THE VIEWS OF SELECTED OKLAHOMA SCHOOL SUPER-

INTENDENTS ON SCHOOL/COMMUNITY

RELATIONS AND SCHOOL/NEWS

MEDIA RELATIONS

By

DARRELL LEE GWARTNEY

Bachelor of Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
1974

Master of Education
Northeastern Oklahoma State University
Tahlequah, Oklahoma
1979

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Education
December, 1982

THE VIEWS OF SELECTED OKLAHOMA SCHOOL SUPER-

INTENDENTS ON SCHOOL/COMMUNITY

RELATIONS AND SCHOOL/NEWS

MEDIA RELATIONS

Thesis Approved:

Kennett M. Clain
Thesis Adviser

A. Kenneth Stern

_____

Ephraim E. Segall

Norman N. Durham
Dean of the Graduate College

ii

1155636

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

appreciation to his son, Dason, and wife, Debbie, for their constant

support, faith, encouragement, and understanding during these years

of disruption in their lives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A Cleveland, Ohio, newspaperman once offered Ohio school board members what he believed was the key to obtaining quality education in any public school district: a basic public relations program. The newspaperman, William Ware (cited in Bagin, 1981, p. 2), commented, "It took 100 years or more for school boards to discover the word 'public' in public schools."

Ware (cited by Bagin, 1981, p. 2) further stated that school boards and superintendents did not begin to "cry loudly and long for help from the public they had so long ignored" until the post-war period and the severe problems brought with it. "This was an abrupt change of direction," he said (p. 2). Ware explained that for decades the tradition among school boards and administrators was that schools were really not much of the public's business (cited by Bagin, 1981).

In a sense, everyone is part of the school's business, just as everyone has a role in government. James Madison (cited by Reeder, 1937, p. 3), the fourth president of the United States, once said, "A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both." Like all other phases of school administration, the public relations effort is designed to advance the welfare of the persons

1

for whom the school exists: the students. However, it is very important that lines of responsibility in communicating with the public are delineated carefully and that suggestions are made in terms of working relationships. It is too easy for the tasks that are left for everyone else to do to be accomplished by nobody.

Broadly speaking, the four principle players on the school stage are: (1) the school district superintendent; (2) members of the board of education; (3) the citizens' advisory committee members; and (4) the schools' communication specialist. In this scenario, the audience is the general public whose actual interest ranges from total apathy and genuine antagonism to whole hearted enthusiasm for every action of the school district. And, as with most audiences, the greatest number of persons are supportive patrons who are willing to be convinced, if the effort to "convince" is made.

In the school drama, the players are not typecast, but are real human beings whose special talents, shortcomings, and assets can influence the script to a variety of degrees. The "cast" is different in each community. And with the "actors" on the school stage comes the American public. The public, including taxpayers, parents, antagonists, supporters--whatever the title given, American citizens have the responsibility and the right to play a part in the life of public schools. Bagin (1981, p. 1), president of the National School Public Relations Association, begins many of his presentations before education groups with the statement: "The public wants to know what is being done with its two most valuable possessions, children and money, and you happen to have control over both of them a good deal of the time."

When the eighth annual Gallup Poll of the Public Schools questioned citizens about serving on school board-appointed committees in roles as advisers to the school district, 90 percent said they would like to serve (Gallup et al., 1977). Areas on which the public would like to have input, according to the poll, are: discipline problems; student-teacher relations; career education; student dropouts; teacher evaluation; handicapped students; and school finance. The foregoing are listed here in the order of importance as indicated by the Gallup Poll. Considering the fact that nine out of ten persons polled are interested in participating in their public schools, it appears the sky is the limit, and that the rewards of communication and citizen participation could result in more opportunities and better education for students. This is evidenced in the participation occurring within such groups as advisory committees, community education, Chapter I (Title I) committees, and the like.

While the parent-teacher associations offer a kind of citizen-parent influence on school-related services and matters, actual influence of these groups has been nebulous. In some communities, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) groups are very strong, and are effectively utilized by the superintendent of schools as an advisory group. In other school districts, the parents involved in the PTA are placated with input at the local school level, but have very little influence on the district level (American Association of School Administrators, 1960). The realization that parents can be the greatest supporters of public schools and do actually hold the keys to better understanding within the community will result in better educational opportunities.

