

A STUDY OF SUPERINTENDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF  
STAFF DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS  
IN OKLAHOMA

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Staff development, under the title "in-service education," has been with us ever since the time when new teachers entered the profession clutching their normal training certificates. For years, an occasional teachers' institute or convention sufficed to keep them informed on developments in their field. But as the education system grew more complex, policymakers began requiring continued professional training for new or renewed certification. Today, staff development has broader implications and is generating widespread interest. Teachers are expected to maintain a wholesome classroom atmosphere and to stay abreast of public policy that affects job security, teacher evaluation, staff development education, entry-year procedures, and the latest research in classroom instruction. They are expected to know the advantages and disadvantages of testing, to teach handicapped youngsters, and to develop and implement lessons that create quality learning experiences for their students.

Because of heightened visibility of staff development and the recognition or hope of many people that schools can best be helped by improving the people working in them, many groups are vying to participate in, set policy for, and/or control staff development efforts. Consensus among educators has long been that teacher training meets only the minimal academic and professional requirements for continued



success in teaching. With the rapid growth of knowledge, the background of training and information received at graduation is soon inadequate. Vital, meaningful teaching requires persistent study to keep abreast of the new advances in knowledge. The ever-changing dynamic society in which we live requires ongoing preparation programs that provide sound undergraduate and graduate education and stretches from the first day of employment to retirement.

Staff development should suggest a growth plan which may be incorporated into a consistent, continuous plan of study and curriculum improvement. Through regular staff development, problems and needs of an entire school system may be identified before they become critical. The constantly changing curriculum and improved developing methods of instruction do not just happen; they must be formally planned.

Leep, Creason, and Schilson (1968) stated that those in the past who were responsible for staff development failed to perceive the growth activities as a part of a series of interrelated steps essential to the implementation of successful change in curriculum and newly developed strategies and skills for improved classroom instruction. Like all professionals, educators within the framework of the school should consider it their obligation to continue to search for personal and professional improvements and to provide means through which this obligation may be met.

Wood and Thompson (1980) and Schiffer (1978) stated that in the past when administrators thought about staff development training, they usually wanted to know what to do with faculty, and, as a result, the following list epitomizes most of their efforts:

1. All direction and impetus for staff development must come from the administration. This will eliminate wasted time in teacher planning and coordinating.

2. Teachers should not plan the staff development activities, since they might manipulate the sessions to meet their needs.

3. Staff development should be like watching a spectator sport--go, sit, absorb.

4. The activities should be theoretical in nature, letting the teacher figure out the application.

5. Avoid contact or partnership with the universities for providing professional growth activities for your faculty. Everyone knows they are not in touch with the real world.

6. Staff development should be given in the only acceptable form--the lecture. Concepts such as classroom observation, research, writing, teacher effectiveness, and other less controllable methods should be avoided.

In many respects and in most instances, staff development in the majority of schools resembles a patchwork quilt. As in the case with a quilt, it is not a first order of business but rather something which can be worked on at the end of the day in a more relaxed and comfortable setting. The time allotted and the frequency of the activity suggest merely "remnants" of larger ideas and ideals that are dealt with. Rarely are institutional goals coordinated with personal needs in these activities, but are approached in a rather random pattern. Finally, the intent is not one of major reform as much as basic maintenance--a protective cover.

There is evidence that some states, many universities, and an expanding number of public and private schools across the country are developing highly successful staff development programs. As a result of these efforts, general characteristics of successful staff development processes are evolving which are serving as models for other schools. These models typically include a formal and an informal assessment of school needs, a plan of program continuity, a decision-making process on the topic considered feasible for effective staff development, a committee identified to plan and program the activities, and a comprehensive method for evaluating the local staff development program.

The professional staff development program in Oklahoma was a major part of the education reform legislation passed in the Oklahoma legislature as House Bill 1706. This particular legislation, among other things, provided the following:

1. Increased standards for admission to colleges of education
2. Required competency testing in teaching areas before graduation
3. An entry-year experience under the guidance of a qualified teacher consultant
4. A team monitoring approach for the entry-year teacher
5. Funds for staff development experiences for all public school educators

While four of the five components of this legislation were directed to preteaching or the first year teaching experience, perhaps the most important component deals with the mandated staff development program, since it affects all educators. This particular component of

the legislation was to be developed through a local staff development committee. Composed predominately of teachers, it was also to include administrators and parents. This local staff development committee was to provide a planned program of activities for professional growth for all educators within the local school district.

To accomplish the task of implementing the professional growth experiences, the local staff development committee was charged, through the Oklahoma State Department of Education, with five major responsibilities. The responsibilities included developing the following:

1. A plan to assess the needs of certified and licensed teachers and administrators
2. A local plan or program objectives based on the needs assessment
3. A plan of staff development activities based on the program objectives
4. A plan for evaluating the staff development activities
5. A plan for making recommendations to the local board of education for proper management

While the staff development component of House Bill 1706 was designed to provide quality experiences for teachers and administrators, many educators through informal visitations indicated that there are more obstacles to be overcome before a high degree of success can be declared for this program. These obstacles included the following:

1. Insufficient involvement of teachers in initiating, planning, and conducting the staff development program

2. Insufficient activities designed for general faculty development

3. Insufficient activities that emphasize teacher responsibility in developing new strategies for teaching and learning

4. Insufficient contact with institutions of higher education who provide assistance and direction in staff development

5. Insufficient funding for schools who develop exemplary staff development programs to implement them

A practical, well-planned, and carefully evaluated staff development program can provide activities to accommodate identified staff needs on both short- and long-term bases. The continuous growth and progress of the teachers and administrators are just as important as that of the students. A carefully and thoughtfully planned program of learning experiences providing practical opportunities for the teaching staff will pay many dividends in the years ahead (Kleiman, 1974).

Larson (1974) stated that the role of the superintendent is to provide leadership to the board of education to insure that inservice education is a top priority. Through these efforts, the emphasis will be placed on assessing needs, collaborative planning, determining and providing resources, and continuous evaluation. Gardenswartz and Rowe (1983) stated that the superintendent must believe that changes and improvements through staff development are possible and that his participation lends credibility, authority, and importance to the program.

The superintendents who have the responsibility for running the humane and effective schools realize that staff development is an effective tool to help staff unleash their potential. The most

effective staff development has a purpose, is structural, and concentrates on the areas of professional growth and development and has resources committed to that end.

### Superintendents' Responsibilities in Staff Development Programs

The staff development program in Oklahoma is designed to improve the quality of educational experiences for students and is mandated for implementation through the position of superintendent of schools. It therefore becomes imperative to study the perceptions of the superintendent to determine how effectively the local staff development program meets the legal implications and the expected effectiveness of the local staff development program.

The coordinator of the local staff development program is the responsibility of the local superintendent of schools. This responsibility includes the following:

1. Assurance that all school district staff members are being served under the plan
2. Reporting of plans and activities to the State Department of Education
3. Assurance of wide involvement and successful implementation of planned activities
4. Developing a process for evaluating the total staff development program
5. Assurance that teachers, students, parents, and administrators are involved in the development of the plans for staff development at the local level

This study relates these areas of responsibility to the superintendents' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the staff development activities in their districts. The effectiveness as perceived by the superintendent was determined by focusing on the following areas: procedures used to determine local staff development needs, objectives planned to meet the assessed needs, activities planned to accomplish the stated program objectives, alternative activities provided, perceptions regarding the relevance of the total staff development program, procedures used for evaluation, involvement of higher education instructors, and planned staff development activities for administrators.

#### Statement of the Problem

The State of Oklahoma does not have a base for determining the superintendents' perceptions of staff development effectiveness in this state. Since the implementation of House Bill 1706, data are needed to determine the effectiveness of staff development and to revise and improve the program on a statewide basis.

This descriptive study was conducted to gather data relative to current practices and procedures and to determine the effectiveness of staff development programs throughout Oklahoma. The notions relative to the staff development program gave rise to the following research questions.

#### Research Questions

This study focused on the following research questions:

1. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the procedures used to determine the staff development needs?
2. What are the superintendents' perceptions of the staff development objectives planned to meet the assessed needs?
3. What are the superintendents' perceptions of the staff development activities developed to accomplish the stated program objectives?
4. What are the superintendents' perceptions of the alternative activities and delivery systems used to meet the needs identified by the local needs assessment?
5. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the relevance of the total staff development program?
6. What are the superintendents' perceptions of the process established for evaluating the local staff development program?
7. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the decision-making authority of the staff development committee?
8. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the involvement of higher education instructors in consulting with the local staff development committee?
9. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the staff earning additional compensation for participating in staff development activities?
10. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding staff development for administrators?

#### Significance of the Study

The coordination of the local staff development program is the



responsibility of the local administration. This responsibility includes the following:

1. Assurances that all school district staff members are being served under the plan
2. Reporting of plans and activities to the State Department of Education
3. Assurance of wide involvement and successful implementation of planned activities
4. Developing a process for evaluating the staff development program

This study relates these areas of responsibility to the superintendents' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the staff development activities in their districts.

#### Limitations of the Study

The study will be limited to the following:

1. The Oklahoma school superintendents, selected randomly from school districts as determined by the Oklahoma Educational Directory, 1983-84.
2. The staff development experiences of school administrators for the 1983-84 school year.
3. The number of selected school superintendents who responded honestly and cooperatively to the questionnaires and through the interviews.
4. The number of questionnaires returned by the selected superintendents.

## Definition of Terms

Staff Development. A procedure established for the purpose of continued education of teachers and administrators beyond initial licensing and certification to ensure that children will be taught by those fully trained in their area of expertise.

Staff Development Committee. A committee appointed by the local school district to develop a district staff development plan. Its responsibilities are to determine the staff needs of the district, develop program objectives, develop activities to meet the identified needs, develop a systematic method of evaluation, and to make recommendations to the local board of education. The majority of this committee shall be teachers, but must also include administrators and parents of the school district.

Staff. Individuals employed in a local school district who have proper certification or licensing to teach in the classrooms of Oklahoma.

Staff Needs. Assessment outcomes as determined by a survey of staff members.

Superintendent. The individual appointed and employed by the board of education to be the executive officer of the board, performing duties as the board directs.

Evaluation. A systematic appraisal of individual staff development activities or the total staff development program. The evaluation will determine whether local needs are being met through the staff development program.

Perception. The process by which we obtain firsthand information about the world around us.

Staff Development Committee Chairperson. A staff committee member elected by the entire staff development committee to serve as leader of the local staff development committee.

