors, and letters of reference from high school teachers/administrators.

The Role of Placement Credentials When Considering the Employment of Experienced Teachers

Letters of reference from previous education related employers were perceived by the independent and dependent school district respondents to the questionnaire/survey as

being highly important in the placement files of experienced teachers. Other credential items in these files tend to be perceived as having above average or average importance to the independent and dependent respondents. Those items with above average importance include the personal data sheet/resume and character references as well as letters of reference from previous non-education related employers, college transcripts of academic work completed, and course work information sheets/listings.

The items having only average importance to the independent and dependent school district respondents in the placement files of experienced teachers include letters of reference from cooperating teachers in the student teaching experience, letters of reference from college instructors, and letters of reference from high school teachers/administrators.

From the urban and rural school district perspective, the data reveal that letters of reference from previous education related employers are highly important in the placement files of experienced teachers. Other credential items are perceived as having above average or average importance to the respondents. An apparent difference is that more of these items appear to have only average importance to the urban and rural school district respondents in comparison to the independent and dependent school district respondents. The personal data sheet/

resume as a credential item has above average importance while letters of reference from previous non-education related employers, character references, and college transcripts of academic work completed are also above average in importance to the respondents. The items having only average importance to the urban and rural school district respondents in the placement files of experienced teachers include letters of reference from college coordinators of student teaching, letters of reference from cooperating teachers in the student teaching experience, letters of reference from college instructors, letters of reference form high school teachers/administrators, and course work information sheets/listings.

Employer Preferences for Letters of Reference and Credentials

Majorities of all categories of respondents to the questionnaire/survey favor confidential references over open references in the placement files of teacher applicants. The most common reason given by the respondents for favoring confidential references was that the information contained in these references tends to be more candid, frank, honest and truthful than the information found in open references. Those respondents who supported open references believe that fairness to the applicant is the most important reason why applicants

should be able to have such references. In terms of reference format, majorities of the respondents prefer a combination rating scale/anecdotal statement reference writing format over rating scale and anecdotal statement formats by themselves. In personally checking references, majorities of the respondents stated that they always do this while a small number of the respondents indicated that they occasionally check them. None of the respondents reported that they occasionally or never check references. A variety of placement credential policies are utilized by the respondents with no one policy being used by a majority of them. The most utilized policy is requiring credentials from applicants who are seriously considered based upon application and/or resume. Approximately one-fourth of the respondents indicated that they do not require placement credentials from teacher applicants.

Teacher Applicant Characteristics Displayed in Interviews

The data provided by the independent and dependent school district respondents on their questionnaire/surveys show that seven of the eight listed interview characteristics received ratings of forty-seven percent or higher in the highly important category. Five of these had majorities of the respondents rate them highly important. These include interest in the position, enthusiasm for

teaching, neat and well groomed appearance, expression and demonstration of maturity, and appearance of being poised and self-confident. Two characteristics were rated by majorities and strong minorities of independent and dependent school district respondents as highly important. These include facility for verbal communication and the ability to respond to questions about teaching methodology and subject knowledge. Facility for verbal communication, which seems to be more important to the independent school district respondents, was rated by sixty-seven percent of the independent and forty-seven percent of the dependent school districts as highly important. The ability to respond to questions about teaching methodology and subject knowledge appears to be more important to the dependent school district respondents as forty-eight percent of the independent and sixty-five percent of the dependent school districts rated this highly important. One teacher applicant interview characteristic, being well informed and knowledgeable about the school district, was perceived to be average in importance to the respondents.

Data from the urban and rural perspective reveal the same seven teacher applicant interview characteristics receiving percentage ratings of forty-seven percent or higher in the highly important category. Five of these were rated by majorities of the respondents as highly important. These include interest in the position, enthusiasm for teaching, neat and well groomed appearance,

expression and demonstration of maturity, and facility for verbal communication. Two characteristics were rated by majorities and strong minorities of urban and rural school district respondents as highly important. These include the appearance of being poised and self-confident and the ability to respond to questions about teaching methodology and subject knowledge. Both of these seem to be more important to the urban than to the rural school district respondents. Poise and self-confidence was rated by seventy-five percent of the urban and forty-seven percent of the rural districts as highly important while responding to questions about teaching methodology and subject knowledge was rated by seventy-five percent of the urban and forty-seven percent of the rural districts as such. Being well informed and knowledgeable about the school district was perceived to be average in importance to the respondents.

The data reported by the administrators who were personally interviewed by the writer show a range of completely structured to completely unstructured interviewing of teacher applicants by the respondents. Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that their interviews were completely unstructured. Half of the respondents also reported that there were no differences in the way that they interviewed experienced and non-experienced teachers. Those that did report differences indicated that they ask experienced teachers about their

actual teaching experiences while beginning teachers are asked questions about why they want to teach. The respondents also reported a variety of different questions that they ask which they consider beneficial in acquiring information about teacher applicants. Questions concerning an applicant's philosophy of education, background, and interest in teaching and attitude were among the more important ones that the respondents believe are helpful to them in the information gathering process.

Importance of Selected Qualities When Considering the Employment of Teachers

The data for the independent and dependent school district respondents to the questionnaire/survey show that none of the eight listed qualities had percentage ratings of fifty percent or higher in the highly important category. The majority of the responses were in the above average and average importance categories with the result that the respondents tend to perceive these qualities as such. The major field grade point average appears to have above average importance to the independent and dependent school district respondents. The ability of applicants to teach a second field seems to have above average importance to the independent school district respondents but only average importance to the dependent school district respondents. The interest of applicants in directing extra curricular activities appears to be above

average in importance to both groups of respondents. The five qualities that seem to have only average importance to the independent and dependent school district respondents include the overall grade point average, the nature and extent of professional education courses, the nature and extent of liberal arts courses relating to teaching fields, general liberal arts courses completed by applicants that are designed to provide a broad cultural background, and experience in campus activities.

The data from the urban and rural perspective reveal that none of the eight listed qualities received percentage ratings of fifty percent or higher in the highly important category. The majority of the ratings were in the above average and average importance categories. The major field grade point average and the ability of applicants to teach a second field appear to have above average importance to the urban and rural school district respondents. The ability to teach a second field seems to be more important to the rural school district respondents. The interest of applicants in directing extra curricular activities appears to be above average in importance to both groups of respondents. Three qualities seem to have above average importance to the urban school district respondents but only average importance to the rural school district respondents. These include the nature and extent of professional education courses, the nature and extent of liberal arts

courses relating to teaching fields, and the overall grade point average. The two qualities that appear to have only average importance to both groups of respondents are general liberal arts courses completed by applicants that are designed to provide a broad cultural background and experience in campus activities.

Factors Related to Interviewing, Hiring and Informing Teacher Applicants

An overall assessment of the data gathered in this category indicates that differences exist between independent and dependent school districts concerning the factors related to interviewing, hiring, and informing teacher applicants. A variety of policies were indicated by the independent and dependent school district respondents regarding how the districts conduct hiring, who interviews teacher applicants, who makes the final hiring decision, and how follow-up is accomplished after applicants are interviewed. In conducting hiring, the most common procedure reported by the independent school district respondents was centralized screening of applicants with principals selecting from the applicant pool. The most common policy reported by the dependent school district respondents was principals selecting applicants independent of the county superintendent's office. The interviewing of teacher applicants is done in the majority of the independent school districts by the

superintendent and the building principal. In forty-seven percent of the dependent school districts the interviewing is done by the building principal and the school board while forty-one percent of the dependent school district respondents reported that it is done by the building principal alone. In a practical sense, the final hiring decision is made by the superintendent in the majority of the independent school districts while the majority of the dependent school district respondents indicated that it is made by the school board. No single follow-up practice after the interview was dominant among the independent school district respondents. The two most popular policies seem to be informing a successful applicant by telephone while sending letters to all applicants informing them of acceptance or rejection and informing the successful applicant by telephone while informing only the unsuccessful applicants by letter. The most popular policy reported by the dependent school district respondents was simply to inform the successful applicant by telephone.

The urban and rural perspective data also indicated differences concerning the factors related to interviewing, hiring and informing teacher applicants. In conducting hiring, three-fourths of the urban school districts reported that they utilize centralized screening of applicants with principals selecting from the applicant pool. No one policy was dominant among the rural school

district respondents. The two most popular policies appear to be principals selecting applicants independent of the central office and hiring conducted through a centralized office. In interviewing teacher applicants no one policy is evident among the urban school districts. Applicants being interviewed by a personnel director and a building principal or a superintendent, assistant/ associate superintendent, and a building principal appear to be the most popular arrangements with urban school district respondents. In a majority of the rural school districts, the interviewing is done by the superintendent and the building principal. A large majority of the urban school districts reported that the final hiring decision is made by the building principal while a large minority of the rural school districts indicated that it is made by the superintendent. In terms of follow-up after an interview, no one policy was dominant among either the urban or rural school district respondents. Five policies are utilized by seventeen percent of the urban school district respondents each while the most popular policy among the rural school district respondents involves informing the successful applicant by telephone while sending letters to all applicants informing them of acceptance or rejection.