Significance of the Study

Virtually every new function accepted by the school district carries with it the need for understanding by and cooperation of school personnel and community forces. The administrator's role in improving school/community relations has been even more significant and certainly more difficult during the past few years.

Since 1900, the administrator's concept of the job he holds in this particular area has shifted from indifference to publicity campaigns, to educational interpretation to a cooperative endeavor, better known as the "school-community partnership" (Jones, 1966, p. 63). This concept views the school as a social institution which moves forward as an integrated process. It considers new discoveries concerning teaching techniques and child development. These ever-changing concepts concerning the role of the superintendent in public relations have made even more critical the relationship between the superintendent's success at his job, and his competence in developing effective school/community relations and communications programs.

Moore (1957), in his research for the W. K. Kellogg foundation, cites more than 30 studies concerning the relationship of the school to the community. Despite the fact that these studies raised more questions than they actually answered, one finding about which there was agreement was that the school administrator must improve his competence in school/community relations areas. This will be a focal point of this study.

A survey of superintendents conducted by the American Association of School Administrators (1960) in 1960 indicated that superintendents were concerned about their competence in school/community

relations. Almost 4,000 administrators in towns and cities with pop-
ulations of 2,500 or more responded to the association's question-
naire. Further evidence of the need to cope with the increasing
problem in educational public relations is corroborated by additional
surveys. Among courses listed as helpful and important in advanced
graduate study, school/community relations ranked third, directly be-
hind finance and curriculum. Further, superintendents ranked school/
community relations fifth on a list of 18 weaknesses they reported
(Young and Dillman, 1960).

Further evidence of the significance of school/community rela-
tions to the success of the superintendent on the job was indicated
by a survey of all chief state school officers and all executive
secretaries of the chief state school officers and all executive
secretaries of the state teacher associations conducted by Keenan
(1961) of the National Education Association's (NEA) National Commis-
sion on Professional Rights and Responsibilities. Keenan sought to
secure his subjects' opinions on the reasons that superintendents
agreed that the most frequently mentioned reason for this action,
other than incompetencies, is poor school/community relations. An
ignorance of public relations techniques, in fact, is cited as pre-
venting the success of superintendents.

An extensive study of the school superintendent's position was
undertaken by Gross (1958). Gross gathered information through per-
sonal interviews in order to develop a complete analysis of the job
of the school superintendent in terms of community social structure.
He discovered that only 40 percent of the school board members who
were polled rated superintendents of the districts they represented
as "excellent" in the area of school/community relations.

The need for research which focuses on the superintendent's role in the school/community relations area and process continues to intensify. "New research is needed in determining something of the transactions that take place between individuals and groups in society and the educational decisionmakers in local school systems" (Scribner, 1970, p. 325). "The most serious deficiency concerns the pertinence, timing and organization of information" (Becker, McCombs, and McLoen, 1975, p. 21). Obviously, the area of school/community relations is an increasingly demanding responsibility for education administrators, particularly those who are superintendents of schools. Yet, most research indicates that superintendents tend to "fear" this responsibility, and often attempt to deal with the area of concern in an inappropriate manner. This response alone indicates the need for a review of the "whys" and "why nots" that superintendents tend to utilize in their approach to school/community relations programs, practices, and policies.

In addition to these general needs, a specific look should be taken at the superintendent's point of view concerning school/community relations, as several researchers have pointed out. Such areas as trust, professionalism, and competence should be identified in terms of the superintendent's view of media representatives. Such information would be extremely helpful in order that recommendations and guidelines might be established to change the "can't win" approach to a "want to communicate" approach to school/community relations.

This researcher will attempt to extend present knowledge of the school/community relations and communications area, and contribute significantly to the findings of authors reviewed in this study.

Purpose of the Study

The general focus of this research will be the views of public school superintendents concerning the attitude of the community and news media toward the educational process within their respective school districts. This is the problem area to be explored.