### Organization of the Study

An introduction, statement of the problem, significance of the study, definition of terms, and limitations of the study are contained in Chapter I. A review of the literature is provided in Chapter II. In Chapter III, the methods and procedures of the study are presented. Chapter IV will present and analyze the data collected. Chapter V contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

### Summary

A staff development program is one important means of helping each individual educator to satisfy his or her needs for status, recognition, professional and personal growth, and to meet the classroom needs of students. Through significant legislative action, Oklahoma has taken the lead in developing guidelines and providing funding for staff development programs for all educators and school districts in the state. While many school districts across the state were thought to have begun some effective staff development activities, it was not until the mandated program through House Bill 1706 that staff development became a regulation to be met in all school districts in the state.

This study was conducted to determine the superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of staff development in Oklahoma. The effectiveness was determined by the method of clarifying district needs, parent and teacher involvement, program activities, program evaluation, and the impact on the quality of classroom experiences provided for students throughout the state.

A sample of school superintendents in Oklahoma was selected randomly to receive a questionnaire or to be surveyed by telephone or by personal interviews. This study involved the use of the data gathered from this population to determine the staff development effectiveness in Oklahoma.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Harris (1966) wrote that inherent in the whole notion of inservice education is the belief that all professional people can grow and develop; once they become professional adults, they do not, or at least should not, stand still.

For some time educators have been concerned about the quality and effectiveness of staff development programs provided for school personnel. Until recently, unfortunately, there have been few comprehensive plans that offer a systematic approach to designing and evaluating staff development. In 1980, the Oklahoma State Legislature passed House Bill 1706, which provided a framework for the continuing education of teachers. This legislation charged the local boards of education with the responsibility of developing programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of their teachers and administrators.

Auton, Deck, and Edgemon (1982) stated:

Staff development, inservice education, professional improvement, skill enhancement--all are labels for a variety of activities and programs that schools and school systems undertake as means of organizational improvement (p. 117).

Whitfield, Whitfield, and Purkerson (1983, p. 230) wrote: "A staff development program is one important means of helping each

individual to satisfy his or her needs for status, recognition, and professional and personal growth."

Herman (1982), superintendent of West Bloomfield Michigan School District, wrote: "Humans either progress or regress--they cannot remain in a neutral state for an extended period" (p. 21). The demand or need to improve inservice is increasing at an accelerating rate. Arends, Hersh, and Turner (1978) stated three reasons for improving inservice education:

- (1) with declining enrollments and related reductions in the work force, schools must emphasize developing current human resources over hiring new ones;
- (2) as the demands for educational reform have grown louder, more schools have attempted to implement new programs that require new attitudes and skills on the part of current staff;
- (3) traditional practices for organizing inservice education and times of scarce resources have rendered many would-be providers of inservice impotent (p. 196).

The literature would further indicate that effective inservice or staff development programs would consist of the following four components:

1. Staff development involvement in the planning, implementing, and conducting staff development
2. A clear process for defining staff needs
3. Well-planned activities to meet these determined staff needs
4. A comprehensive method of evaluating the staff development program

Kleine and Wisniewski (1981) stated that House Bill 1706 provides for the four basic components and must all involve parents and higher education personnel.

## Teacher Involvement in Initiating, Planning, and Conducting Staff Development

What has caused an adverse teacher reaction to staff development efforts in school systems throughout the country? Berrie (1975) stated that inservice education in the past has focused on the faculty, and is usually planned by the administrators. He further stated that to follow the established concept of teacher inservice education, the following characteristics should be noted:

1. All direction and impetus for inservice must come from the administration.
2. Teachers should not plan the program, since they might manipulate the sessions to meet their needs.
3. Inservice should be like watching a ball game. It should be a spectator sport.
4. The inservice program should be mostly theoretical in nature. The teachers should be able to figure out the applications.
5. Teachers' ideas and questions should not be discussed during the inservice time, since they would detract from the planned agenda.
6. Inservice should be given in the only acceptable form--the lecture.
7. Inservice also provides a good opportunity for the administrator to blow steam at the teachers' failings.

Brimm and Tollett (1974) wrote that most negative attitudes held by teachers and administrators toward inservice education were caused by poor planning and organization, activities that were impersonal and

unrelated to the day-to-day problems or participants, and a lack of involvement in planning and implementing by the participants.

Turner (1970) stated:

There are certain aspects of the traditional inservice program which rankle the teaching staff. In too many instances, some individuals in the central office determine what 'teachers need,' how much and in what manner, and then proceed to supply this 'assistance' without consulting the teachers themselves. The obvious result of such arbitrary action is that many otherwise satisfactory programs are not well received (p. 116).

In recent literature there are articles which indicate that an expanding number of states and school districts are formally recognizing the need for staff development efforts. These efforts for formalized staff development programs have consistently indicated the value of staff involvement in organizing, planning, and evaluating these programs.

Lawrence et al. (1974) undertook a comprehensive search for and review of research on inservice education. Their findings concluded that the inservice programs most successful in accomplishing the objectives were the ones that:

- (1) involved teachers actively in initiating, planning, and conducting the program, and
- (2) were designed as a collective effort of a faculty, with common purpose directed toward general faculty development (p. 2).

Leep, Creason, and Schilson (1968) suggested a plan which could be followed by school personnel in the organization and development of inservice education:

Involve teachers in the initial planning of curricular evaluation and study. In order for teachers to function professionally--to work as, and be viewed as, more than techniques--it is essential they participate in each phase of curriculum. The power to make decisions



concerning the instructional program is a primary component of the professional teacher's role (p. 114).

Ingersoll (1978) pointed out that decisions as to content, form, and arrangements for inservice training have typically been handled at an administrative level with little input from the teaching faculty. As Rubin (as cited in Ingersoll, p. 169) noted: "Teachers feel totally left out of a decision-making process that has direct impact on their professional welfare." Brimm and Tollett (1974, p. 521) stated: "Evidence has been presented that suggests that teacher attitudes reflect a general feeling that most inservice training is not responsive to their own needs."

To fail to include the teacher in initiating, planning, and conducting decisions lacks sense for a variety of reasons:

1. When teachers are involved at the choice point, they are more likely to carry their interest into actual training
2. It fails to make financial sense to offer something that has little relevance to teachers' needs
3. To make all the decisions for staff development at an administrative level presents a certain state for failure

#### Determining Staff Development Needs

Successful and effective inservice programs do not happen by accident--they are planned carefully to accommodate staff needs for both short- and long-range needs. Harris (1966) stated that times change, students change, curriculums change, and situations change, so there must be dynamic professional growth programs if there is to be anything approximating excellence in education, now and in the future.

Lawrence et al. (1974) pointed out that needs and preferences of users or clients must be at the starting point of all inservice activities--there must be response to these identified client needs. Taken as a group, teachers and administrators have many needs, but the needs must be based on a decision about what is "good." There are many competing notions about what is "good," and therefore their values are translated into inservice needs through a group decision (Arends, Hersh, and Turner, 1978).

One of the major reasons for staff development is to identify the staff needs before they become a crisis (Champagne, 1980). Nadler (1976) stated that content for staff development must come from the needs of the learner and this process must be a constant and ongoing process to meet the ever changing curriculum and conditions of the teacher.

The new National Teacher Center Program, as reviewed by Lovett and Schmieder (1978) states:

The teachers must have a greater voice in determining their own needs for inservice training since their needs have a close relationship to the needs of their students. Traditional inservice programs are generally not related to teachers' most urgent needs (p. 8).

King, Hayes, and Newman (1977) wrote that school systems with successful inservice programs made a genuine effort to identify all needs, wants, or problems that could be met through effective inservice. To identify their needs, ideas are drawn from a great variety of sources such as formal instruments, suggestion boxes, or perhaps by private consulting firms.

Kleiman (1974) indicated that identifying and determining faculty needs was the greatest challenge facing staff development. He further

stated that the success or failure of the program would depend upon the degree to which faculty themselves identified their own needs.

In the research by Ainsworth (1978) she stated:

No matter what type of inservice program is instituted, whether formal or informal, the teachers must be actively involved in determining the needs which provide linkage between technique and method and their particular level of instruction (p. 108).

Zigarmi, Betz, and Jensen (1977) stated from their research that the most useful inservice education programs are planned in response to the assessed needs of teachers and are built on the interests and strengths of the teachers for whom they were designed. The "Tips for Principals" from the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) (1982) bulletin stated:

Teachers want inservice that is relevant and feasible; that meets their immediate needs and concerns and teaches them to handle specific classroom situations. They would like to have more activities that combine application with theory (p. 2).

Williamson and Elfman (1982) indicated that teachers should be involved in determining their own inservice needs from the beginning. These needs should be divided into short- and long-range needs. The short-range needs would be dealt with in a single session to keep teachers up-to-date on particular topics. Short-range need lists should be developed by surveying faculty members. After the need lists are completed the staff should rank them in the order of importance to help plan the short-range activities. The short-range topics may deal with children of divorce, child abuse, accountability, or topics similar in nature. The long-range needs would take a longer period of time and would meet the needs that range from new classroom management systems to new systems of problem solving for the district.

Harris (1966) stated that teachers' and administrators' behavior is deeply rooted in tradition, habit, values, and interests, and does not change much with the class, type of principal, grade level, or curriculum. To bring about changes of this nature, long-range activities must be planned to help move up to something dramatically better.

O'Keefe (1974) suggested that the philosophy behind teacher-centered inservice education is to serve the needs of teachers so that they can respond effectively to the educational demands of the students and society. He continued by stating that the teachers must have sufficient control over their training, development, and professional performances to make each school an optimum operation in its time and place.

Dillon (1977) wrote in her research that:

Needs assessment related to staff development still lacks much in sophistication. In most school districts, little effective data are available to assist administrators and teachers in determining specific skills needed by staff members to produce quality education (p. 14).

The literature is specific in that teacher needs should be determined accurately, realistically, in-depth, and continually. There are many approaches used to determine these needs, however, they fall primarily into the following five areas:

1. Examining existing data currently available in all school systems that would indicate needs. Teacher and student evaluations, state and regional accreditation reports, students' cumulative files, and data on curriculum development.

2. Conducting surveys is an approach used frequently to determine the staff development needs of a school district. Surveys are

important but should not be a one-time exercise, since needs and perceptions of need change throughout a school year.

3. Observing existing programs, students and teachers assist in determining needs. Observers may identify need through various documentation skills.

4. Conducting interviews with individual teachers or groups of teachers can provide information used to determine needs. Often the interview will result from a self-evaluation by the classroom teacher.

5. Studying the needs of students will inevitably be reflected in the needs of teachers. If teachers study student needs and utilize the results, they will find their own needs and concerns diminished.

School systems who have successful staff development programs make a genuine effort to identify all local needs, wants, or problems that might possibly be met through effective inservice. It appears important that this determination not be made unilaterally by an administrator, supervisor, or outside expert. Suggestions from outsiders should be acceptable, but the successful program emphasizes suggestions from those who are to be staff development recipients and from those who have identified a particular need for a particular staff member.