The twelve administrators who were interviewed provided a variety of answers to the questions of how they decide which applicants are best qualified and when to

make an offer of employment. They reported that transcripts with good grades, excellent references, evidence of successful work and classroom experience, a strong interest in children, being able to fit into the environment of the school and community, dressing neatly, knowledge of field, and meeting the goals and objectives for the position are all indications of being best qualified for a teaching position. In deciding when to make an offer of employment, one-half of the respondents pointed out that they do this after they are satisfied that the most qualified applicants have been interviewed. Selection is made from a group of three to five applicants who are perceived to be the top candidates. Offers are also made after interviews with the boards of education, a careful check of references and recommendations, and upon the recommendations of building principals.

Teacher Supply/Demand Information

For the 1985-1986 school year, majorities of all categories of respondents to the questionnaire/survey reported the supply/demand balance for teachers in their school districts as generally one of having more qualified applicants than positions available. Majorities also indicated that they did not have unfilled positions at the beginning of the 1985-1986 school year, but one-third of the urban school district respondents did report that they had such positions. The largest amount of hiring, but not

a majority of it, is done by the rural, independent, and dependent school district respondents in June and July with April and May being a second important hiring period. Two-thirds of the urban school district respondents reported hiring their teachers in June and July. In terms of subject areas where the respondents had difficulty securing teachers, the data show that the independent school districts had more difficulty than the dependent school districts while the urban school districts had higher percentages of difficulty than did the rural school districts. The independent school district respondents reported the most difficulty in hiring math teachers while the dependent school district respondents indicated that special education and music were problem areas. One-half of the urban school district respondents reported special education as a problem area while math was the number one area of difficulty for the rural school district respondents. Other major subject areas of difficulty reported by all categories of respondents were science, computer science, foreign languages, speech pathology, and library science.

ENDNOTES

[1]Oklahoma State Department of Education, Oklahoma Educational Directory: 1985-1986 (Oklahoma City, 1985), pp. 59-135.

[2]Dale L. Bolton, Selection and Evaluation of Teachers (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 179-180.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate current teacher hiring practices and procedures utilized by public school administrators in Oklahoma and determine what factors influence these individuals as they make hiring decisions. This study has researched hiring practices and procedures in a sample of the independent and dependent school districts in Oklahoma to accomplish this purpose. In addition, twelve randomly selected Oklahoma public school administrators who make hiring decisions in their respective school districts were interviewed by the writer.

A questionnaire/survey was sent to seventy-seven randomly selected independent and twenty-six randomly selected dependent school districts. Fifty-two independent and seventeen dependent school districts participated in this study by returning completed questionnaire/surveys. The respondents were asked to provide demographic information concerning type of district, the number of students served by the district

and whether they considered their district as urban, rural or other. In terms of urban and rural, twelve of these districts defined themselves as urban while fifty-seven of them identified themselves as rural. This made it possible to interpret the data from an urban/rural as well as an independent/dependent perspective. The person completing the questionnaire/survey was asked to indicate his/her title.

In completing the questionnaire/survey, the respondents provided information concerning the following: (1) sources of teacher applicants; (2) teacher applicant contact practices; (3) screening factors in the teacher selection process; (4) the role of placement credentials when considering the employment of beginning/inexperienced teachers; (5) the role of placement credentials when considering the employment of experienced teachers; (6) employer preferences for letters of reference and credentials; (7) teacher applicant characteristics displayed in interviews; (8) importance of selected qualities when considering the employment of teachers; (9) factors related to interviewing, hiring, and informing teacher applicants; and (10) teacher supply/demand information.

The twelve administrators were interviewed for the purpose of obtaining additional information concerning teacher hiring that would supplement and add strength to the study. They were asked to indicate what information they require from all teacher applicants for positions in

their school districts. They also indicated how they conduct their interviews of teacher applicants as well as how they decide which applicants are best qualified and when to make an offer of employment.

The findings for the study revealed that hiring administrators value college/university placement offices and letters of inquiry from applicants as primary sources of teacher applicants. Most teacher applicant contact practices were found to be highly suitable and acceptable to these same administrators. The personal interview was found to be the most important screening device used in the hiring process, but administrators also require differing combinations of information from teacher applicants for use in the selection process. Letters of reference from previous education related employees are perceived to be highly important in the placement files of applicants while confidential references are preferred by a majority of the hiring administrators because these references are more likely to contain appraisal information that is valid, reliable and truthful. Most of the administrators indicated that such characteristics as enthusiasm for teaching, interest in the position, neat and well-groomed appearance, maturity, poise and self-confidence, facility for verbal communication, and ability to respond to questions about teaching methodology and subject knowledge should be displayed by applicants in interviews. In addition, the ability to teach a second

field, interest in directing extracurricular activities, and a good major field grade point average are above average in importance to hiring administrators as factors in the employment process. Differences were found to exist among the school districts concerning the interviewing, hiring, and informing of teacher applicants, but administrators generally make employment offers after they are satisfied that the most qualified applicants have been interviewed. These offers are highly influenced by careful reference checks and recommendations of building principals. Public school teacher hiring in Oklahoma at the present time is influenced by the fact that many school districts report having more qualified applicants than positions available; however, teacher shortages in subjects areas such as special education and math influence the ability of administrators to hire or not hire teachers.

Conclusions

Based upon the questionnaire/survey and interview findings, the following conclusions have been drawn as answers to the study's three research questions:

What factors influence Oklahoma public school administrators to select or not to select teachers?

1. The following characteristics displayed in interviews by teacher applicants are highly important to the administrators in assisting them to make hiring

decisions: (a) interest in the position; (b) enthusiasm for teaching; (c) neat and well-groomed appearance; (d) expression and demonstration of maturity; (e) appearance of being poised and self-confident; (f) facility for verbal communication; and (g) ability to respond to questions about teaching methodology and subject knowledge. Being well informed and knowledgeable about the school district is not highly important as an interview characteristic.

2. The following qualities have above average to average, but not high importance, to the administrators when they consider the employment of teachers: (a) major field grade point average; (b) ability of applicants to teach a second field; (c) interest of applicants in directing extra curricular activities; (d) nature and extent of professional education courses; (e) nature and extent of liberal arts courses relating to teaching fields; (f) overall grade point average; (g) general liberal arts courses completed by applicants that are designed to provide a broad cultural background; and (h) experience in campus activities.

3. Hiring administrators regard the following as factors in helping them to decide which teacher applicants are best qualified: (a) transcripts with good grades; (b) excellent references; (c) evidence of successful work and classroom experience; (d) strong interest in children; (e) ability to fit into the environment of the school and

the community; (f) dressing neatly; (g) knowledge of teaching field; and (h) meeting the goals and objectives established for the position.

4. The administrators make an offer of employment after they are satisfied that the most qualified applicants have been interviewed. Selection is usually made from a group of three to five applicants who are perceived to be the top candidates. Offers of employment are also highly influenced by a careful check of references and recommendations, recommendations of building principals, and board of education interviews.

5. Public school teacher hiring in Oklahoma at the present time is influenced by the fact that many school districts report having more qualified applicants than positions available. Many districts usually do not have unfilled positions at the beginning of the school year.

6. June and July are the months when the largest amount of teacher hiring occurs in Oklahoma. Many teachers are also hired in April and May.

7. Teacher shortages in some subject areas influence the ability of administrators to hire or not hire teachers. Areas where obvious shortages exist that present hiring difficulties are special education, math, science, computer science, speech pathology, foreign languages, library science, and music.

<u>What value(s) do Oklahoma public school administrators place upon teacher selection tools and processes in making teacher hiring decisions?</u>

1. Hiring administrators value college/university placement offices and letters of inquiry from teacher applicants as sources of teacher applicants while newspapers advertisements, personal contacts, and employees already in the district are less valued as sources. Commercial agencies are not valued as such.

2. Most teacher applicant contact practices are acceptable and suitable to the hiring administrators. Such practices as unsolicited applications, initial contacts by telephone, providing photocopied, machine duplicated or professionally printed resumes with letters of inquiry/application, and providing a photograph (even though it cannot be required) with application materials are highly suitable and acceptable. Other less suitable but still acceptable practices are walk-in visits, handwritten, photocopied or machine duplicated letters of inquiry/application, and telephone contacts by applicants after interviews.

3. The personal interview is the most important screening device used by Oklahoma public school administrators in the teacher selection process while the letter of application is also highly important as a screening device. The application form and placement credentials are above average, but not highly important, as screening devices while information secured from personal acquaintances is only average in importance as such to the administrators.

4. Hiring administrators tend to require different combinations of information from applicants for screening purposes. Such information may include any or all of the following: (a) transcript(s); (b) resume; (c) completed application form; (d) placement credentials; (e) letter of application; (f) miscellaneous information such as questionnaires and skills tests.

5. Most hiring administrators do not utilize separate application forms for experienced and inexperienced teachers.

6. The items in the placement files of beginning/ inexperienced teachers are generally not perceived to be highly important to the hiring officials as screening devices. They are regarded as having above average to average importance as such. Only letters of reference from previous education related employees are perceived as being highly important as screening devices.