The purpose of this study is to: (1) identify several factors influencing the views of public school superintendents within the review of the literature; (2) develop a survey instrument which would gather information and establish these factors influencing the views of superintendents' responses; examine tenure as a factor contributing to the views of superintendents; examine school enrollment size as a factor contributing to the views of superintendents; investigate the presence or absence or news media as a factor contributing to the views of superintendents; and (3) statistically present and summarize the findings of this research concerning superintendents' views regarding school/community relations and school/news media relations.

The course of this research may informally address such research questions as: (1) do local public school superintendents tend to view their respective communities as being a supportive body for the school system, enhancing the educational process within the school, or as a problem for the school system, disrupting the educational process within the school district? and (2) do local school superintendents tend to view the news media reporting school news in their respective communities as a support mechanism for the school system, enhancing the educational process within their school district, or as a problem for the school system disrupting the educational process within the school district?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to: (1) determine if superin-
tendents view the community and news media as separate entities;
(2) determine if such factors as size of school, tenure of superintend-
ents, utilization of public relations staff, and interaction with the
news media have an impact on views of superintendents; (3) present
the general findings superintendents have related in their response
to the questionnaire concerning school/community and school/news
media relations in Oklahoma school districts; and (4) offer this ma-
terial as a possible reference to define, strengthen, or maintain
community relations within their districts.

Limitations of the Study

Generalizations from the findings of this study should be made
with reservation due to the conditions of participation placed on
responding superintendents.

The obvious complexity of the human personality and daily inter-
action with others, as well as the responding superintendents' will-
ingness to be truthful, are also limitations of the study.

The survey instrument and the incorporation of such variables as
tenure, employment of a full-time community relations specialist, and
the presence or absence of news media within the district are also
limitations of the study which must be accounted for, and therefore
may suggest that the sample is not representative of all Oklahoma
superintendents when reviewed.

Additionally, the tenure of superintendents may be a limitation
to the study in that these figures were categorized and were subject

to interpretation. An overlap in the tenure breakdowns may have resulted in the superintendents responding in a category other than years of experience completed, as was requested. The same interpretive problem also is a factor in the reporting of a full-time public relations specialist.

Assumptions

A common assumption to be held throughout this research is that superintendents' responses involved in the study, for the most part, are characteristic and representative of superintendents across the state of Oklahoma.

Superintendents' views will be reflected in their responses and may be considered the basis for their approach in dealing with community relations issues in their individual school districts.

All superintendents have a viewpoint about their working relationships with the public, media representatives, and the communications processes within their districts.

Community relations are recognized as vital to the success of the superintendent and the school district.

Reporting of news through the media has an impact on the community and therefore school/community relations.

Definition of Terms

Communication - An act or instance of transmitting or informing; a verbal or written message; a process or technique for expressing ideas effectively (Webster, 1971).

News Maker - For purposes of this paper, an individual or reporter who conveys the facts out of context or out of proportion in an attempt to create a story.

News Media - A means of effecting or conveying the news; channel of communication such as a publication or broadcast that carries the news.

News Reporter - One who gathers, reports, or comments on the events or happenings considered important within the environment in a concise, factual manner (Webster, 1971).

Media Representative - News reporter, editor, publisher, etc. charged with the responsibility of furnishing newsworthy events to an audience of readers, listeners, or viewers.

School/Community Relations - The interaction of the educational process and the interests of the people living in a particular area.

Tenure - The act, right, manner, or term of holding something as an office or position (Webster, 1971).

Summary

The introduction of this study points out the belief that many variables may indeed be factors involved in the responsibilities of school superintendents and their subsequent views of the community and news media.

The review of related literature in the following chapter will focus on some of the major personal and professional traits which superintendents are believed to need in the successful performance of their community relations duties, as was alluded to in this Chapter.

This review will cite many of the views of researchers' findings which can be related to the data presented in this study.

In addition to a review of the particulars concerning the make-up of superintendents, evolving areas of responsibilities will also be reviewed in an attempt to point out the complexities of the ever-changing position of superintendent of schools.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The school/community relationship has been a rapidly-growing
area of emphasis over the past three decades. Several studies have
been conducted through the years in an attempt to determine the impli-
cations resulting from either a positive or a negative relationship
between these two parties. As a result, the area is open to research
from several different viewpoints such as that of superintendents.
This study is concerned with school/community relations, specifically
in the area of the superintendent's relationship with this phase of
his responsibility, as well as his relationship with the news media.
The literature regarding this relationship, as well as background in-
formation on the superintendent's role in community relations, is
presented in this chapter.