Orlich (1983) stated that staff development may be classified as one means of effecting meaningful instructional or school improvement. Therefore, staff development becomes a concept that is based on the concept of change. As chief administrative officers in the school building, principals tend to initiate or retard change. Brickell (1964) observed that:

The administrator may promote or prevent innovation. He cannot stand aside or be ignored. He is powerful, not because he has a monopoly on imagination, creativity or interest in change--the opposite is common--but simply because he has authority to precipitate a decision. Authority is a critical element in innovation, because proposed changes generate general reactions which can prevent consensus in peers and result in stagnation (p. 503).

Byrne (1983) stated that the task of the building principal in staff development involves professional judgment, respecting teacher needs. The principal, in consultation with the teacher, prepares the professional staff development growth plan. Based upon these plans, he or she must evaluate recommendations for activities and workshops that will relate the plans to the staff development program.

Regardless of the different problems facing staff development, it appears the movement is coming of age. One of the necessary components of effective staff development is the manner in which staff members are involved to validate the needs of the staff. If staff development needs are formulated through staff involvement, it has the potential to contribute significantly to the realization of the dream of effective universal education.

#### Selecting Staff Development Activities

In staff development, the selection of all activities must be directed toward some clearly defined goal. Teachers who have negative feelings toward inservice because of programs poorly planned programs need to be more involved in selecting these activities.

Whitfield, Whitfield, and Purkerson (1983) stated:

Staff development is more effective when teachers are provided with choices. Allowing individuals to select activities that interest them promotes enthusiasm in

their efforts to grow professionally because their needs and concerns are more rapidly met (p. 231).

Goodlad (1972) stated that most inservice activities approved by school districts take the teachers away from the problems of their schools. Teachers learn a great deal from the demands of teaching each other and take readily to the activities of instruction by their peers. Zigarmi, Betz, and Jensen (1977) concluded their report by stating that good staff development activities help teachers extend and apply what they learn. In Larson's (1974) report she stated that that in Portland, Oregon's in-service program, the most effective in-service activities were those which were planned and implemented by the learners.

Howey (1976) stated that there are many ways to plan inservice activities that would effect change and improvement through the staff development program. These activities would include transitional activities that carry one from preservice to inservice, specific skill development, and personal growth. Other activities would include graduate level education, general professional development, and career progression.

Joyce, Howey, Yarger, Hill, Waterman, Vance, Park, and Baker (1976) stated that staff development activities tend to fall into certain modes or areas. Job-embedded activities allow the teacher to learn while actually on the job. Job-related activities take the form of workshops, which serve to help teachers solve problems of interest to the group. Credential oriented activities are used mainly by those seeking advanced degrees or certification, while professionally related activities are used to keep members of the professional organization

current in the relevant field of study. Self-directed activities help maintain and improve one's own skills through self-initiated activities.

Ehrenberg and Brandt (1976) stated that a strategy for staff development activities consists of a plan of actions that coordinate things and people to achieve an objective. Because many activities lack such strategy, learning outcomes for students are often not realized. Gardenswartz and Rowe (1983) stated that to capitalize on the staff's capabilities by building both awareness and skill, the staff development program should cover four essential areas: self-esteem, communication, stress, and problem solving. Harris (1966), in reviewing staff development patterns, indicated that as professional teachers, the basic modes of operation are rooted in old habits, skills, values, and techniques. When one tries to change these modes of operation we are challenging the teacher to become a substantially different person.

Wood and Thompson (1980) reported from their research that most inservice activities are planned on a districtwide basis--distant from the needs of the individual teacher in their own building. Yet, there is increasing evidence showing that most successful changes come at the building level. Howey (1976) stated that this approach embraces those learning activities which a teacher can engage in during the normal course of daily responsibilities. Examples of this approach could include collegial or self-observation, focused experimentation with a new teaching technique or curriculum design, or exploration with a different framework for diagnosing learning obstacles. This approach contains several appealing features, since it is economical in terms of both time and monies, and also focuses on the actual



teacher and student performance. It can be related to the specific needs of the teacher, bringing a balance between individual development and school renewal. Olivero (1976) stated that activities have been scheduled for the masses rather than attempting to individualize and personalize professional growth plans.

Nadler (1976) stated that schools can learn much more business and industry in terms of learning activities for employees. He stated that organizations must provide three different kinds of learning experiences which deal with training, education, and development. Goodlad (1972) said that teachers learn a great deal from the demands of teaching others and take readily to instruction by peers with whose experience they can readily identify.

Zenke (1976) reported findings indicating that inservice activities based on self-instruction by the teachers, activities that teachers plan and share, and activities linked to a general effort of the school are generally more effective. Hennegan (1972) explained that educational renewal activities have had success in correcting deficiencies, bringing changes in behavior, providing continual learning, and adopting to changes. Other areas of inservice activities will provide skills for efficiency, proper utilization of individual skills, and ways to seek new information for instructional skills development.

Ainsworth (1978) stated that most teachers have a desire for inservice programs on techniques and methods in their own particular areas and their own particular levels of instruction. Brimm and Tollett (1974) reported that their research in Tennessee indicated that teachers want inservice activities that help them cope with professional tasks more successfully.

## Evaluation--The Key Component

The final step in the process of staff development is evaluation. King, Hayes, and Newman (1977) stated that evaluation is the last step in staff development and should provide information that permits continued refinement of the local inservice program.

Griffin (1978), in his research on guidelines for the evaluation of staff development programs, stated:

There is a long history of practical and theoretical demands and suggestions of school-related activities. This history illustrates the rationality and logic of determining if what schools do is effective in achieving what they believe they are engaged in accomplishing and the political and social necessity for providing evidence that what schools do justifies the expenditure of limited human and material resources (p. 126).

"In-service Education: Current Trends and Schools Policies and Programs" (1975), published by the National School Public Relations Association, stated that:

Evaluation too often comes at the end of the activity but should arise long before the program is underway. With the emphasis in staff development on establishing goals and defining objectives in measurable terms, the basis for evaluation is ideally built into the objectives (p. 26).

Yeatts (1976) reported on a research study conducted in the Campbell County Teacher Center. His report indicated that evaluation of staff development is on-going and should be conducted in several ways. He further stated that each activity should be evaluated in writing by the individual participant, that an appraisal checklist should be completed on each activity, and that participation records should be evaluated on each employee to assist in the assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, and reception of the total program.

Dillon (1977) stated that it is very important to try to evaluate staff development efforts, but it is extremely difficult to establish quantitative or qualitative criteria. At the present time, the vast majority of staff development activities are evaluated subjectively. She also reported that until the districts and constituencies become more definitive about what is expected of schools, effective evaluation of staff development efforts is unlikely.

In a study reported by Fox and Griffin (1974), they indicated that a new collaborative approach was used in establishing staff development in Wayne County Intermediate School, District of Michigan. The participants in the workshops were involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the program. They responded through questionnaires and indicated that 90% of them have been able to identify examples of improvements in their schools or themselves.

Kleiman (1974) stated that inservice education should be developed to be practical and useful. The final step in the process of developing a practical program is the evaluation of the inservice experience. This should involve both the participants and the instructors as well. Brinkerhoff (1977) reported on the Evaluation Research Center at the University of Virginia, which supports the concept of public evaluation in all aspects of the school program. This model views evaluation as a comparison, the comparison of intent (what was planned) with performance as a comparison (what happened).

Griffin (1978) stated that evaluation should be ongoing, should be informed by multiple data sources, and should focus on all levels of the inservice program. Dillon (1977) stated:

Until the districts and their constituencies become more definitive about what is expected of schools--and until teachers and administrators become less threatened by the idea of accountability--effective evaluation of staff development efforts is unlikely (p. 15).

Evaluation is but one piece of a large puzzle called "inservice" or "staff" development. Only through careful planning, implementing, conducting, and evaluating can staff development realize its basic goal. That basic goal must be the improvement of instruction that enables boys and girls to realize consistent and lasting benefits.

### Summary

The increased attention recently focused on inservice programs supports the assumption that effective inservice is a direct means of improving the quality of instruction. However, that improvement of local inservice to an effective level requires a sustained commitment of effort and resources on the part of the planners, implementers, and the boards of education.

The demands of staff development provide highly trained individuals who know how to function productively as they deal with urgent issues and problems. Progress in staff development, in large part, is due to the fact that we now have a sense of direction, that more and more people are actively involved in planning, and that the quality and scope of involvement is beginning to focus on purposeful learning for our students.

Public education, in many cases, is suspect, and educational practices and traditions are being invalidated and transformed into relics. House Bill 1706, which mandates expanding efforts in staff development, now gives educators in Oklahoma a vehicle to develop

programs that reestablish the faith and confidence of students and parents.

The review of literature demonstrates the many approaches to effective staff development and that it should be a never ending process that brings school improvement. This literature review will assist the researcher in evaluating the perceptions of the Oklahoma superintendents relating to staff development as mandated by House Bill 1706.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The problem of this study was to investigate the perceptions of school superintendents of the effectiveness of the staff development programs in their school districts. House Bill 1706 mandated staff development on a statewide basis, and this study researched practices in selected school districts in Oklahoma to determine the total statewide effectiveness. This chapter is divided into the following sections: Population, Sample, Instrumentation, Data Collection Procedures, and Data Analysis Procedures.

#### Population

Bartz (1981) stated that population is a group of elements that are alike in one or more characteristics as defined by the researcher. Guilford (1956) reported that the term "population," in the broad sense, should include all sets of individuals, objectives, or reactions that can be described as having a unique pattern of qualities. The population for this study consisted of the superintendents in school districts in Oklahoma. The school districts for the purpose of this study were identified in the Oklahoma Educational Directory, 1983-84 (1983) as independent school districts that provide a K-12 school program. There were 458 districts in Oklahoma that were identified as the population for this study.

## Sample

Important questions in research are how the sample was determined and whether the sample is truly representative of the population. Bloomers and Lindquist (1960) stated that a sample is a collection consisting of a part of a subset of the objects or individuals of a population which is selected for the express purpose of representing the population.

The sample for this study was selected on a random basis. Garrett (1964) stated that the term "random" is often misunderstood to the point that individuals believe the sample has been chosen in an offhand, careless, or haphazard fashion. Instead, it means that there is a reliance upon a certain method of selection to provide an unbiased cross section of the larger group or population. Guilford (1956) wrote that random sampling is a manner of selecting cases from the population in such a manner that every individual in the population has an equal chance of being chosen. The selection of any one individual is also in no way tied to the selection of any other.

Of the 458 independent school districts in Oklahoma, it was determined that at least 10% should serve as the research sample. Using Table L in Appendix 2 of Bartz (1981), 34 were selected randomly to receive questionnaires, and 12 were selected for personal interviews.