7. The items in the placement files of experienced teachers are generally perceived to have above average to average, but not high importance, to the hiring officials. Only letters of reference from previous education related employers are perceived as being highly important as screening devices.

8. Thirteen years after the passage of the Buckley Amendment, confidential references are still preferred by Oklahoma public school hiring officials because these references are perceived to be more candid, frank,

reliable and truthful as appraisal instruments than open references. The preferred format for appraisal is a combination rating scale/anecdotal statement format.

9. Public school teacher hiring officials in Oklahoma will most likely check references as part of their hiring procedures.

10. Hiring officials tend to utilize a variety of different placement credential policies in the teacher selection process with no one policy being used extensively. The most utilized policy is requiring credentials from applicants who are seriously considered based upon application and/or resume. One-fourth of the questionnaire/survey respondents indicated that they do not require placement credentials from teacher applicants.

11. Interviews of teacher applicants by public school teacher hiring officials in Oklahoma range from the completely structured to the completely unstructured interviewing of applicants for teaching positions.

12. Basically there are no major differences in the way that experienced and inexperienced teachers are interviewed by the administrators. Any differences that do exist are primarily based upon asking experienced teachers more about their actual teaching experiences while inexperienced teachers are asked about why they want to teach.

13. Questions concerning an applicant's philosophy of education, background, and interest in teaching are among

the most important questions that hiring administrators believe are helpful to them in gathering information on applicants.

14. Differences exist among the public school districts in Oklahoma concerning how they conduct hiring, who interviews teacher applicants, who makes the final hiring decision, and how follow-up is accomplished after applicants are interviewed. These differences, in turn, can be attributed to organizational differences that exist between independent/dependent and urban/rural school districts.

Are some factors that influence teacher hiring decisions unique to independent and/or dependent public school districts in Oklahoma? Urban and/or rural public school districts in Oklahoma?

1. Urban school district hiring officials seem to value letters of inquiry from applicants as their primary source of teacher applicants while rural school district hiring officials favor college/university placement offices as their primary source.

2. Rural school district hiring officials are highly in favor of teacher applicants voluntarily providing photographs with their applications or resumes while urban school district hiring officials are less in favor of photographs with applications or resumes.

3. The ability of teacher applicants to teach a second field appears to be more important to the independent and the rural school district hiring officials

than to the dependent and urban school district hiring officials.

4. In conducting hiring, the most common procedure utilized by the urban school district officials is centralized screening of applicants with principals selecting from the applicant pool. The most common procedure utilized by the dependent school district officials is principals selecting applicants independent of the county superintendent's office. No one procedure is dominant among the independent and rural school districts. The three most favored procedures used by hiring officials in these districts include centralized screening of applicants with principals selecting from the applicant pool, principals selecting applicants independent of the central office, and hiring through a centralized office.

5. In most of the independent and the rural school districts, the interviewing of teacher applicants is done by the superintendent and the building principal. In most of the dependent school districts it is done by the building principal and the school board or the building principal alone. No one policy dominates among the urban school districts but the building principal does play a major role in interviewing applicants in these districts.

6. In many of the independent and rural school districts, the final hiring decision, in a practical sense, is made by the superintendent. In many of the

dependent school districts such a decision is made by the school board. No one decision maker emerges in the urban school districts but the building principal does play a major role in making teacher hiring decisions.

7. Follow-up policies after interviews vary among the school districts, especially the urban school districts, with no one policy being used extensively. One of the more popular policies among the independent and rural school districts is to inform the successful applicant by telephone while sending letters to all applicants informing them of acceptance or rejection. One of the most popular policies among the dependent school districts is to simply inform the successful applicant by telephone.

8. Urban school districts seem to have the most difficulty in filling positions before the beginning of a school year. One-third of the urban school district respondents to the questionnaire/survey reported that they had unfilled positions at the beginning of the 1985-1986 school year.

9. Independent school districts seem to have more difficulty in hiring teachers than dependent school districts in subject areas where teacher shortages exist. Urban school districts seem to have more difficulty than rural school districts in hiring teachers in subject areas where teacher shortages exist.

10. At the present time, hiring officials in urban school districts are finding it difficult to hire teachers in special education. The independent and rural school district officials are finding it difficult to hire math teachers. Dependent school district officials are having difficulty in hiring special education and music teachers.

Discussion

The findings and conclusions presented in this study have implications for Oklahoma public school administrators who make teacher hiring decisions. They simply indicate what administrators are doing (or perhaps not doing) to hire teachers for the children of their school districts. From this, it is obvious that the decision to hire a teacher is no simple matter. This is perhaps the way it should be. Teacher selection should be a serious, not a simple procedure, in which hiring administrators strive to hire the best teachers for the children of their school districts. The recommendations which follow for administrators who make teacher hiring decisions are not designed to simplify the teacher selection process. Instead, they are suggested with the hope that they might assist in facilitating the process somewhat.

The findings and conclusions also have implications for teacher applicants seeking positions in Oklahoma. At the present time, applicants are faced with the problem of

a tight job market. For prospective teachers to find employment, it is important that they be aware of the factors that influence administrators in Oklahoma to hire teachers. The recommendations that follow for teacher applicants are designed to serve as job search strategy suggestions that will hopefully aid them in obtaining employment as public school teachers in Oklahoma.

Recommendations

Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested for Oklahoma public school administrators who hire teachers, teacher applicants seeking positions in Oklahoma, and further research.

Recommendations for Administrators

1. Administrators should utilize, if they already are not doing so, college and university placement offices as a source of teacher applicants. Most teacher education graduates and alumni are registered with such offices and have established credential files as a result of registration. Because of their proximity to teacher education programs, these offices are in an excellent position to provide information on prospective teacher applicants.

2. Administrators should consider utilizing separate application forms for experienced and inexperienced teachers. Many application forms ask for much more

information than is actually needed to make a hiring decision. Application forms for inexperienced teachers should capture information which indicates teaching potential while application forms for experienced teachers should capture information that provides evidence of teaching success.

3. Realistically, not many beginning teachers can provide letters of reference from previous education related employers. It is more reasonable to believe that letters of reference from cooperating teachers in the student teaching experience and college coordinators of student teaching would be highly important in the placement files of beginning teachers. These individuals are in the best position to provide accurate appraisal information on the beginning teacher's potential to teach. The key word in this instance is potential and evidence indicating teaching potential should be a crucial factor in any decision to hire or not to hire a beginning teacher.

4. Beginning teachers should be interviewed for the purpose of determining their potential to teach. Experienced teachers should be interviewed for the purpose of determining how successful they have been as teachers. All teacher applicants who are interviewed should be asked to tell what they can do as a teacher, what they want to do as a teacher and why they want to teach. The answer to the question "Why?" should be evaluated in terms of the

enthusiasm and motivation expressed in answering the question.

5. The building principal in all school districts should play the crucial role in the selection process. He or she should be able to screen, interview, and hire the most qualified applicant for a position. The assumption is that this individual is the best qualified person to determine the type of teacher who would stand the best chance of being successful in his or her building. Other officials such as the superintendent, deputy/associate/ assistant superintendent, and personnel director need to be involved and provide input into the decision but, because of their remoteness from the actual teaching environment, they should not make the final decision. Boards of education are even more remote from the teaching environment and in a practical sense should not make the final decision. They should have faith and confidence in the administrators they hire, especially the building principals, to use their professional training and expertise to hire the best teachers for their school districts.

6. Administrators should professionally inform all teacher applicants of acceptance or rejection by whatever method they deem useful and expedient. The point is applicants should be and need to be informed as to whether or not they have been hired.

7. Administrators should utilize teacher selection literature more as a means of striving to improve their hiring procedures. Castetter has developed some recommended steps in the teacher selection process that are worthy of consideration by administrators responsible for making teacher hiring decisions.[1] Bolton outlines the purposes of selection procedures and how to utilize them.[2] He has also devised some suggestions for keeping accurate records on teacher applicants.[3] The American Association of School Personnel Administrators believes that certain facts should be known about teacher applicants prior to their selection.[4] Palmer has identified some situational variables affecting decision making in the selection of teachers and developed the "Position Analysis Outline" as a selection tool in dealing with these variables. [5] DeWitt has outlined some steps that can be utilized to identify humanistic teachers.[6] Thayer's development of Project EMPATHY for use by the Omaha, Nebraska, Public School System is designed to predict a teacher's success in the classroom as well as to predict which teachers relate well to students and the administration.[7] Slaughter has proposed a screening program for elementary teacher candidates which involves children assessing human relations skills among teachers.[8] The improvement of the interviewing process is the subject of research by Bernard and Charles McKenna. They offer fifteen guidelines for the purpose of "polishing" interview techniques.[9] Lieske

has developed a structured person-to-person interview process for use in the selection of elementary teachers.[10] Bonneau has devised an interview process for selecting secondary teachers which is designed to reduce the element of chance in selecting such teachers.[11]

Recommendations for Teachers Seeking Employment in Oklahoma

1. Teacher applicants would be wise to register with their college/university placement office. Many of the school districts, especially rural, use these offices as a primary source of teacher applicants.