The Superintendent's Role in School

Public Relations

Professional administrators have increasingly systematized their ·
responsibility toward the community over the years (McCloskey, 1967).
This slow but sure process has brought to focus additional recognition
of the importance of the value of positive public relations and posi-
tive public opinion relating to education. School administrators were

12

advised of the dangers involved in not attempting to mold public opinion in the late 1880s (Harris, 1882). Classroom teachers have long appreciated the benefits of a budding relationship between school and home.

Virtually every new function accepted by the school carries with it the need for understanding and cooperation by the school personnel and community forces. The administrator's role in improving school/community ties has become more significant and certainly more difficult over the years (Fusco, 1967). Since 1900, the administrator's concept of his job in this area has shifted from "indifference" to "publicity campaigns" to "educational interpretation" to "cooperative endeavor" or the "school/community partnership" (Jones and Stout, 1960, p. 193). This latter concept views the school as a social institution which moves forward as an integrated process. It takes into consideration new discoveries concerning teaching and child development. These changing concepts concerning the role of the superintendent in school/community relations have made more critical the relationship between the superintendent's success on the job and his competency in developing effective programs to deal with the community.

This home-school relationship was a relatively new approach for school superintendents. The public sector became involved to a degree that became greater with each passing year. Articles dealing with the administration of education began to appear by 1920. Authors suggested specific approaches for superintendents in terms of public relations (Miller and Charles, 1924). Concurrently, the idea of administrative responsibility for community relations or "publicity" as it was then called, was emerging.

Several areas of community relations developed into key elements in the role of the superintendent. These areas included such vital elements as environment, leadership, interorganizational communications satisfaction, and news media relations.

The Changing School Environment as Faced
by Superintendents

Any organization which endures for an extended period of time in its original form and with its initial goals intact is unique. The organization usually survives only until the initial goal or objective has been accomplished, and then becomes obsolete, resulting in goal displacement. Educational organizations, strapped with on-going purposes, "often rely upon the efforts of the administration" to balance effectively the material and psychological support the organizational system needs (Walton, 1969, p. 38). The consideration of the environment in terms of the organization is in itself very complex (Emery and Trist, 1965). Adapting to the complexities of a changing environment is increasingly a thorn in the side of organizational leaders. Terreberry (1968) cites the failure to adapt to new needs within the environment as a threat to the survival of the organization. She adds that adaptability itself exists "to the extent that a system can survive externally induced change in its transactional interdependencies in the long run" (p. 590).

Educational organizations are no exception. The changing needs of the community in terms of educational programs must be identified and met by the school district. The superintendent is charged with the responsibility to see these needs are met and carried out. This

process may involve many individuals from both outside and inside the formal educational framework. More and more superintendents must answer not only to community patrons but also to government agencies and subsequent attorney interpretations of these agencies' regulations and guidelines. As Walton (1969) points out, the balance lies primarily in the hands of the school superintendent.

<div align="center">

The Role of the Superintendent as a

School Leader

</div>

An important aspect of the superintendent's community relations is the leadership style used to deal with the organization and the public. According to Fiedler (1967, p. 8), leadership style refers to "the underlying attitudes toward people that motivate behavior in various leadership situations." This definition led Fiedler to identify two leadership styles: relationship-oriented and task-oriented. Hoy and Miskel (1978) concurred, establishing the contention that even when researchers identified more than two dimensions of leadership, the greater number still could be placed in one of the two categories, similar to those of Fiedler.

Because leadership is situational, the concept of effectiveness is complex and sometimes difficult to measure (Powell, 1981). Stodgill and Coons (1957) focused on group effectiveness which included such key factors as morale, output, and satisfaction. Fiedler (1967) contested these conclusions, listing morale, output, and satisfaction as performance objectives. McCloskey (1967) based his contentions on research in social psychology and group dynamics. He concluded that leadership is currently conceived as a process of

"stimulating a two-way flow of influence between people--a process of social interaction" (p. 6). McCloskey also determined that studies dealing with the functions of leadership are proving more fruitful than studies of traits. Therefore, emphasis may need to be placed on job-related responsibilities as opposed to the man in the position.