## Instrumentation

The instrument used to collect the data for this study was a 46-item questionnaire developed especially for this study (Appendix B).

This questionnaire was submitted to a panel of judges for the purpose of establishing its validity. The questionnaire was revised and altered through suggestions from members of the doctoral committee. It was reviewed by 11 administrators and members of the staff development committee and then was field tested with 12 superintendents from school districts which had been selected randomly. The items were reviewed for understanding, proper meaning, clarity, and comprehensiveness.

#### Data Collection Procedures

The data were collected with the use of a 46-item questionnaire (Appendix B) for 34 superintendents selected randomly from a total of 458 independent school districts listed by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. An additional 12 superintendents were selected randomly to be interviewed, either in person or by telephone, using the questionnaire as a base for the interview but also recording other pertinent information that was relevant. Questions from the instrument were asked and responses properly recorded with related information relative to any particular item recorded.

The questionnaire was sent to the selected superintendents, along with an introductory letter (Appendix A) and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The school superintendents selected for the interview were also mailed a copy of the questionnaire and later contacted by telephone to arrange an interview time. The superintendents who were interviewed received the questionnaire with instructions to review the instrument so that they would be somewhat knowledgeable of the content and manner of response for the various items.



The introductory letter requested the questionnaires be completed and returned within a two week period of time. Additional copies of the questionnaire were made available to the selected superintendents should the original have been misplaced.

#### Data Analysis Procedures

The data from the questionnaires and from the interviews were recorded according to school size. The lower one-third of the number were considered small schools, the middle one-third were considered middle-sized schools, while the top one-third were referred to as large schools.

While the study focused on the perceptions of the superintendent, there was reason to believe that superintendents from different sized schools would tend to have perceptions grouped more nearly together if they were from the same sized school. The data from all three sized schools were recorded and analyzed on the basis of how uniform the perceptions were on each item and how similar they were within the school size group.

The data analysis procedures keyed in on three major areas: (1) demographic data; (2) the analysis of the degree of involvement by the superintendent; and (3) analysis of data dealing with program outcomes, program activities, program evaluations, and program needs.

The demographic data were compiled into tables which provided the following information:

1. The age of the superintendents in the study
2. The highest degree held by the superintendents
3. The total number of years having served as superintendent

4. The total number of years the superintendent had served in this district

This data were evaluated for the purpose of describing the sample used in this study and whether these factors caused a significant difference in the perceptions of the superintendents based on these data regarding staff development effectiveness.

The superintendents' dedication and commitment to the Staff Development Program was determined by data provided regarding their participation and overall involvement in the local staff development program. Involvement in the development programs was clarified by such activities by the superintendents as: serving as a presenter, serving on the staff development committee, and number of staff development activities attended. Data gathered from questions relative to how the superintendents earned most of their staff development points, whether or not they sought assistance for the staff development program from the State Department of Education or from higher education instructors, or whether or not they gave high priority to staff development, would indicate commitment.

The third part of the data analysis procedure was designed to provide information on the development and implementation of staff development as mandated by House Bill 1706. The procedures to determine program needs, program activities, program outcomes, and program evaluations were examined to compare and contrast the efforts in the individual school districts to determine how effective they were perceived to have been.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter presents an analysis of the data gathered from questionnaires and personal interviews involving a sampling of superintendents from public schools in Oklahoma. The purpose of the questionnaire and the personal interview was to determine the superintendents' perceptions of staff development effectiveness in Oklahoma.

The questionnaires were mailed to 34 superintendents who were selected randomly from a listing of schools in the Oklahoma Educational Directory, 1983-84 (1983). An additional 12 superintendents were selected randomly from the same source for personal interviews covering the same items on the questionnaire. From the 34 questionnaires mailed, a total of 30 were completed and returned within a two week period of time. A follow-up contact by mail resulted in the return of four additional completed questionnaires, for a total of 34. The 12 personal interviews were completed at the home school of the superintendent, at statewide professional meetings, or by telephone.

The superintendents who made up the sample for this research received a copy of the questionnaire. Thirty-four of the respondents returned the questionnaire within a three week period of time. The remaining 12 superintendents were interviewed either in person or by telephone using the questionnaire as a guide for these interviews. In conducting the interviews, the respondents did not appear to be

reluctant or evasive in their responses, but did ask additional questions for clarification. While the interview technique takes considerably more time to conduct, it would appear that this approach did provide strength for this study.

### Description of Respondents

Demographic data were collected for the purpose of describing the sample used in this study and to compare and examine the perceptions of the superintendents regarding staff development effectiveness (see Tables I through V). Additionally, practices and procedures in various sized school districts relative to the staff development program were to be analyzed.

The superintendents in this study represented 46 of the 458 superintendents representing the independent districts in Oklahoma. Of the 46 superintendents from which data were received, 17 represented independent school districts having a student population of 750 or fewer and were considered small districts. The next 15 superintendents represented independent schools with a student population of 751 to 3200, and were considered middle-sized schools. The last 14 superintendents in the sample represented independent school districts with 3200 or more students and were considered large schools.

The student enrollment in the small schools ranged from 140 students to 750 students and represented 37% of the schools in the study. School size in the medium group of schools ranked from 1030 students to 3200 students, and represented 32.7% of the schools in this study. The third group of schools had students that ranged from 4000 to 46,000 in size (Table I).

TABLE I  
DISTRIBUTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS BY  
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Students	Superintendents	%
0-750 (Small)	17	37.0
751-3200 (Medium)	15	32.6
3200+ (Large)	<u>14</u>	<u>30.4</u>
Totals	46	100.0

The school size for this study was determined by arbitrarily dividing the number of schools in the sample into three groups. This division of schools does not reflect the same pattern in school enrollment in Oklahoma if the total number of schools were divided into three equally numbered groups. If schools in Oklahoma were divided into three equal groups, the small schools' enrollment would range from 81 to 431 students, the middle-sized schools would show enrollment from 432 to 1049, and the large-sized schools would show enrollment from 1050 to 46,000 students. The arbitrary division was applied when it appeared a significant difference might exist relative to superintendents' perceptions regarding staff development effectiveness in their districts.

#### Ages of Superintendents

The ages of the superintendents in this study had a wide range,

with the 40-49 age bracket containing the highest percentage (41.4%), while the 50-59 age bracket contained 39.1% of the respondents. The smaller schools had the younger superintendents, while the superintendents from the larger schools were grouped in the 50-59 age bracket (Table II).

TABLE II  
DISTRIBUTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS BY AGE

Age	Superintendents	%
30-39	5	10.8
40-49	19	41.4
50-59	18	39.1
60+	4	8.7
Totals	46	100.0

#### Years of Experience

Respondents from the small schools averaged 8.25 years of experience as school superintendents, while those in the medium size schools averaged 11.8 years of experience. The large school superintendents averaged 12.6 years of experience (Table III).

TABLE III  
DISTRIBUTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS BY YEARS OF  
EXPERIENCE AS SUPERINTENDENTS

School Size	Superintendents	Average Years
Small schools	17	8.2
Medium schools	15	11.8
Large schools	<u>14</u>	12.6
Total	46	

#### Experience in Present District

It is interesting to note that not only did the large school superintendents have more years of experience, they averaged more years (8.2) of experience in their present district than the other two groups. The middle-sized school superintendents had averaged 7.3 years in their current districts, while the small school superintendents had averaged 6.75 years in their present districts (Table IV).

#### Highest Degree Held

The information provided by the respondents indicated that 32.6% of them had doctorates, 65.2% had master's degrees plus 30 hours, and 2.2% had master's degrees. Of the respondents from large schools, 64.3% had doctorates, while 20% of the middle-sized schools and 11.8% of the small-sized school superintendents had doctorates (Table V).

TABLE IV  
DISTRIBUTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS BY YEARS OF  
EXPERIENCE IN THIS DISTRICT

School Size	Superintendents	Average Years
Small schools	17	6.75
Medium schools	15	7.30
Large schools	<u>14</u>	<u>8.20</u>
Total	46	

TABLE V  
DISTRIBUTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS BY  
HIGHEST DEGREE HELD

Degree	Superintendents	%
Master's	1	2.2
Master's + 30 hours	30	65.2
Doctorate	<u>15</u>	<u>32.6</u>
Totals	46	100.0



The demographic data found in Tables I through V not only describe the sample used in this study but also provides information relative to superintendents' involvement in the local staff development program. The superintendents from the small school group had a significantly different involvement in the local staff development program than did the superintendents from the large school group. The superintendents from the middle-sized school group tended to have less difference in their involvement in the local staff development program. Therefore, the comparison in superintendents' involvement in the local staff development program will be made between the small school and the large school superintendents.

Superintendents from the small schools were generally younger, had less experience as superintendents, and had a lower academic degree level than did the superintendents from the larger schools. The superintendents from the larger schools had more years of experience in their current positions and communicated the staff development program more frequently to boards of education and to the public as well.

The superintendents from the small school group reported that they attended more local staff development workshops, served on more local staff development committees, and sought assistance for staff development more often from the State Department of Education than did their colleagues from the larger schools. Superintendents from the small group of schools were seldom involved as presenters for local staff development, while superintendents from the larger schools were involved frequently as presenters for local staff development programs.

The State Department of Education was less frequently involved with larger schools in planning and consulting regarding the local staff development program. Larger schools indicated that representatives from higher education have been used to a greater degree for planning, implementing, and consulting for their local staff development program.

While superintendents from the small schools and the large schools agreed that staff development was important for administrators, there is a difference in how this need is met for the two groups of schools. The small school superintendents indicated that limited funds precluded many staff development activities for them on a local basis. Therefore, most of their points were earned through staff development activities planned by the State Department of Education or through activities planned by their professional organization. In the case of the large school superintendents, most of their staff development points were earned through locally planned administrator inservice workshops and activities.

In matters dealing with monitoring and evaluating the local staff development program, the small school superintendents had little involvement. While the large school superintendents were not greatly involved in monitoring and evaluating the local program, there was adequate assistance from other administrative personnel to enable the superintendent to perceive the program to be functioning effectively.

Superintendents from all schools in Oklahoma perceived the funding level for staff development to be inadequate. The small school superintendents did not allocate additional funding for the local staff development program. Superintendents from larger schools

recommended the use of additional funds to provide a more complete staff development program for their district.

#### Attendance at Local Workshops

Attendance at local staff development workshops indicated that 54.5% of the superintendents had attended between one and three workshops during the past school year. Ten respondents had attended between four and five local workshops, while eight had attended between six and seven, and three had attended more than seven local staff development workshops. No attempt was made to determine whether these workshops were scheduled for all certified personnel or for superintendents only. (Table VI reports the distribution of workshop attendance.)