2. Teacher applicants should utilize a letter writing campaign as part of their job search strategy. Many of the school districts, especially urban, value letters of inquiry as a primary source of teacher applicants.

3. The preparation and use of resumes by teacher applicants is an important aspect of the job search. Applicants should provide information that indicates teaching potential and/or success as well as provide evidence of leadership, organization, decision making, communication and interpersonal skills. Resumes should be photocopied, machine duplicated or printed and used anytime an applicant has an opportunity to come in contact with a prospective employer. Although school districts cannot require a photograph as part of the application

process, applicants might wish to consider providing one anyway. Many of the rural districts seem to like the practice of providing a photograph while lesser numbers of urban districts indicate a preference for it.

4. Applicants should prepare letters of inquiry and application very carefully. Such letters are highly regarded as screening devices because hiring administrators use them to assess an applicant's communication skills. These letters should be addressed to specific persons responsible for making hiring decisions in school districts. In writing these letters, applicants should indicate why they are writing and state their interest in the school district. They should create interest in themselves and close by soliciting a response from the school district.

5. In registering with their college/university placement office, teacher applicants should establish a placement (credential) file. Most of the school districts have credentials policies in that they use credentials in some manner as part of the hiring process. It is recommended that serious consideration be given to establishing a confidential rather than an open file. A large majority of Oklahoma administrators who hire teachers prefer confidential references because they believe that these references are more valid and reliable than open references.

6. Beginning teachers should have as many references from previous education related employers in their placement files as possible since these seem to be the most valuable references. Realistically, it is recommended that beginning teachers provide references from cooperating teachers in the student teaching experience and from the college coordinator of the student teaching experience. These individuals would be more likely to provide an accurate appraisal of a beginning teacher's potential for success in the classroom.

7. Experienced teachers should insure that their placement files contain current and recent references from previous education related employers. Such references should be able to provide accurate appraisal information concerning success as a classroom teacher.

8. Teacher applicants should concentrate on compiling a strong grade point average in their major field. Being able to teach a second field is also important as is interest in directing extra curricular activities.

9. The personal interview is a highly important screening device for administrators who hire teachers. In interviewing for teaching positions, applicants should realize that such characteristics as enthusiasm for teaching, interest in the position, neat and well-groomed appearance, expression and demonstration of maturity, poise and self-confidence, facility for verbal

communication, and the ability to respond to questions about teaching methodology and subject knowledge are highly important to administrators as traits that should be exhibited by applicants in interviews.

10. Applicants should be prepared for all kinds of interviews ranging from the completely structured to the completely unstructured interview. Beginning teachers should be able to answer questions about why they want to teach while experienced teachers should be prepared to discuss how successful they have been as teachers. In general, all teacher applicants should be prepared to answer questions concerning what they can do as teachers, what they want to do as teachers, and why they want to teach.

11. Applicants should realize that Oklahoma school administrators use a variety of policies in interviewing, hiring, and informing teacher applicants. This is due to the organizational differences that exist among independent, dependent, urban, and rural school districts in the state. It may be safe to say that the building principals in many school districts play some kind of role in interviewing applicants and making the decision to hire an applicant for a teaching position.

12. At the present time teacher applicants should be prepared for a tight job market in Oklahoma. Because of financial cutbacks there are generally more applicants than positions available. Although much hiring occurs in

June and July, late hiring in August has also been the case after administrators find out what monies are available to them to hire teachers. Shortages of teachers do exist in some subject areas and those applicants who teach in the fields of special education, math, science, computer science, speech pathology, library science, foreign language, and music generally have good opportunities for employment in Oklahoma now.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Continuing research concerning the effect that the passage of the Buckley Amendment has had on the credibility of placement credentials as a teacher selection screening device is needed. The findings in this study revealed that only letters of reference from previous education related employers were highly important to hiring administrators. Other credential items were perceived as having above average to average importance. How much has the fact that teacher applicants can now have open references in their placement files affected the use of placement credentials in the teacher selection process?

2. More ongoing research is needed concerning the value of confidential as opposed to open references. This research should be more experimental than descriptive in nature. Does the status of recommendations really affect the hiring decisions made by public school officials?

3. Continuing research is needed on the strategies utilized by hiring officials to obtain and evaluate information on teacher applicants. How much information is enough and how should it be used in making hiring decisions?

4. Research on the effectiveness of structured and unstructured hiring interviews is needed. Just how effective is the structured interview in the teacher selection process? Is it too formal and impersonal? Just how effective is the unstructured interview in the teacher selection process? Is it too informal and loose?

5. Continuing research is needed concerning the validity and predictability of teacher selection methods.

Concluding Statement

This study was conducted for the purpose of determining those factors that influence Oklahoma public school administrators in making teacher hiring decisions. It is hoped that the information gathered in this study will benefit both administrators who hire teachers in Oklahoma and teacher applicants seeking employment in the state.

For administrators there will always be the need to improve the teacher selection process because it is obvious that it is far from perfect. Perhaps a knowledge of what is going on in Oklahoma concerning teacher selection at this time will alert administrators to the

fact that they need to concern themselves continually with process improvement. Hiring policies, procedures and processes need to be evaluated and assessed on a regular basis to insure that they are working to benefit the children in Oklahoma's public school districts. Hiring administrators owe it to the children of their school districts to hire the best teachers possible. Anything less than the best is potentially damaging to Oklahoma's future.

The goal of teacher applicants in the job search process should be to find positions in the kind of environment in which they can successfully live and work and do what they are hoping to do as teachers. A tight job market in Oklahoma at the present time means that competition will be keen for available positions. It is important for applicants to organize their job search activities thoroughly. One way to do this is to become familiar with teacher hiring practices in the state. The information gathered in this study should be useful to applicants as they establish contacts with school districts and interview for positions.

ENDNOTES

[1]William B. Castetter, The Personnel Function in Educational Administration (New York, 1986), pp. 221-256.

[2]Dale L. Bolton, Selection and Evaluation of Teachers (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 3-20.

[3]Dale L. Bolton, "Tomorrow's Staff at Your Fingertips," Educational Executive's Overview, 3 (August, 1962), p. 55.

[4]American Association of School Personnel Administrators, Standards for School Personnel Administration, The Association, 1960, in Harry B. Gilbert and Gerhard Lang, Teacher Selection Methods, Project #6-1665, Board of Examiners, Board of Education of the City of New York (New York, 1967), pp. 70-72.

[5]Dale H. Palmer, "Situational Variables Affecting Decision Making in the Selection of Teachers," (unpub. doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, 1970), p. 43.

[6]Gerald DeWitt, "How to Identify Humanistic Teachers," National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, 57 (December, 1973), pp. 19-25.

[7]Vicki W. Thayer, "Project EMPATHY--An Alternative Way to Hire Teachers," North Central Association Quarterly, 52 (Spring, 1978), pp. 438-442.

[8]C. H. Slaughter, "A Proposed Screening Program for Elementary Teacher Candidates," Journal of Teacher Education, 20 (February, 1969), pp. 343-346.

[9]Bernard H. McKenna and Charles D. McKenna, "How to Interview Teachers," American School Board Journal, 155 (June, 1968), pp. 8-9.

[10]Gustave R. Lieske, "An Interview Process for Selecting Activating Teachers," (unpub. doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1969), pp. 39-40.

[11]Loren R. Bonneau, "An Interview for Selecting Teachers," (unpub. doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1956), pp. 150-154.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

TABLES I-X

TABLE I

PRIMARY SOURCES OF TEACHER APPLICANTS ACCORDING TO SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Key

U - Urban (12) I - Independent (52)
R - Rural (57) D - Dependent (17)

Source	# and % of Districts Who Ranked Source #1				# and % of Districts Who Ranked Source #2				# and % of Districts Who Ranked Source #3			
	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D
College / University Placement Offices	3 25%	32 56%	26 50%	9 53%	8 67%	14 25%	20 35%	2 12%	1 8%	4 79%	3 6%	2 12%
Commercial Agencies	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Letter of Inquiry from Applicants	8 67%	15 26%	20 38%	3 18%	1 8%	21 36%	14 27%	8 47%	2 17%	18 32%	15 29%	5 29%
Newspaper Advertisements	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 5%	2 4%	1 6%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	1 6%
Personal Contacts	0 0%	9 16%	4 8%	5 29%	1 8%	16 28%	12 23%	5 29%	6 50%	26 46%	28 54%	4 24%
Employees Already In District	1 8%	1 2%	2 4%	0 0%	2 17%	3 5%	4 8%	1 69%	2 17%	7 12%	5 10%	4 24%
Walk-ins	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%
State	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	0 0%	1 6%

TABLE I

TEACHER APPLICANT CONTACT PRACTICES REPORTED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Key:
U - Urban I - Independent
R - Rural D - Dependent