<div align="center">

The Superintendent's Role in Organizational

Communication Satisfaction

</div>

The idea of communications satisfaction evolved from the studies on job satisfaction. Basic theories of Maslow (1954), Herzberg (1959), Sergiovanni (1967), King (1970), and Roethlisberger (1939) related to the area of job satisfaction and explore the many social variables that may increase worker satisfaction. This belief opened the door to an extended debate on communications (Powell, 1981). Performance and job satisfaction have been studied by other leading researchers denoting surprising results. Vroom (cited in Lawler and Porter, 1969) found a low but consistent relationship existing between satisfaction and performance. According to Powell (1981), Cummings and Scott found an inverse relationship does exist. They found that good performance may lead to rewards, which, in turn, leads to satisfaction; this formulation then would say that satisfaction, rather than causing performance, as was previously assumed, is caused by it. According to Likert (1961), the end result of job satisfaction is determined, at least in part, by the intervening variable communication.

Among the operating characteristics that Likert (1961) identified as being related to communication satisfaction are:

Extent to which subordinates have confidence and trust in superiors,

extent to which superiors have confidence and trust in
subordinates,

extent to which superiors display supportive behavior
toward others,

extent to which superiors behave so that subordinates
feel free to discuss important things about their job
with them, and

extent to which immediate supervisor attempts to employ
subordinates' ideas and opinions into problem solving
in a constructive and useful way (p. 4).

These same characteristics should, theoretically, be applicable
to other communications relationships pertinent to the views being
investigated in this study: the communications relationships between
the superintendent and the representatives of the community.

The latest development in relating job satisfaction to communica-
tion has been a movement toward studying managerial communication. In
fact, measuring the effectiveness of a manager by employee satisfac-
tion has been based on the manager's skill in face-to-face communica-
tion (Powell, 1981). Original face-to-face communications research
evolved from the study by Batten (1976).

Batten (1976) found that communication is not necessarily a sci-
ence, but more likely an art that can be mastered. Batten established
nine elements he found effective in one-to-one relationships: vulner-
ability, openness, positive listening, kinesics, high expectations,
forming conclusions, reinforcement, caring, and integrity. Research
by Keckly (1977) involving communications breakdown in business and
industry may be easily related to educational organizations. Keckly
lists three major factors in communications failure: lack of manage-
ment's ability to communicate, withholding of information by manage-
ment, and inadequate use of channels.

Downs (1977) concluded that three criteria were necessary for effective communications: qualities of the message, its presentation, and achievement of the desired results. He states:

> Today job satisfaction is being treated as an end result goal desirable in itself . . . the examination of the communication-satisfaction relationship has produced a construct called 'communication satisfaction' which is becoming a common reference in organizational literature (p. 51).

Thayer (1961) lists four primary goals of administration communication: to inform, to instruct or direct, to evaluate, and to influence. Wiio (1976) concluded that job satisfaction and communication satisfaction were correlated but clearly separate things. He pointed out that, while too little communication is a negative factor in job satisfaction, so is too much. A more recent research effort by Hecht (1978) alludes to the fact that only significant advances within the organizational area have been made. Hecht calls for more basic research efforts in terms of job satisfaction and communication.

Suggestions for future direction in the study of communications satisfaction were offered by Hecht (1978) in his article entitled, "Measures of Communication Satisfaction." He concluded that measurement of communication satisfaction had not progressed very far, and that, in fact, the only significant advances had been made only within the organizational area. "As a result," he wrote, "research of the most basic nature is necessary" (p. 367). Points he offered that hold a significance for this study include:

1. Approaches to measurement must be linked to theoretical orientations.

2. Measures of communication satisfaction should be written to include descriptions of the communication process rather than traits or attitudes.

3. Measures should be content specific and include such distinctions as public and private communication, level of intimacy, goal or purpose, and level of relationship.