TABLE VI  
DISTRIBUTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS' ATTENDANCE  
AT LOCAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Workshops Attended	Superintendents	%
1-3	25	54.4
4-5	20	21.7
5-7	8	15.2
More	<u>3</u>	<u>8.7</u>
Totals	46	100.0

## Superintendents' Involvement

The question of the superintendents' involvement has provided information that will indicate some degree of commitment to the local staff development program. While no attempt was made to differentiate between the superintendents' involvement from the various district sizes, it would appear that this data would add clarity to the study and to the degree of involvement by the superintendents in staff development (Table VII).

### Analysis of Research Questions

#### Research Question One

Research question one was stated as follows: "What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the procedures used to determine the staff development needs?" (The findings are shown in Table VIII and in the report below.)

Findings. The superintendents perceived by a high percentage (72%) that the district staff development needs were determined by assessing the needs of the parents, students, teachers, and administrators. The data further showed (74%) that the activities planned by the local staff development committee did meet the goals of the local school district.

The respondents agreed (85%) that the needs of the school administrators were not being met adequately through local staff development activities. The survey data showed that 80% of the school administrators have earned a majority of their staff development points in state administrator meetings.

TABLE VII  
SUPERINTENDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL  
STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Item No.	% Yes	% No
1. I have served as a member of the local staff development committee.	43	57
2. I have served as a presenter for a local staff development program.	61	39
3. I have encouraged the board of education members to attend local staff development activities.	54	46
4. I have contacted and received assistance from the State Department of Education and Higher Education in developing our staff development program.	85	15
5. I place the staff development calendar on the board of education agenda each month for information.	20	80
6. I have earned most of my staff development points in state administrator meetings.	61	39
7. I have recommended that additional local funds be provided for staff development above those funds provided by the state.	39	61
	% Agree	% Disagree
8. I believe the mandated staff development program is positive legislation that will lead to improved professional growth.	80	20
9. I, as superintendent, should direct the staff development program.	9	91
10. I have a primary responsibility as superintendent to give priority to staff development and to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated.	50	50
11. I have had little involvement in monitoring and evaluating the staff development program.	50	50

TABLE VII (Continued)

Item No.	3	5	7	More
	(in Percentages)			
12. I have attended the following number of locally planned staff development activities this year.	54	22	15	9
13. What staff development regulations would you suggest be changed by the State Department of Education?	<u>Frequency of Suggestions</u>			
a. Give more balance to the makeup of the staff development committee by decreasing the number of teachers serving on the committee.	85			
b. Eliminate the extreme amount of paper work involved in reporting to the State Department of Education and shorten the applications.	70			
c. Eliminate the teacher stipends and recommend the money be used for merit pay.	65			
d. Provide additional money to assure quality staff development exercises for teachers.	55			

The interview data indicates that the planning and control of staff development is controlled by a majority of teachers, therefore, few activities are planned for professional growth for school administrators. A strong consensus exists among the respondents that

regulations governing staff development in Oklahoma should be changed to eliminate the requirement that the staff development committee be comprised of a majority of teachers.

TABLE VIII  
PROCEDURES USED TO DETERMINE THE  
STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Item No.	% Agree	% Disagree
40. Our staff development activities should reflect teacher needs rather than student needs.	50	50
41. The community understands and supports the need for staff development.	61	39
42. Our staff development activities reflect school needs.	78	22
43. The needs of school administrators are being met adequately through staff development activities.	15	85
44. Our district staff development needs were determined by assessing the needs of parents, students, teachers, and administrators.	72	28
45. The planned staff development activities are designed to meet the goals of the district.	74	26
46. Our staff development activities reflect student needs.	59	41

The interview data provided some notions that some staff development committees are less than complete in involving all segments of the community in the needs assessment function. It appears that in some needs assessment efforts the student needs are assessed at a lower priority level than those of the teachers. Where little increase in the student achievement level is evident, the superintendents perceived the cause to be related to an unsatisfactory effort in adequately assessing the district needs.

The respondents were equally divided on the question of whether the staff development activities should be developed to meet the needs of the students or of the staff members. On the question of activities meeting staff needs, the respondents were equally divided, with 50% agreeing and 50% disagreeing. The superintendents agreed by 59% that the staff development activities should reflect the student needs. The most interesting aspect in the staff development area was that the majority (78%) of the school superintendents perceived the local staff development activities to truly reflect school needs, and in so doing, met the needs of both staff and students.

A clear majority of the respondents (61%) indicated that the community understood and supported the concept of staff development. Because of the staff development activity in each community, there appears to be a rising expectation for an increase in student achievement and a greater degree of visible involvement of parents in school activities. Some respondents who were interviewed observed that the public with whom they worked were expecting substantial improvement and changes as a result of the public investment in staff development.



The results of the research strongly indicate that superintendents perceived the procedures for determining staff development needs were adequately met. The process developed locally for determining staff development needs also begins to present a definitive pattern of what is expected of schools (see Table VIII).

### Research Question Two

Research question two was stated as follows: "What are the superintendents' perceptions of the staff development objectives planned to meet the assessed needs?" (The results are shown in Table IX and in the report below.)

Findings. The respondents reported by 85% that staff development should not exist for the purpose of developing professional teacher organizations, but that developing teacher skills should be the major goal of all staff development programs.

While 70% of the respondents perceived that staff development did very little to correct teacher deficiencies, it should lead to the development of new methods of instruction and the overall improvement in the quality of school programs.

The superintendents perceived in 87% of the reports that staff development should assist in developing good human relations skills, and this should be one of the major goals of all staff development programs.

In the interview data it was perceived by the superintendents that little could be done through staff development to salvage a marginally performing teacher if this was an identified need. These

respondents reported that it would be better to find a replacement, whenever possible, who had the potential to develop into quality teacher rather than to invest time and effort in one who had little possibility for success in the classroom (Table IX).

TABLE IX  
STAFF DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES TO  
MEET THE ASSESSED NEEDS

Item No.		% Agree	% Disagree
15.	Staff development is not for developing professional teacher organizations.	85	15
16.	Teacher skill development is a basic goal of our staff development program.	94	6
19.	Most staff development activities have not led to instructional improvement.	30	70
21.	Staff development should focus on improving the quality of school programs.	85	15
24.	Staff development does assist in developing human relations skills.	87	13
25.	Staff development does not provide for correcting teacher deficiencies.	70	30
26.	Staff development should be for developing new methods of instruction.	74	26

### Research Question Three

Research question three was stated as follows: "What are the superintendents' perceptions of staff development activities developed to accomplish the stated program objectives?" (The findings appear in Table X and in the report below.)

Findings. The results from the survey indicate a variety of planned staff development activities to meet the stated program objectives. While these activities may vary widely in terms of content, there appears to be a very evenly divided time pattern in four of the five options.

Superintendents reported that the most commonly used time pattern for workshop length was one hour. Of the five time options given, the results showed that 26% of the schools usually scheduled staff development activities that were one hour in length. The middle-sized group of school showed that 33% of the workshops they scheduled were one hour in length, while the small schools showed that one hour workshops were scheduled only 20% of the time.

Local school districts across the State of Oklahoma (22%) planned staff development following a two hour pattern. The larger schools in Oklahoma scheduled two hour staff development activities 28% of the time, while middle-sized schools scheduled two hour staff development activities only 18% of the time. Interview data indicated that districts which covered a larger geographical area had some difficulty bringing the staff together, therefore, scheduled fewer staff development activities but scheduled them for a longer period of time.

TABLE X  
STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED TO  
ACCOMPLISH PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

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<u>Small Schools</u>	
A. One hour in length	20%
B. Two hours in length	20%
C. Half-day in length	32%
D. All day in length	23%
E. Scheduled in the summer	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%
<u>Middle Schools</u>	
A. One hour in length	33%
B. Two hours in length	19%
C. Half-day in length	14%
D. All day in length	31%
E. Scheduled in the summer	<u>3%</u>
Total	100%
<u>Large Schools</u>	
A. One hour in length	28%
B. Two hours in length	28%
C. Half-day in length	19%
D. All day in length	20%
E. Scheduled in the summer	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%
<u>Summary of All Schools</u>	
A. One hour in length	26%
B. Two hours in length	22%
C. Half-day in length	23%
D. All day in length	24%
E. Scheduled in the summer	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%

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Smaller districts in Oklahoma scheduled more half-day staff development activities than did other districts. The total population of the sample scheduled half-day staff development activities 23% of the time, while the smaller schools scheduled half-day staff development activities 32% of the time.

The respondents from small schools who were interviewed indicated that the distance from a university campus center or a metropolitan center caused them to schedule longer activities to more adequately utilize the time of the resource persons. Another factor that appeared to cause the smaller schools to follow this time pattern was the commitment of staff to after school assignments such as coaching, supervision of agricultural activities, and bus driving.

A similar percentage (22%) of the schools scheduled most of their staff development activities for a full day. These activities were scheduled at a time when the students were dismissed from school, and staff attendance was mandated. A number of the respondents indicated that they could justify the expense of quality staff development consultants and could be assured that there would be total staff attendance at these staff development activities.

The respondents reported that locally planned staff development activities scheduled for the summer were the least popular. Summer jobs, college or university attendance, vacations, and the extreme heat caused this time to be the least desirable for planned staff development activities (see Table X).

#### Research Question Four

Research question four was stated as follows: "What are the

superintendents' perceptions of the alternative activities and delivery systems used to meet the needs identified by the local needs assessment?" The findings are presented below.

Findings. The respondents, through the survey and interviews, expressed concern regarding this aspect of the staff development program in Oklahoma. Their perceptions clearly indicated that their teacher controlled staff development committees would approve activities that appeared to have marginal value for professional growth. These alternatives ranged from vacation travel to aerobics and microwave cooking, and appeared to have little or no value for developing classroom skills that create better learning experiences for students.

A large majority of the respondents (80%) reported the Oklahoma State Department of Education should be more definitive in terms of the staff development activities that should be approved for credit. Additionally, the superintendents perceived a need for regulation that would require teachers and administrators to complete three hours of college or university credit every three years. This resident academic course work should be directly related to the area of certification for the individual teacher or administrator.

The interview data from schools in all three size categories indicated that the superintendents do perceive the alternative activities as an extremely weak part of a very worthwhile program. Teachers who control the majority on the staff development committees often approve activities that appear to have little value for improving instruction. Travel abroad appears to be the most abused of the alternative activities approved by staff development committees.

With the pressures of inadequate financing, inflation, demands for accountability, and low confidence in education, superintendents indicated that they were squeezing every area of their budgets. One of the first areas to be affected is staff development, as witnessed by lack of funds to pay teacher stipends during the past two school years. When steps such as these are taken, superintendents must realize that the life is being squeezed out of the educational system. When superintendents see staff development funds approved for low priority alternative staff development activities, they are not very convincing to the public and the legislature that improved funding in the staff development area will produce tangible, visible results in student learning.