Contact Practice Questions:	YES (# and % of Districts)				NO (# and % of Districts)			
	U (12)	R (57)	I (52)	D (17)	U (12)	R (57)	I (52)	D (17)
A. Do you welcome unsolicited applications when no position has been announced?	11 92%	49 86%	45 87%	14 82%	1 8%	8 14%	7 13%	3 18%
B. Do you object to teacher applicants making their initial contact by phone?	0 0%	9 16%	6 12%	3 18%	12 100%	48 84%	46 88%	14 82%
C. Do you object to "walk-in" visits on the part of teacher applicants?	5 42%	23 40%	23 44%	6 35%	7 58%	34 60%	29 56%	11 65%
D. Do you object to receiving a letter of inquiry / application that has been written by hand rather than typed?	5 42%	23 40%	21 40%	7 41%	7 58%	34 60%	31 60%	10 59%
E. Do you object to receiving a letter of inquiry / application that has been photocopied or machine duplicated?	7 58%	21 37%	22 42%	6 35%	5 42%	36 63%	30 58%	11 65%
F. Do you prefer that a resume be enclosed with the letter of inquiry / application?	9 75%	46 81%	38 73%	16 94%	3 25%	11 19%	14 27%	1 6%
G. Do you object to receiving a resume that has been photocopied or machine duplicated as opposed to being professionally printed?	2 17%	2 4%	4 8%	0 0%	10 83%	55 96%	48 92%	17 100%
H. Would you prefer that the applicant provide a photograph with the resume or letter of inquiry / application?	6 50%	49 86%	41 79%	14 82%	6 50%	8 14%	11 21%	3 18%
I. Do you have separate application forms for experienced and non-experienced teachers?	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	12 100%	56 98%	51 98%	17 100%
J. Do you object to the applicant contacting you by phone as a follow-up procedure after the interview?	4 33%	16 28%	16 31%	4 24%	8 67%	41 72%	36 69%	13 76%

TABLE III

IMPORTANCE OF SCREENING FACTORS IN THE TEACHER SELECTION PROCESS AS PERCEIVED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Key
U - Urban (12) I- Independent (52)
R - Rural (57) D - Dependent (17)

Screening Factors:	1 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Highly Important				2 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Above Average Importance				3 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Average Importance				4 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Below Average Importance				5 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Little Importance				6 # and % of Districts Perceiving as No Importance			
	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D
Letter of Application	7 58%	31 54%	27 52%	11 65%	4 33%	22 39%	21 40%	5 29%	1 8%	3 5%	3 6%	1 6%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Placement Credentials	3 25%	19 33%	19 37%	3 18%	6 50%	17 30%	15 29%	8 47%	3 25%	16 28%	15 29%	4 24%	0 0%	3 5%	2 4%	1 6%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	0 0%	1 6%
Application Form	3 25%	28 49%	23 44%	8 47%	7 58%	18 32%	20 38%	5 29%	1 8%	8 14%	7 13%	2 12%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 8%	2 4%	1 2%	2 12%
Information Secured from Personal Acquaintances	0 0%	11 19%	10 19%	1 6%	2 17%	13 23%	11 21%	4 24%	8 67%	17 30%	19 37%	6 35%	0 0%	6 11%	5 10%	1 6%	2 17%	4 7%	5 10%	1 6%	0 0%	6 11%	2 4%	4 24%
Personal Interview	10 83%	41 72%	38 73%	13 76%	2 17%	13 23%	11 21%	4 24%	0 0%	3 5%	3 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

TABLE IV

THE ROLE OF PLACEMENT CREDENTIALS WHEN CONSIDERING THE EMPLOYMENT OF BEGINNING/INEXPERIENCED TEACHER APPLICANTS

Key
U - Urban (12) I- Independent (52)
R - Rural (57) D - Dependent (17)

Credentials Item:	1 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Highly Important				2 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Above Average Importance				3 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Average Importance				4 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Below Average Importance				5 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Little Importance				6 # and % of Districts Perceiving as No Importance			
Letters of Reference From:	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D
College Coordinators of Student Teaching	3 25%	13 23%	11 21%	5 29%	4 33%	21 37%	19 37%	6 35%	3 25%	18 32%	15 29%	6 35%	1 8%	4 7%	5 10%	0 0%	1 8%	1 2%	2 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Cooperating Teachers / Student Teaching	4 33%	22 39%	19 37%	7 41%	6 50%	23 40%	22 42%	7 41%	2 17%	10 18%	9 17%	3 18%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
College Instructors	2 17%	8 14%	8 15%	2 12%	3 25%	15 26%	14 27%	4 24%	5 42%	23 40%	18 35%	10 59%	1 8%	8 14%	8 15%	1 6%	1 8%	3 5%	4 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
High School Teachers/ Administrators	2 17%	10 18%	10 19%	2 12%	3 25%	11 19%	12 23%	2 12%	4 33%	30 53%	25 48%	9 53%	3 25%	5 9%	5 10%	3 18%	0 0%	1 2%	0 0%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Previous Employers (Education Related)	8 67%	29 51%	29 56%	8 47%	3 25%	18 32%	15 29%	6 35%	1 8%	10 18%	8 15%	3 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Previous Employers (Non-Education Related)	1 8%	12 21%	9 17%	4 24%	4 33%	24 42%	20 38%	8 47%	5 42%	17 30%	20 38%	2 12%	2 17%	4 7%	3 6%	3 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Character References	2 17%	17 30%	13 25%	6 35%	3 25%	25 44%	22 42%	6 35%	6 50%	12 21%	14 27%	4 24%	1 8%	1 2%	1 2%	1 6%	0 0%	2 4%	2 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
College Transcripts	5 42%	21 37%	19 37%	7 41%	3 25%	21 37%	17 33%	7 41%	4 33%	13 23%	14 27%	3 18%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%
Coursework Information Sheets/Listing	3 25%	17 30%	15 29%	5 29%	2 17%	22 39%	17 33%	7 41%	4 33%	15 26%	15 29%	4 24%	3 25%	3 5%	5 10%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Personal Data Sheet/ Resume	3 25%	26 46%	20 38%	9 53%	5 42%	16 28%	16 31%	5 29%	4 33%	14 25%	15 29%	3 18%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

TABLE V

THE ROLE OF PLACEMENT CREDENTIALS WHEN CONSIDERING THE EMPLOYMENT OF EXPERIENCED TEACHER APPLICANTS

Key
U - Urban (12) I- Independent (52)
R - Rural (57) D - Dependent (17)

Credentials Item:	1 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Highly Important				2 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Above Average Importance				3 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Average Importance				4 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Below Average Importance				5 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Little Importance				6 # and % of Districts Perceiving as No Importance			
Letters of Reference From:	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D
College Coordinators of Student Teaching	1 8%	6 11%	6 12%	1 6%	2 17%	12 21%	9 17%	5 29%	6 50%	23 40%	20 38%	9 53%	1 8%	12 21%	12 23%	1 6%	2 17%	2 4%	4 8%	0 0%	0 0%	2 4%	1 2%	1 6%
Cooperating Teachers / Student Teaching	2 17%	9 16%	7 13%	4 24%	2 17%	19 33%	15 29%	6 35%	6 50%	17 30%	16 31%	7 41%	0 0%	10 18%	10 19%	0 0%	2 17%	0 0%	2 4%	0 0%	0 0%	2 4%	2 4%	0 0%
College Instructors	1 8%	5 9%	4 8%	2 12%	1 8%	11 19%	9 17%	3 18%	7 58%	24 42%	22 42%	9 53%	1 8%	12 21%	11 21%	2 12%	2 17%	1 2%	3 6%	0 0%	0 0%	4 7%	3 6%	1 6%
High School Teachers/ Administrators	3 25%	18 32%	17 33%	4 24%	1 8%	11 19%	9 17%	3 18%	4 35%	15 26%	14 27%	5 29%	2 17%	9 16%	8 15%	3 18%	2 17%	1 2%	1 2%	2 12%	0 0%	3 5%	3 6%	0 0%
Previous Employers (Education Related)	11 92%	39 69%	38 73%	12 71%	0 0%	14 25%	10 19%	4 24%	0 0%	4 7%	3 6%	1 6%	1 8%	0 0%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Previous Employers (Non-Education Related)	3 25%	14 25%	13 25%	4 24%	4 33%	23 40%	20 38%	7 41%	3 25%	15 26%	14 27%	4 24%	2 17%	4 7%	4 8%	2 12%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Character References	2 17%	17 30%	12 23%	7 41%	4 33%	31 54%	27 52%	8 47%	6 50%	6 11%	10 19%	2 12%	0 0%	2 4%	2 4%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
College Transcripts	5 42%	22 39%	22 42%	5 29%	2 17%	18 32%	14 27%	6 35%	5 42%	16 28%	15 29%	6 35%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Coursework Information Sheets/Listing	1 8%	18 32%	14 27%	5 29%	3 25%	21 37%	16 31%	8 47%	5 42%	15 26%	17 33%	3 18%	3 25%	3 5%	5 10%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Personal Data Sheet/ Resume	3 25%	27 47%	21 40%	9 53%	6 50%	18 32%	18 35%	6 35%	3 25%	8 14%	9 17%	2 12%	0 0%	3 5%	3 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%