The superintendents perceived that public schools in the near future cannot hire teachers who already have all the skills they need. Therefore, the staff development program and suggested alternative activities will become more vital to the development of quality teachers and administrators.

#### Research Question Five

Research question five was stated as follows: "What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the relevance of the total staff development program?" (The findings appear in Table XI and in the report below.)

Findings. Over 60% of the respondents agreed that student achievement performance has remained on the same level despite efforts to improve instruction through the staff development program. The

superintendents perceived by some 89% that significant improvement in educational practice requires considerable time and long-term development programs.

TABLE XI  
SUPERINTENDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING RELEVANCE  
OF TOTAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Item No.		% Agree	% Disagree
14.	Student achievement performance has remained on the same level despite the efforts to improve instructor through the staff development program.	61	39
18.	Significant improvement in educational practice takes considerable time and long-term staff development programs.	89	11
19.	Most staff development activities have not led to instructional improvement.	30	70
29.	Staff development activities are scheduled that are research based and limited to those that will improve student achievement.	35	65
32.	Our year-end evaluation indicates no significant improvement in the instructional program because of staff development.	26	74
36.	Our staff development program was of little value before House Bill 1706.	41	59
37.	The total staff development program in my district is extremely effective.	65	35
41.	The community understands and supports the need for staff development.	61	39
45.	The planned staff development activities are designed to meet the goals of the district.	74	26



A significant majority of the superintendents (70%) indicated that most staff development activities have led to instructional improvement which will reflect an increase in student achievement levels in the near future. The superintendents reported that in 74% of the year-end evaluations, teachers indicated seeing significant instructional improvement because of staff development.

The respondents were almost equally split on whether there were any meaningful staff development programs before House Bill 1706. They also agreed by some 64% that the community understands and supports the need for staff development.

It is interesting to note that the superintendents, by 65%, perceived their local staff development to be extremely effective. Although some effectiveness has been achieved, there is much yet to be done if staff development is to reach the high levels of expectation for an improved instructional program (see Table XI).

#### Research Question Six

Research question six was stated as follows: "What are the superintendents' perceptions of the process established for evaluating the local staff development program?" (The findings are shown in Table XII and in the report below.)

Findings. The superintendents reported, by 74%, that significant improvement has occurred in the instructional program because of staff development, and year-end evaluations in 91% of the cases indicated that the identified needs are adequately met. The respondents further

stated, by 85%, that the year-end evaluations were used to refine the staff development programs in their districts.

TABLE XII  
PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROCESS ESTABLISHED FOR  
EVALUATING LOCAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM

Item No.	% Agree	% Disagree
32. Our year-end evaluation indicates no significant improvement in the instructional program because of staff development.	26	74
33. Our year-end evaluation is used to determine if the identified needs are met.	91	9
34. Our year-end evaluation is not used to refine the staff development program.	15	85
35. Most staff development activities offered locally are evaluated in writing by those who attend.	89	11
36. Our staff development program was of little value before House Bill 1706.	41	59
37. The total staff development program in my district is extremely effective.	65	35
38. Each staff development activity has a clearly stated set of objectives.	74	26
39. Each staff development activity has a long-range follow-up evaluation.	35	65

A majority of the districts (89%), through the superintendents' responses, indicated that all staff development activities are evaluated in writing. Those evaluations are a necessary part of improving the staff development programs and eliminating those less relevant activities.

The interview data completely supports the data gathered through the use of the questionnaires. Superintendents selected for interviews perceived the evaluation process as being thorough and used to refine the staff development program from year to year. Superintendents perceived that often the evaluation was more reflective of the personality of the presenter than the content of the staff development presentation.

Respondents indicated with some degree of indifference that they maintained an effective staff development program in their district before House Bill 1706. The smaller districts very strongly (70%) indicated that their districts provided very little effective staff development activity, while the larger districts reported some very effective programs.

The response from all districts indicates that 65% of them evaluated their staff development programs as very effective. It would appear that House Bill 1706 has caused significant improvement in staff development for the smaller schools, and some improvement for other schools.

Each staff development activity has a clearly stated set of objectives, as reported by 74% of the responses. It would appear that one area of weakness in the programs would be the long-range follow-up to determine the impact on students and the quality of learning

experiences they have while in school. Sixty-five percent of the respondents indicated no long-range follow-up or no present plan to implement such an evaluation (see Table XII).

#### Research Question Seven

Research question seven was stated as follows: "What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the decision-making authority of the staff development committee?" (The findings are shown in Table XIII and in the report below.)

Findings. The respondents indicated, by 57%, that they had not served on their local staff development committees. Since the superintendent can appoint for this committee, it would appear that more of them should be involved, hence, an assurance of less teacher control in the direction of the local staff development activities. The superintendents indicated, by 85%, that their needs were not met through local staff development activities, and further stated, by 61%, that the major number of points they earned were at state level workshops.

In 61% of the cases reported, the superintendents would not recommend that additional local funds be provided for staff development, above those funds provided through the state. The interview data indicated that there were two basic reasons for the superintendents to take this position. First, the finances of the state are greatly limited and the superintendents felt this additional more was more vitally needed in other areas; secondly, the superintendents did not desire the staff development control over additional funds.

TABLE XIII  
 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE DECISION-MAKING  
 AUTHORITY OF THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT  
 COMMITTEE

Item No.	% Yes	% No
1. I have served as a member of the local staff development committee.	43	57
6. I have earned most of my staff development points in state administrator meetings.	61	39
7. I have recommended that additional local funds be provided for staff development above those funds provided by the state.	39	61
11. I have had little involvement in monitoring and evaluating the staff development program.	50	50
31. Staff development points are earned through local teacher led workshops.	60	40
39. Each staff development activity has a long-range follow-up evaluation.	35	65
43. The needs of school administrators are being met adequately through local staff development activities.	15	85

One weakness in the staff development program was the lack of long-range evaluation and planning. The respondents indicated, by 65%, that this was a significant problem and that teachers did not appear to look to the future as they planned on a year-to-year basis for staff development (see Table XIII).

Research Question Eight

Research question eight was stated as follows: "What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the involvement of higher education instructors in consulting with the local staff development committee?" (The findings are found in Table XIV and in the report below.)

TABLE XIV  
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS IN CONSULTING  
WITH LOCAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

Item No.	% Agree	% Disagree
4. I have contacted and received assistance from the State Department of Education and Higher Education in developing our staff development program.	85	15
21. Staff development should focus on improving the quality of school programs.	85	15
31. Staff development points are earned through college consultant-led workshops.	90	10
36. Our staff development program was of little value before House Bill 1706.	41	59
39. Each staff development activity has a long-range follow-up evaluation.	35	65
45. The planned staff development activities are designed to meet the goals of the district.	74	26

Findings. The respondents generally agreed, by 85%, that the State Department of Education and Higher Education had been contacted and assistance had been received for the local staff development program. Eighty-five percent of the schools indicated that staff development had focused on improving the quality of school programs, and that many suggestions and much guidance from higher education had been received.

Ninety percent of the respondents indicated that they used higher education to present staff development workshops, but only 10% of the total workshop time was scheduled for these workshops. Local teacher-led staff development workshops were scheduled 60% of the time by the local staff development committees.

Superintendents from the interview data clearly supported the higher education instructors serving as consultants to local staff development committees. Higher education instructors would provide direction for continuity and for long-ranged planning as well. Without the higher education instructors, the quality of staff development may be adversely affected.

In general, a majority of the respondents agreed that many successful staff development programs existed before House Bill 1706, and the planned staff development activities were designed to meet the goals of the local districts. Many of these programs that existed before House Bill 1706 were a result of direction from higher education. Sixty-five percent of the planned staff development activities had little long-range follow-up--a need that superintendents perceived higher education meeting (see Table XIV).

### Research Question Nine

Research question nine was stated as follows: "What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the staff earning additional compensation for participating in staff development activities?" (The findings are in the report below.)

Findings. Item 13 of the survey instrument asked the respondents to list regulations that should be changed by the State Department of Education. From the questionnaires and the interviews, the respondents indicated that additional compensation should not be paid directly to the teacher. Data indicated that the superintendents would: (1) increase the funding and have that increase as a salary increase for those who had met their required staff development point total, (2) increase the funding level in staff development point total, or (3) increase the funding level in staff development and develop a statewide plan on the basis of merit for utilizing these funds for teacher compensation.

Additionally, some respondents would eliminate the stipend and not renew the contracts of those teachers who do not meet the yearly staff development point total. Others indicated that they would completely favor the elimination of staff development and appropriate the funds for the improvement of basic academic programs. In general, two-thirds of the respondents expressed a need to do more collaborative planning with adjoining districts to better utilize the available funds more wisely.



### Research Question Ten

Research question ten was stated as follows: "What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding staff development for administrators?" (The findings appear in Table XV and in the report below.)

Findings. The superintendents perceived, by 85%, that the school administrators' needs were not being adequately met through local staff development activities. As a result, 60% of the superintendents reported that most of their staff development points were being met in state administrator workshops. The interview data indicated that the majority of the superintendents felt that little staff development activity was scheduled for administrators because of the predominant number of teachers making up the staff development committees.

While the respondents reported (61%) having served as presenters for local staff development activities, less than half have served as members of the local staff development committee. The superintendents believed, by some 80%, that the mandated staff development program is positive legislation that will lead to improved professional growth. They also reported (91%) that professional growth requires commitment to new performance norms. The data showed that in 74% of the responses from the superintendents, they perceived no reduction in their power or authority because of staff development (see Table XV).

TABLE XV  
 SUPERINTENDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF STAFF  
 DEVELOPMENT FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Item No.	% Yes	% No
1. I have served as a member of the local staff development committee.	43	57
2. I have served as a presenter for a local staff development program.	61	39
6. I have earned most of my staff development points in state administrator meetings.	61	39
8. I believe the mandated staff development program is positive legislation that will lead to improved professional growth.	80	20
20. Professional growth requires commitment to new performance norms.		
	% Agree	% Disagree
20. Professional growth requires commitment to new performance norms.	91	9
27. My power and authority as superintendent have not been reduced because of staff development	74	26
43. The needs of school administrators are being met adequately through local staff development.	15	85

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of school superintendents regarding the effectiveness of the staff development programs in their school districts. This study has researched practices in selected districts in Oklahoma to determine the total statewide effectiveness of staff development.

The sample consisted of 46 Oklahoma school superintendents who administer school districts with student populations ranging in size from 140 to 46,000. Thirty-four of the superintendents received questionnaires, and 12 superintendents were interviewed in person or by telephone.

Superintendents who responded to the questionnaire in writing provided essentially the same information as those who were interviewed in person or by telephone. The questionnaire and interview requested demographic data on the superintendent relative to: age, degree held, number of years as a superintendent, number of years as superintendent in his or her district, total student enrollment for the school district, and perceptions of the local staff development program. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 33 items

designed to gather data on the staff development program needs, outcomes, activities, and evaluation procedures.

This chapter summarizes the results of the research and the review of the related literature, with conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research. The study focused on the 10 research questions which were presented in Chapter I.

### Conclusions and Implications

Based upon the questionnaire and interview findings of the study, the following conclusions and implications were drawn:

1. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the procedures used to determine the staff development needs?

There is a close relationship between the superintendents' perceptions of the procedures used to determine staff development needs and the effectiveness of the total program. Superintendents perceived, by 78%, that staff development activities reflected school needs while meeting student and teacher needs as well.

The respondents indicated, by 72%, that staff development activities were not planned until there was a complete assessment of the needs of parents, students, teachers, and administrators. While the plan called for the meeting of needs for administrators, 85% of those surveyed indicated that their administrators' needs were not being met through local staff development activities.

2. What are the superintendents' perceptions of the staff development objectives planned to meet the assessed needs?

Superintendents perceived that the success or failure of the staff development program depends upon the degree to which the staff

members themselves are involved in identifying their needs, the limitations and content of the total program, and the degree of program concentration on any one area of identified needs. From the identified needs and degree of program concentration or objectives, the activities should be selected that would provide a complete and effective staff development program.

The respondents strongly indicated that one of the major objectives of their staff development program was staff renewal. The priority of activities in the various districts indicated that teachers felt pressures from changes in curriculum, instruction, and society, and want to develop skills to cope with a rapidly changing set of demands and circumstances.

3. What are the superintendents' perceptions of the staff development activities developed to accomplish the stated program objectives?

The findings, as reported in Chapter IV, indicated that a variety of staff development activities were developed to accomplish the stated program objectives. Current practices reported in this study clearly indicated that in 74% of the cases each staff development activity had a clearly stated set of objectives. In 65% of the cases, there appeared to be little to indicate that follow-up was being done with students to determine whether the activities met the objectives on a long-range basis.

The superintendents perceived, in 91% of the cases, that objectives were clearly being met and that the program of staff development in Oklahoma has been extremely effective. In 85% of the cases, superintendents perceived that data collected from evaluations was not being used effectively to refine the local staff development program

or to suggest changes for total program improvement in order to clearly meet the program objectives on a long-term basis.

Activities scheduled to meet the state program objectives appeared to vary in length rather equally between the one hour workshop (25%), the two hour workshop (22%), the half-day workshop (23%), and the full day workshop (24%). This pattern of workshop length appeared to be inconsistent with the literature, which indicated that shorter and more concentrated workshops were considered to be more effective and useful to teachers (Zigarmi, Betz, and Jensen, 1977).

It is interesting to note that the superintendents perceived the need to involve teachers, students, parents, and administrators in developing the staff development objectives, and also the need to be involved in the development of the activities to meet these objectives. Arends, Hersh, and Turner (1978) have stated that the development of effective staff development programs should include the cooperative efforts between teachers and administrators to develop activities that would benefit the entire staff.

4. What are the superintendents' perceptions of the alternative systems used to meet the needs identified by the local needs assessment?

The superintendents perceived that many of the alternative activities approved by the local staff development committee have contributed very little toward meeting the needs identified by the local needs assessment. Rather, these alternative activities appeared to meet teachers' needs that are not directly related to the activities of their professional organizations.

While superintendents agreed that alternative activities may have value, they perceived that local staff development committees should

look with greater scrutiny on these activities before approval. Careful evaluation of these alternative activities link staff and local needs to student achievement needs and proper utilization of the funds that provided for staff development.

5. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the relevance of the total staff development program?

The superintendents perceived that a majority of the staff development activities were extremely relevant and did indeed meet the needs of teachers, leading to a significant improvement in the instructional program. The staff development programs have also caused professional growth and a commitment to new performance norms for the teachers. The superintendents perceived that staff development has introduced new teaching techniques, creative classroom programs, better classroom management procedures, and has contributed to the development of more human relations skills. The literature of today stresses the importance of developing staff development programs that are relevant to the needs of teachers (Ingersoll, 1978).

The general agreement among superintendents pointed out that the importance of staff development is to provide for teachers' skill development and to continue this practice throughout the career for all teachers. Teachers must have input into the staff development program and must continue to evaluate the relevance of the individual staff development activities.

6. What are the superintendents' perceptions of the process established for evaluating the local staff development program?

The superintendents perceived staff development evaluation as a very necessary and basic organizational process, and insisted that

evaluation should be completed on a formal basis. The staff developmental evaluations have important consequences for schools and for their ability to achieve the intended outcomes. Evaluations provide data for making the total staff development program more efficient, and, when necessary, provide planners with feedback that is reassuring and supportive. Evaluation of the staff development activities allows for necessary adjustments.

The respondents indicated that the majority of the districts use questionnaires, interviews, and other "one shot" attempts to decide whether or not staff development has been effective. While some literature (Griffin, 1978) indicated that summative evaluation is the most common practice in most staff development programs, there appears to be an increase in the use of formative evaluation. Formative evaluation is being promoted as an important, ongoing procedure to improve the staff development program as we move forward.

Superintendents agreed that teachers are extremely busy and that staff development is more often than not another layer on an already complicated and demanding schedule. Therefore, it is important to realize that it may be unreasonable to assume that elaborate procedures are realistic. Using lengthy questionnaires, group interactions, or interviews to evaluate staff development after a regular workday is likely to be met with little enthusiasm and possibly provide a poor quality of data.

7. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the decision-making authority of the staff development committee?

Superintendents, in many cases, took issue with the regulation that places the teachers in majority on the staff development



committee. While being in disagreement with this regulation, there appeared to be little evidence that the power or the authority of the superintendent has been reduced by this mandated regulation. Respondents have strongly indicated that the staff development program in their district have been extremely effective regardless of the makeup of the staff development committee.

In other cases, the superintendents indicated that staff development committees who are majority teachers are a threat to direct most of their energy and efforts toward the development of professional teacher organizations. The inability of the superintendents to control the efforts of this committee has placed some in a position to begin to trust that teachers are professional educators and will assume the responsibility necessary to develop quality professional growth experiences that will lead to improved skills for use in the classroom. The findings further indicated that superintendents should not direct the staff development program, but should contribute as a member of the staff development committee. The superintendents agreed unanimously that school climate and favorable leadership influence the success of staff development programs. There is general agreement among the superintendents that the mandated staff development program is positive legislation that will lead to improved professional growth.

8. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the involvement of higher education instructors in consulting with the local staff development committee?

There does not appear to be a clear set of perceptions made by the superintendents regarding the involvement of higher education

instructors with the local staff development committees. While many of the superintendents indicated that higher education instructors were consulted occasionally on staff development matters, there was little evidence that higher education instructors were retained on a regular consultant basis with the local staff development committees.

The findings showed that higher education instructors were used more frequently as workshop presenters rather than as regular consultants to the local staff development committees. The research reflected that staff development points were earned in 20% of the cases in workshops led by higher education instructors, while the State Department of Education led workshops equal to this same percentage. It is interesting to note that smaller schools used higher education instructors less frequently than the middle-sized and large-sized schools, but experienced a significantly higher use of State Department of Education personnel for workshop presentations. Large-sized schools used the State Department of Education less frequently for staff development workshops, but appeared to use the higher education instructors to a greater extent. The middle-sized schools used higher education instructors 23.8% of the time as presenters for their local staff development activities.

The literature indicated that university influence continued to be strong in staff development for teachers who enrolled in graduate programs through the certification level (Dillon, 1977; Porter, 1978). However, when these requirements have been met, staff members traditionally tended to participate more heavily in staff development presented by state departments or those presented in the local district. Perhaps more university effort should be exerted toward trying

to assume a partnership role with school districts in staff development efforts. Because the staff resources of higher education represent specialized areas, public schools should consider using these special services and staff expertise as an integral part of a more comprehensive staff development program.

9. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding the staff earning additional compensation for participating in staff development activities?

The superintendents perceived staff development as a professional responsibility and basically agreed that additional compensation should not be provided for this purpose. There appeared to be some support that staff development funds should be made available to compensate teachers and administrators who attend college or university classes to meet the requirements of staff development. The literature seems to support the notion that staff should either receive compensation or released school time for staff development activities (Dillon, 1977; Kleiman, 1974; Porter, 1978). Although teacher organizations expressed much interest in staff development, they do not as yet assume significant leadership of it. In most cases, they act to insure that the rights of their members are not abridged in terms of time and compensation. Finding adequate time for staff development activities is a continuous, unrelenting problem.

The research indicated that a majority of the schools pay staff members a stipend for presenting a staff development activity for the other staff members. Hall (1983) stated that a majority of the schools agreed that teachers should receive a stipend for completing local staff development points as required each year. He also

indicated that only 3% of the school districts currently pay stipends for teachers who complete the local staff development point requirements.

10. What are the superintendents' perceptions regarding staff development for administrators?

The results of the study indicated very strongly that needs of the school administrators were not being adequately met through the local staff development programs. The interview data showed that a majority of the superintendents perceived a very significant need for staff development for administrators, although this need may have to be met through the State Department of Education or through the administrators' professional organizations. While in a majority of the districts superintendents reported that administrators attended staff development activities with the teachers, few of those activities were planned to specifically meet the needs of the administrators. In a majority of the districts, the superintendents perceived the staff development program for administrators to be ineffective and disjointed--a potpourri of unrelated workshops, seminars, and conferences. The literature stressed the notion that staff development is a necessary function; if cooperative planning and effective leadership techniques are used, it can become a positive force for improving the performance of all personnel (Whitfield, Whitfield, and Purkerson, 1983; Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson, 1982).

The respondents clearly indicated that needs for staff development in the districts vary greatly and the needs of the administrators seemed less likely to be met in local staff development programs. Administrators must assert themselves and communicate their professional

needs to the local staff development committees so that they too will be able to experience professional development experiences.

### Findings

The following are the findings of the study:

1. The superintendents perceived the procedures used to determine the staff development needs to be highly effective. Data also showed that considerable effort was made to determine staff, students, and community needs as well. While there was some disagreement among superintendents regarding the effectiveness of some of the planned activities to meet these needs, there was little disagreement regarding the procedure for determining these needs.

2. The superintendents perceived the objectives planned to meet the assessed needs to be functioning very effectively. If staff needs are identified with skill development, improving human relation skills, improving the quality of school programs, and correcting teacher deficiencies instead of with professional teacher organizations, it will continue to be more effective.