TABLE VI

PREFERENCES FOR LETTERS OF REFERENCE AND CREDENTIALS REPORTED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Preferences For:	# and % of Urban Districts	# and % of Rural Districts	# and % of Independent Districts	# and % of Dependent Districts
Confidential References	8 - 67%	40 - 70%	39 - 75%	9 - 53%
Open References	3 - 25%	12 - 21%	9 - 17%	6 - 35%
Makes No Difference	1 - 8%	5 - 9%	4 - 8%	2 - 12%
Rating Scale on Reference Form	2 - 17%	10 - 17%	10 - 19%	2 - 12%
Anecdotal Statement on Reference Form	1 - 8%	9 - 16%	7 - 14%	3 - 18%
Combination Rating Scale and Anecdotal Statement On Reference Form	9 - 75%	38 - 67%	35 - 67%	12 - 70%
Reference Checks:				
Always Checks References	10 - 83%	44 - 77%	43 - 83%	11 - 65%
Usually Checks References	2 - 17%	13 - 23%	9 - 17%	6 - 35%
Occasionally Checks References	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%
Never Checks References	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%
Requires Credentials From:				
All Applicants	2 - 17%	11 - 19%	11 - 21%	2 - 12%
Seriously Considered Applicants	4 - 33%	16 - 28%	17 - 33%	3 - 18%
Applicants Before Interview Only	1 - 8%	6 - 11%	4 - 8%	3 - 18%
Applicants After Interview But Before Hiring Decision	2 - 17%	9 - 16%	7 - 13%	4 - 23%
Credentials not Required	3 - 25%	15 - 26%	13 - 25%	5 - 29%
Other	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%

TABLE VII

TEACHER APPLICANT CHARACTERISTICS DISPLAYED IN INTERVIEWS AS PERCEIVED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Key
U - Urban (12) I- Independent (52)
R - Rural (57) D - Dependent (17)

Applicant Characteristics	1 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Highly Important				2 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Above Average Importance				3 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Average Importance				4 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Below Average Importance				5 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Little Importance				6 # and % of Districts Perceiving as No Importance			
	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D
Interest in the Position	9 75%	42 74%	40 77%	11 65%	3 25%	11 19%	9 17%	5 29%	0 0%	4 7%	3 6%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Verbal Communication	8 67%	35 61%	35 67%	8 47%	3 25%	22 39%	16 31%	8 47%	1 8%	0 0%	1 2%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Neat Appearance	8 67%	41 72%	36 69%	13 76%	4 33%	15 26%	14 27%	4 24%	0 0%	1 2%	2 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Poised and Self-confident	9 75%	27 47%	27 52%	9 53%	2 17%	29 51%	24 46%	7 41%	1 8%	1 2%	1 2%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Enthusiasm for Teaching	8 67%	44 77%	41 79%	11 65%	3 25%	13 23%	10 19%	6 35%	1 8%	0 0%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Knowledgeable About the School District	1 8%	1 2%	1 2%	1 6%	2 17%	12 21%	9 17%	5 29%	8 67%	32 56%	29 56%	11 65%	1 8%	9 16%	10 19%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	2 4%	2 4%	0 0%
Response to Questions About Teaching Methodology and Subject Knowledge	9 75%	27 47%	25 48%	11 65%	1 8%	19 33%	15 29%	5 29%	2 17%	8 14%	9 17%	1 6%	0 0%	2 4%	2 4%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Expression and Demonstration of Maturity	7 58%	40 70%	37 71%	10 59%	3 25%	16 28%	13 25%	6 35%	2 17%	0 0%	1 2%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	0 0%

TABLE VIII

IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED QUALITIES WHEN CONSIDERING THE EMPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS AS PERCEIVED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Key
U - Urban (12) I- Independent (52)
R - Rural (57) D - Dependent (17)

Qualities	1 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Highly Important				2 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Above Average Importance				3 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Average Importance				4 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Below Average Importance				5 # and % of Districts Perceiving as Little Importance				6 # and % of Districts Perceiving as No Importance			
	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D	U	R	I	D
Overall GPA	2	3	3	2	5	22	22	5	5	27	24	8	0	3	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
	17%	5%	6%	12%	42%	39%	42%	29%	42%	47%	46%	47%	0%	5%	2%	12%	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%	2%	2%	0%
Major Field GPA	4	13	12	5	6	30	29	7	1	12	8	5	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	33%	23%	23%	29%	50%	53%	56%	41%	8%	21%	15%	29%	8%	2%	4%	0%	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Nature of Professional Education Courses	2	10	7	5	6	15	16	5	3	25	23	5	1	4	4	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	1
	17%	18%	13%	29%	50%	26%	31%	29%	25%	44%	44%	29%	8%	7%	8%	6%	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%	4%	2%	6%
Nature of Liberal Arts Courses Related to Teaching Fields	1	6	6	1	7	19	18	8	3	26	24	5	0	5	2	3	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
	8%	11%	12%	6%	58%	33%	35%	47%	25%	46%	46%	29%	0%	9%	4%	18%	8%	2%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
General Liberal Arts Courses that Provide a Broad Cultural Background	0	2	2	0	4	20	16	8	6	30	28	8	2	2	4	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
	0%	4%	4%	0%	33%	35%	31%	47%	50%	53%	54%	47%	17%	4%	8%	0%	0%	5%	4%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Experiences in Campus Activities	0	3	1	2	2	12	12	2	6	24	24	6	4	9	10	3	0	5	3	2	0	4	2	2
	0%	5%	2%	12%	17%	21%	23%	12%	50%	42%	46%	35%	33%	16%	19%	18%	0%	9%	6%	12%	0%	7%	4%	12%
Interest in Directing Extra Curricular Activities	0	6	3	3	7	29	30	5	4	19	17	7	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	0%	11%	6%	18%	58%	51%	58%	29%	33%	33%	33%	41%	8%	4%	4%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	6%
Ability to Teach a Second Field	2	23	23	2	6	23	22	6	3	10	7	7	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
	17%	40%	44%	12%	50%	40%	42%	35%	25%	18%	13%	41%	8%	0%	0%	6%	0%	2%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%

TABLE IX

FACTORS RELATED TO INTERVIEWING, HIRING AND INFORMING TEACHER APPLICANTS REPORTED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Factor:	# and % of Urban Districts (12)	# and % of Rural Districts (57)	# and % of Independent Districts (52)	# and % of Dependent Districts (17)
How does your district conduct hiring?				
Through Centralized Office	2 - 17%	15 - 26%	15 - 29%	2 - 12%
Centralized Screening/Principals Select From Applicants	9 - 75%	11 - 19%	23 - 44%	3 - 18%
Principals Select Independent of Central Office	1 - 8%	21 - 36%	8 - 15%	9 - 53%
Through Principal and School Board	0 - 0%	2 - 4%	0 - 0 %	2 - 12%
School Board Input	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%	1 - 6%
Superintendent and Principals Select	0 - 0%	5 - 9%	4 - 8%	0 - 0%
Superintendent Selects	0 - 0%	2 - 4%	2 - 4%	0 - 0%
Who interviews applicants?				
Superintendent	0 - 0%	7 - 12%	7 - 13%	0 - 0%
Asst. / Assoc. Superintendent	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%
Personnel Director	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%
Building Principal	2 - 17%	6 - 11%	1 - 2%	7 - 41%
School Board	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%	1 - 6%
Other:				
Building Principal / School Board	1 - 8%	6 - 11%	0 - 0%	8 - 47%
Personnel Director / Bldg. Principal / Some Directors	1 - 8%	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Personnel Director / Bldg. Principal	3 - 25%	0 - 0%	3 - 6%	0 - 0%
Supt. / Asst. / Assoc. Supt. / Bldg. Principal	3 - 25%	1 - 2%	4 - 8%	0 - 0%
Asst. / Assoc. Supt. / Bldg. Principal	2 - 17%	1 - 2%	3 - 6%	0 - 0%
County Supt. / Bldg. Principal	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%	1 - 6%
Supt. / Bldg. Prin. / School Board	0 - 0%	3 - 5%	3 - 6%	0 - 0%
Supt. / Bldg. Principal	0 - 0%	31 - 54%	30 - 58%	0 - 0%

TABLE IX (CONTINUED)

	# and % of Urban Districts (12)	# and % of Rural Districts (57)	# and % of Independent Districts (52)	# and % of Dependent Districts (17)
Who makes the final decision?				
Superintendent	2 - 17%	25 - 44%	27 - 52%	0 - 0%
Asst. / Assoc. Superintendent	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%
Personnel Director	1 - 8%	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Building Principal	5 - 42%	7 - 12%	9 - 17%	3 - 18%
School Board	2 - 17%	11 - 19%	3 - 6%	10 - 59%
Other:				
Asst. / Assoc. Supt. / Bldg. Principal	1 - 8%	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Personnel Director / Education Directors	1 - 8%	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Bldg. Principal / School Board	0 - 0%	5 - 9%	1 - 2%	4 - 24%
Supt. / Bldg. Principal	0 - 0%	6 - 11%	6 - 12%	0 - 0%
Supt. / Asst. / Assoc. Supt.	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Supt. / School Board	0 - 0%	2 - 4%	2 - 4%	0 - 0%
Follow-up after interview?				
Inform Successful Applicants by Telephone.	2 - 17%	15 - 26%	10 - 19%	7 - 41%
Send Letter to All Applicants Informing Them of Acceptance or Rejection	2 - 17%	10 - 18%	8 - 15%	4 - 24%
Send Letter Only to Successful Applicants	1 - 8%	1 - 2%	1 - 2%	1 - 6%
Inform Unsuccessful Applicants	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Other:				
Inform Successful Applicants by Telephone/ Send Letters to all Applicants Regardless of Success	2 - 17%	18 - 32%	16 - 31%	4 - 24%
Inform Successful Applicants by Telephone / Inform Unsuccessful Applicants	2 - 17%	11 - 19%	12 - 23%	1 - 6%
Inform Successful Applicants by Telephone/ Send Letter Only to Successful Applicants/ Inform Unsuccessful Applicants if Interviewed	1 - 8%	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Inform Successful Applicants by Telephone/ Send Letters Only to Successful Applicants	2 - 17%	0 - 0%	2 - 4%	0 - 0%
Send Letters to All Applicants Informing Them of Acceptance or Rejection or phone them	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%

TABLE X

OKLAHOMA TEACHER SUPPLY/DEMAND INFORMATION: 1985-1986

Question:	# and % of Urban Districts (12)	# and % of Rural Districts (57)	# and % of Independent Districts (52)	# and % of Dependent Districts (17)
What is the general supply/demand balance for teachers in your school district?				
Substantially more qualified applicants than positions.	1 - 8%	13 - 23%	10 - 19%	4 - 24%
More qualified applicants than positions available.	8 - 67%	31 - 54%	28 - 54%	11 - 65%
Approximately balanced.	1 - 8%	10 - 18%	10 - 19%	1 - 6%
More positions available than qualified applicants.	2 - 17%	2 - 4%	3 - 6%	1 - 6%
Substantially more positions than qualified applicants.	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Did you have unfilled positions at the beginning of this school year?				
yes	4 - 33%	6 - 11%	8 - 15%	2 - 12%
no	8 - 67%	51 - 89%	44 - 85%	15 - 88%
Of the teachers hired for this school year, when were these teachers primarily hired? Approximately what percentage was hired in each of the following time periods?				
March or before	0 - 0%	5 - 9%	4 - 8%	1 - 6%
April - May	2 - 17%	23 - 40%	20 - 38%	5 - 29%
June - July	8 - 67%	24 - 42%	24 - 46%	8 - 47%
August - September	2 - 17%	5 - 9%	4 - 8%	3 - 18%

TABLE X (CONTINUED)

Question:	# and % of Urban Districts (12)	# and % of Rural Districts (57)	# and % of Independent Districts (52)	# and % of Dependent Districts (17)
What areas did you have difficulty in securing teachers for this school year?				
Math	4 - 33%	16 - 28%	20 - 38%	0 - 0%
Science	4 - 33%	11 - 19%	14 - 27%	1 - 6%
Counselor	2 - 17%	2 - 4%	4 - 8%	0 - 0%
Industrial Arts	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%
Music	3 - 25%	11 - 19%	11 - 21%	3 - 18%
Agriculture	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%	0 - 0%
Computer Science	4 - 33%	6 - 11%	9 - 17%	1 - 6%
Special Education	6 - 50%	12 - 21%	15 - 29%	3 - 18%
Foreign Language	3 - 25%	6 - 11%	9 - 17%	0 - 0%
Library Science	2 - 17%	3 - 5%	4 - 8%	1 - 6%
Speech Pathology	0 - 0%	8 - 14%	8 - 15%	0 - 0%
English/Language Arts	1 - 8%	2 - 4%	3 - 6%	0 - 0%
Business Education	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Extra Curricular	1 - 8%	4 - 7%	4 - 8%	1 - 6%
Reading Specialist	0 - 0%	2 - 4%	2 - 4%	0 - 0%
Other:				
Social Studies	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Administration	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%
Good Coaches	0 - 0%	2 - 4%	1 - 2%	1 - 6%
Combined 7th - 8th grade teachers	0 - 0%	1 - 2%	0 - 0%	1 - 6%

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER

February 15, 1986

Dear Oklahoma School Administrator:

In an attempt to determine the factors that influence the teacher hiring decisions of Oklahoma public school administrators, a copy of the enclosed questionnaire/survey is being sent to administrators of randomly selected independent and dependent school districts in Oklahoma. This study is being conducted with the assistance of Dr. Kenneth St. Clair, College of Education, Oklahoma State University, and Dr. Don Briggs, Director of University Placement, Oklahoma State University.

The purpose of the study is to compile information concerning public school teacher hiring practices in Oklahoma. I believe that this information will be beneficial to school administrators needing teachers as well as to teachers seeking employment in Oklahoma's public school districts. I realize that your schedule of daily activities is demanding, but your assistance in taking a few minutes of your time to complete and return the questionnaire/survey would be most appreciated. You and your district will not be identified in the results. A brief summary of the study will be made available to you upon request.

Please return your questionnaire/survey by March 1, 1986 in the enclosed stamped envelope. This study is the basis for my doctoral dissertation and I will be grateful for your interest and support in this project.

Sincerely,

Bob Jamison

Bob Jamison
Placement Counselor

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE/SURVEY

QUESTIONNAIRE/SURVEY

Factors Influencing the Teacher Hiring Decisions of Public School Administrators

I. Preliminary Information

A. School District Information

1. District Name _____
2. Address _____

_____

3. Type of District: a. Independent _____
   b. Dependent _____

B. Title of Person Responding to Questionnaire

_____ 1. Superintendent
_____ 2. Asst./Assoc. Superintendent
_____ 3. Personnel Director
_____ 4. Other: Please Specify: _____

C. Number of Students in District

_____ 1. Less than 250
_____ 2. 251 - 500
_____ 3. 501 - 1,000
_____ 4. 1,001 - 9,999
_____ 5. 10,000 or larger

D. Would you consider the population you serve to be primarily:

_____ 1. Urban
_____ 2. Rural
_____ 3. Other: Please Specify: _____

II. Sources of Teacher Applicants

From the list below please rank order the top three (1 being the highest) that have proved to be primary sources of teacher applicants for your district:

_____ A. College/university placement offices
_____ B. Commercial agencies
_____ C. Letters of inquiry from applicants
_____ D. Newspaper advertisements
_____ E. Personal contacts
_____ F. Employees already in the district
_____ G. Other: Please Specify: _____

III. Teacher Applicant Contact Practices

Please answer the following by checking a response for each question:

A. Do you welcome unsolicited applications when no position has been announced? Yes _____ No _____
B. Do you object to teacher applicants making their initial contact by phone? Yes _____ No _____
C. Do you object to "walk-in" visits on the part of teacher applicants? Yes _____ No _____

D. Do you object to receiving a letter of inquiry/application that has been written by hand rather than typed? Yes _____ No _____

E. Do you object to receiving a letter of inquiry/application that has been photocopied or machine duplicated? Yes ___ No ____

F. Do you prefer that a resume be enclosed with the letter of inquiry/application? Yes _____ No _____

G. Do you object to receiving a resume that has been photocopied or machine duplicated as opposed to being professionally printed? Yes _____ No _____

H. Would you prefer that the applicant provide a photograph with the resume or letter of inquiry/application? Yes _____ No ____

I. Do you have separate application forms for experienced and non-experienced teachers? Yes ____ No _____

J. Do you object to the applicant contacting you by telephone as a follow-up procedure after the interview? Yes _____ No ___

IV. Screening Factors in the Teacher Selection Process

Please rate the items below in terms of importance by using the following scale:

1 - Highly important
2 - Above average importance
3 - Average importance
4 - Below average importance
5 - Little importance
6 - No importance

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. Original, grammatically correct and neatly written or typed letter of application	_	_	_	_	_	_
B. Professional placement credentials	_	_	_	_	_	_
C. Completed application form	_	_	_	_	_	_
D. Information secured from personal acquaintances	_	_	_	_	_	_
E. Personal interviews	_	_	_	_	_	_

V. The Role of Placement Credentials When Considering the Employment of Beginning/Inexperienced Teacher Applicants

The items below are typical of information generally found in teacher placement credential files. Keeping in mind the beginning/inexperienced teacher, please rate each in terms of importance by using the following scale:

1 - Highly important
2 - Above average importance
3 - Average importance
4 - Below average importance
5 - Little importance
6 - No importance