3. There appeared to be a variety of patterns established in school districts for scheduling activities to meet the stated program objectives. While these programs varied widely in content, there appeared to be an evenly divided time pattern between four or five options. The one hour workshops appeared to be used to a greater degree to accomplish the stated program objectives with the half-day workshop, the two hour workshop, and the full day workshop being used less frequently. Small-sized schools in a somewhat isolated situation

scheduled activities in a different time pattern than did middle- and large-sized schools.

4. The superintendents perceived the alternative activities approved by the local staff development committees to be a significant weakness in the total staff development program on a statewide basis. This perception comes from a wide variety of activities that did not relate in a meaningful way to the improvement of instructional programs. The dominant number of teachers making up the local staff development committee contributed significantly to the poor perceptions the superintendents had regarding the approving of alternative activities.

5. The superintendents perceived the total staff development to be relevant toward meeting the identified needs. It appeared that little overall improvement has been seen in the student achievement level, and the consensus appeared to be that improvement in this area would come only after staff development practices have been in place for a longer period of time. Indications were that the instructional practices have improved through staff development and that student achievement gains would follow.

6. The superintendents perceived the process for evaluating the staff development program to be functioning very effectively. The evaluations strongly indicated that staff development activities conducted in the districts were adequately meeting the identified needs. It would appear that a procedure should be established for using the evaluation for long-range staff development planning.

7. The superintendents perceived the decision-making authority of the local staff development committees to be a weakness in the

program. The approving of alternative activities that appeared to be of little value to staff development, plus not having ability for input into staff development decisions, caused the superintendents to push for a change in the regulations. Another concern the superintendents perceived as a weakness is the lack of long-range evaluation and planning that is not conducted by the teacher-dominated committee.

8. The superintendents perceived the involvement of higher education instructors in consulting with the local staff development committee as essential. They would contribute in a more meaningful way if they served as regular consultants and helped develop long-range plans for the staff development efforts. A predominant number of schools used higher education instructors as workshop presenters, but limited funding precluded their being retained on a regular consultant basis.

9. The superintendents perceived that additional compensation should be available for teachers participating in staff development activities, but not an "across the board" compensation. Teachers should not get paid for meeting the minimum staff development requirements, but should be compensated on the basis of merit in this area.

10. The superintendents perceived that administrator needs were not being met adequately through the local staff development program. Perhaps the small number of administrators in each district would not justify the expenditure of funds, or perhaps the administrators have not clearly expressed their needs for local staff development activities. Administrators perceived that their needs would be more adequately met in this area through county or multi-county cooperation.

## Recommendations

The findings and conclusions of the present study suggested the following recommendations:

1. The local staff development committees should be made up of equal numbers of teachers and supervisory or administrative personnel. A change in this regulation would significantly improve the relationship between teachers and administrators and would give positive impetus to the development of more meaningful staff development programs.

2. Staff development cooperatives for better utilization of funds and more productive and meaningful staff development programs should be developed and implemented through the county superintendents. While the staff development needs of schools districts are different, there appeared to be many similar needs that could best be met, particularly in small districts, through area staff development cooperatives.

3. It is suggested that each school district in Oklahoma retain a representative from higher education to serve as a consultant for the local staff development committee. Because of changes each year in the composition of the staff development committee, much is lost in terms of long-range planning and program continuity.

4. All school personnel should strive through the appropriate channels to see that funding levels are increased for staff development. The minimal funds now received provide little for establishing the quality staff development programs needed for significantly improving the instructional programs in Oklahoma.



5. The present study suggests that the more the superintendent was involved in staff development, the more he perceived the program to be effective in his district. Those superintendents who have served as presenters and have served on the staff development committees perceived that the staff development programs have led to improved professional growth for the teachers, and also that overall improvement has occurred in the instructional program. It is recommended that superintendents place a high priority for staff development in their district, and they commit more of their time and financial resources toward the improvement of this program, which, at this time, is operating on a minimal base.

6. The data that is collected from staff evaluations to refine the staff development programs should be used. It appeared that little use is made of the data collected from the teacher evaluations of staff development. This data would provide the base for refining the staff development program and to establish a more realistic base for long-term planning.

7. Building principals had even less involvement in staff development than did the superintendents. Since the principal is the educational leader in his or her building, it is recommended that more effort be put forth by the building principals to be involved in planning and working with their staff for activities to meet their needs.

8. Additional research should be done in the area of administrator needs not being met through local staff development programs. The local administrative team should plan activities appropriate to their needs and see that these activities are approved and funded through the local staff development committee.

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APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE

April 10, 1984

Dear

The enclosed questionnaire is concerned with the superintendents perceptions of staff development effectiveness in Oklahoma. This study is concerned specifically with the involvement of the superintendent in the Staff Development Program and how effective the program activities, outcomes and evaluation have been toward developing a better professional growth program. The results of this study will provide information which hopefully will lead to changes that will increase the effectiveness of staff development on a statewide basis.

I am interested in obtaining your responses because your perception of your staff development program will contribute much to the understanding of staff development on a statewide basis. The results of the study will not identify specific school systems or specific superintendents who respond. All individual responses will be kept confidential.

It will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire. Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped, envelope.

Thank you very much for your help in completing this study.

Sincerely,

Bob Ford  
Ponca City Public Schools  
Ponca City, Oklahoma

Enclosures

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE



A STUDY OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS' PERCEPTIONS  
OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS IN OKLAHOMA

Directions:

Please mark one check for each numbered item for personal and school data. All replies will be treated as confidential.

1. Age: 30-39 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50-59 \_\_\_\_\_ 60 Plus \_\_\_\_\_
2. Degree held: Master's \_\_\_\_\_ 50-59 \_\_\_\_\_ Doctorate \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of years as superintendent \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of years as superintendent in this district \_\_\_\_\_
5. Total school district enrollment this year \_\_\_\_\_

Directions:

Please respond by drawing a circle around the response that best describes your involvement in the local staff development program.

Superintendent's Involvement

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Corre- sponding Numbers</u>
1. I have served as a member of the local staff development committee.	Yes	No	1.
2. I have served as a presenter for a local staff development program.	Yes	No	2.
3. I have encouraged the Board of Education members to attend the local staff development activities.	Yes	No	3.
4. I have contacted and received assistance from the State Department of Education and Higher Education in developing our staff development program.	Yes	No	4.
5. I place the staff development calendar on the Board of Education agenda each month for information.	Yes	No	5.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Corre- sponding Numbers</u>
6. I have earned most of my staff development points in state administrator meetings.	Yes	No	6.
7. I have recommended that additional local funds be provided for staff development above those funds provided by the state.	Yes	No	7.

For each number (8, 9, 10 and 11), circle the appropriate response for that particular number: (SD) strongly disagree, (D) disagree, (A) agree, (SA) strongly agree.

					<u>Corre- sponding Numbers</u>
8. I believe the mandated Staff Development Program is positive legislation that will lead to improved professional growth.	SD	D	A	SA	8.
9. I, as superintendent, should direct the staff development program.	SD	D	A	SA	9.
10. I have a primary responsibility as superintendent to give priority to staff development and to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated.	SD	D	A	SA	10.
11. I have had little involvement in monitoring and evaluating the staff development program.	SD	D	A	SA	11.
12. I have attended the following number of locally planned staff development activities this year.	3	5	7	More	12.
13. What staff development regulations would you suggest be changed by the State Department of Education:					
(A)					13A
(B)					13B
(C)					13C

Directions:

Please respond to each item by drawing a circle around the response that best describes your perception of that particular item. The response you circle will indicate whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree with that particular item.

Program Outcomes

	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>Corre- sponding Numbers</u>
1. Student achievement performance has remained on the same level despite the efforts to improve instruction through the staff development program.	1	2	3	4	14.
2. Staff development is not for developing professional teacher organizations.	1	2	3	4	15.
3. Teachers' skill development is a basic goal of our staff development program.	1	2	3	4	16.
4. All certified school personnel need staff development throughout their careers.	1	2	3	4	17.
5. Significant improvement in educational practice takes considerable time and long-term staff development programs.	1	2	3	4	18.
6. Most staff development activities have not led to instructional improvement.	1	2	3	4	19.
7. Professional growth requires commitment to new performance norms.	1	2	3	4	20.
8. Staff development should focus on improving the quality of school programs.	1	2	3	4	21.
9. School climate and favorable leadership influence the success of staff development programs.	1	2	3	4	22.
10. The superintendent is the key element for adoption and continued use of new practices and practices developed through staff development.	1	2	3	4	23.



Program Outcomes (cont'd.)

		<u>Corre- sponding Numbers</u>
Staff development points are earned through:		
A. Local teacher led workshops	_____	31A
B. Observations in other school systems	_____	31B
C. Professional teachers' organization workshops	_____	31C
D. College consultant led workshops	_____	31D
E. State Department of Education led workshops	_____	31E
F. National consultant led workshops	_____	31F
TOTAL	100%	

Program Evaluation

Most school districts in Oklahoma conduct an end-of-the-year evaluation on the total staff development program. Questions 1, 2 and 3 should be answered from the results from this year-end evaluation.

	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>Corre- sponding Numbers</u>
1. Our year-end evaluation indicates no significant improvement in the instructional program because of staff development.	1	2	3	4	32.
2. Our year-end evaluation is used to determine if the identified needs are met.	1	2	3	4	33.
3. Our year-end evaluation is not used to refine the staff development program.	1	2	3	4	34.
4. Most staff development activities offered locally are evaluated in writing by those who attend.	1	2	3	4	35.
5. Our staff development program was of little value before House Bill 1706.	1	2	3	4	36.
6. The total staff development program in my district is extremely effective.	1	2	3	4	37.

	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>Corre- sponding Numbers</u>
7. Each staff development activity has a clearly stated set of objectives.	1	2	3	4	38.
8. Each staff development activity has a long-range follow-up evaluation.	1	2	3	4	39.

Program Needs

1. Our staff development activities should reflect teacher needs rather than student needs.	1	2	3	4	40.
2. The community understands and supports the need for staff development.	1	2	3	4	41.
3. Our staff development activities reflect school needs.	1	2	3	4	42.
4. The needs of school administrators are being met adequately through local staff development activities.	1	2	3	4	43.
5. Our district staff development needs were determined by assessing the needs of parents, students, teachers and administrators.	1	2	3	4	44.
6. The planned staff development activities are designed to meet the goals of the district.	1	2	3	4	45.
7. Our staff development activities reflect student needs.	1	2	3	4	46.

VITA 2

Robert E. Ford

Candidate for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education

Thesis: A STUDY OF SUPERINTENDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT  
EFFECTIVENESS IN OKLAHOMA

Major Field: Educational Administration

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