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. Letters of reference from college coordinators of student teaching	_	_	_	_	_	_
B. Letters of reference from cooperating teachers of student teaching	_	_	_	_	_	_
C. Letters of reference from college instructors	_	_	_	_	_	_
D. Letters of reference from high school teachers/ administrators	_	_	_	_	_	_
E. Letters of reference from previous employers (Educ. related)	_	_	_	_	_	_
F. Letters of reference from previous employers (non-educ. related)	_	_	_	_	_	_
G. Letters of reference dealing with character	_	_	_	_	_	_
H. College transcripts	_	_	_	_	_	_
I. Coursework information sheets/listing	_	_	_	_	_	_
J. Personal data sheet/ resume	_	_	_	_	_	_

VI. The Role of Placement Credentials When Considering The Employment of Experienced Teachers

The items below are typical of information generally found in teacher placement credential files. Keeping in mind the experienced teacher, please rate each in terms of importance by using the following scale:

1 - Highly important
2 - Above average importance
3 - Average importance
4 - Below average importance
5 - Little importance
6 - No importance

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. Letters of reference from college coordinators of student teaching	_	_	_	_	_	_
B. Letters of reference from cooperating teachers of student teaching	_	_	_	_	_	_
C. Letters of reference from college instructors	_	_	_	_	_	_
D. Letters of reference from high school teachers/ administrators	_	_	_	_	_	_
E. Letters of reference from previous employers (educ. related)	_	_	_	_	_	_
F. Letters of reference from previous employers (non-educ. related)	_	_	_	_	_	_
G. Letters of reference dealing with character	_	_	_	_	_	_
H. College transcripts	_	_	_	_	_	_
I. Coursework information sheets/listings	_	_	_	_	_	_
J. Personal data sheet /resume	_	_	_	_	_	_

VII. Employer Preferences for Letters of Reference and Credentials

A. Check one of the following:
1. The letters of reference in the applicant's placement file should be considered confidential and not available to the applicant. ____
2. The letters of reference in the applicant's placement file should be open and available

to the applicant. _____

3. It is not important whether the letters of reference in the applicant's placement file are confidential or open. _____

B. Briefly support your choice of the one item you selected in A. _____

_____

_____.

C. Which format for references do you find most useful? (Rank 1, 2, or 3 in order of usefulness).

_____ 1. Rating scale
_____ 2. Anecdotal statement
_____ 3. Combination rating scale/anecdotal statement

D. Do you personally check references before hiring a teacher? Check one of the following:

_____ 1. Always
_____ 2. Usually
_____ 3. Occasionally
_____ 4. Never

E. What is your policy regarding placement credentials? Check one of the following:

_____ 1. Required of all applicants
_____ 2. Required of those you seriously consider based on application and/or resume
_____ 3. Required before interview
_____ 4. Required after interview but before final hiring decision
_____ 5. Not required
_____ 6. Other: Please Specify:_____

VIII. Teacher Applicant Characteristics Displayed in Interviews

Please rate the following in terms of importance by using the following scale:

1 - Highly important
2 - Above average importance
3 - Average importance
4 - Below average importance
5 - Little importance
6 - No importance

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. Appearance of being genuinely interested in the position	—	—	—	—	—	—
B. Facility for verbal communication	—	—	—	—	—	—
C. Neat and well groomed appearance	—	—	—	—	—	—

D. Appearance of being poised and self-confident — — — — — —

E. Enthusiasm for teaching — — — — — —

F. Well informed and knowledgeable about the school district — — — — — —

G. Ability to respond to questions about teaching methodology and subject knowledge — — — — — —

H. Expression and demonstration of maturity — — — — — —

IX. Importance of Selected Qualities When Considering The Employment of Teachers

Please rate the following in terms of importance by using the following scale:

1 - Highly important
2 - Above average importance
3 - Average importance
4 - Below average importance
5 - Little importance
6 - No importance

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. Overall grade point average	—	—	—	—	—	—
B. Major field grade point average	—	—	—	—	—	—
C. Nature and extent of professional courses in education	—	—	—	—	—	—
D. Nature and extent of Liberal Arts courses relating to teaching field(s)	—	—	—	—	—	—
E. General Liberal Arts courses completed by applicants that are designed to provide a broad cultural background	—	—	—	—	—	—
F. Experiences in campus activities	—	—	—	—	—	—

G. Interest of applicants in directing extra curricular activities _ _ _ _ _ _

H. Ability of applicants to teach a second field _ _ _ _ _ _

X. Factors Related to Interviewing, Hiring, and Informing Teacher Applicants

A. Check the one that most closely describes your practice:

Does your school district conduct hiring through a centralized personnel office or by individual administrators?

_____ 1. Centralized
_____ 2. Centralized screening, then principals select from pool of qualified applicants
_____ 3. Principals select independent of central office
_____ 4. Other: Please Specify: _____

B. Check all applicable items:

Who interviews the teacher applicants?

_____ 1. Superintendent
_____ 2. Asst./Assoc. Superintendent
_____ 3. Personnel Director
_____ 4. Building Principal
_____ 5. School Board
_____ 6. Other: Please Specify: _____

In a practical sense, who makes the final decision?

_____ 1. Superintendent
_____ 2. Asst./Assoc. Superintendent
_____ 3. Personnel Director
_____ 4. Building Principal
_____ 5. School Board
_____ 6. Other: Please Specify: _____

What follow-up procedures do you use after the interview?

_____ 1. Inform successful applicant by telephone
_____ 2. Send letter to all applicants informing them of acceptance or rejection
_____ 3. Send letter only to successful applicants
_____ 4. Inform unsuccessful applicants

XI. Teacher Supply/Demand Information

A. Check the one that most closely describes your situation:

Taking into consideration the fact that there are teacher shortages in some fields and an excess of teachers in other fields, what is the general supply-demand balance for teachers in your school district?

_____ 1. Substantially more qualified applicants than positions available
_____ 2. More qualified applicants than positions available
_____ 3. Approximately balanced
_____ 4. More positions available than qualified applicants
_____ 5. Substantially more positions available than qualified applicants

B. Did you have unfilled positions at the beginning of this school year?

_____ 1. Yes
_____ 2. No

C. Of teachers hired for this school year, approximately what percentage was hired in each of the following time periods? (Please write in percentages).

_____ 1. March or before
_____ 2. April-May
_____ 3. June-July
_____ 4. August-September

D. Check all applicable areas:

What areas did you have difficulty in securing teachers for this school year?

_____ 1. Math
_____ 2. Science
_____ 3. Counselor
_____ 4. Industrial Arts
_____ 5. Music
_____ 6. Agriculture
_____ 7. Computer Science
_____ 8. Special Education
_____ 9. Foreign Language
_____ 10. Library Science
_____ 11. Speech Pathology
_____ 12. English/Language Arts
_____ 13. Business Education
_____ 14. Extra Curricular

List any other areas not listed above where you had hiring difficulties.

15. _____ _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire/survey. Please return it in the enclosed stamped envelope by March 1, 1986. If you wish to have a summary describing the findings of this study, please call or write:

Mr. Bob Jamison, Placement Counselor
University Placement
Room 360, Student Union
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078
Phone: 405-624-5253

(Please provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope so that I can mail your summary to you).

APPENDIX D

POST CARD REMINDER

March 12, 1986

REMINDER

A questionnaire/survey was recently sent to you regarding the factors that influence the teacher hiring decisions of Oklahoma public school administrators. If you have returned the questionnaire/survey, your time and effort are greatly appreciated. If you have not completed the questionnaire/survey, would you take a few minutes to do so and drop it in the mail today.

Your interest and support are important to the success of this project.

Sincerely,

Bob Jamison

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE SHEET

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

Person Interviewed:_____ Position:_____
School District: _____ Date: _____

1. What information do you require regarding all teacher applicants?

   _____ a. Completed application form
   _____ b. Placement Credentials
   _____ c. Resumes
   _____ d. Letters of Application
   _____ e. Transcripts
   _____ f. Test Results (other than state mandated competency tests): Please specify test(s) required: _____
   _____ g. Other: Please Specify: _____

2. Describe your interview process.

   a. How do you structure the interview and to what extent?_____
   _____
   _____

   b. Is there any difference in the interview of experienced and non-experienced teacher applicants?_____
   _____
   _____

   c. What questions do you find most beneficial in acquiring information on applicants?
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Describe how you decide:

   a. Which applicants are best qualified?
   _____
   _____
   _____

   b. When to make an offer (or delay or reject)?
   _____
   _____
   _____

VITA

Robert Lee Jamison

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE TEACHER HIRING DECISIONS OF OKLAHOMA PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, September 15, 1941, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Jamison. Married to Linda L. Lee on December 29, 1967.

Education: Graduated from Pryor High School, Pryor, Oklahoma, in May, 1959; received Associate in Arts degree from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College in May, 1961; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from Northeastern Oklahoma State University in May, 1963; received Master of Science degree in Higher Education from Oklahoma State University in July, 1973; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 1987.

Professional Experience: Secondary Social Studies Teacher, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, 1963-1968; Education Technician, United States Air Force, 1968-1972; Assistant High School Principal/ History Teacher/Title IV-A and Johnson-O'Malley Education Programs Director, Vinita, Oklahoma, 1973-1980; Education Placement Counselor, Oklahoma State University, 1980 to present.