The Superintendent and Media Relations

Media relations involve the actual task assignment of working with professional communicators. Several phases of responsibilities and assignments have been reviewed over the past 60 years.

Cubberly (1929) stated:

The final responsibility for proper publicity rests with the superintendent of schools and his staff, aided by principals and teachers, though the superintendent himself may do little or not of the work (p. 638).

Englehardt (1931) concurred with Cubberly's thinking, stating:

Another group of activities which the public school executive must plan for are those associated with the relationships that constantly arise between the public and the schools. As time goes on, this association assumes a greater importance, largely because the educational program, as its scope broadens, comes in contact with more children and more adults, and because the educational process includes more and more of the functions of the home and the community (p. 135).

An impressive group of men began to expand on the concept, promoting the superintendent as the pivotal figure in the communication process between the school and the public (Farley, 1934). Several writers such as Moehlman (1957), Grinnell (1937), Yeager (1939), Mort (1941), and Farley (1934) organized public relations thinking during the decades of the thirties and forties. This resulted in educational organizations, whose membership consisted of school and

administrators, devoting their work to the administrative importance

of public relations (Stewart, 1972). Consequently, by the early

fifties, school public relations was being looked upon as a vital

administrative function of the superintendent.

Moore (1957), in his review of over 300 research studies of the

Cooperative Programs in School Administration, lists 39 studies re-

lating to school and community problems connected to the superintend-

ent's realm of responsibility. Additionally, the majority of research

related to the superintendent had some references to the public rela-

tions responsibilities of the position.

Studies attempting to establish the "critical job requirements"

of superintendents reported "Administrator-School-Community Relation-

ships" to be among the most often referred to functions of the super-

intendent (Kirk, 1969, pp. 49-50). Studies such as these generally

signaled the end of the crusade to indicate whether the superintend-

ent has the responsibility for school public relations.

Walton (1969) reinforced this point, stating:

> One of the crucial and indispensible responsibilities of
> the administrator, particularly the superintendent, in
> established education organizations--lower and high, pub-
> lic and independent--is to provide mechanisms whereby
> social needs are elucidated, reconciled, and expressed
> in terms of organizational purposes or objectives (p. 41).

A great deal of emphasis has been placed on the tasks of school

administrators. Ramseyer et al. (1955) list communicating by educa-

tional administrators to be desirable behavior. Communicating was

seen as one of the four overriding administrative processes by Cul-

bertson, Jacobson, and Reller (1960). Griffiths et al. (1962) also

broke down the educational administrators' behavior. They renamed

communication as "maintaining effective relations with the community" (p. 154). Williams (1969, p. 5) established that school administrators "have designated one of the major tasks of administrators as school-community relations." "Relating to the community" was ranked first on Fisk's (1965, p. 235) list of four administrative tasks.

The public relations responsibilities of the superintendent have been clearly established over the course of this century and have been an area of much administrative beleaguerment. Miller and Charles (1924) established the unwillingness of many administrators to concern themselves with community understanding. In a detailed study of superintendents and school board members, Gross (1958) found that only 18 percent of the superintendents said they did an excellent job at public relations.

While speaking to the American Association of School Administrators at a regional convention, Keenan (1961) reported:

> In 1960, as in 1958, both the state secretaries and state superintendents agreed that other than incompetence, the most frequent factor preventing success of superintendents is poor public and community relations (p. 4).

This agrees with the explanation of the NEA Defense Commission and Tenure Committee in its investigation of dismissals.

Young and Dillman (1960) found public relations a close third behind curriculum and finance by graduate students in advanced studies when superintendents' responsibilities were ranked. Public relations ranked fifth on a list of 18 weaknesses reported by the superintendents.

Walton (1969) rationalized:

> We are compelled to say that it is the responsibility of administration in all organizations to work effectively at the task of public relations so that society enjoys

the maximum stability in its institutions, and a kind of
inter-organizational equilibrium is achieved. If admin-
istration is given the responsibility for the maintenance
and effectiveness of an organization within a society of
competing organizations, it follows that the administra-
tor is called upon to inform, solicit and persuade, by
legitimate means, both subtle and direct, in order to ob-
tain outside support (p. 73).

Walton's (1969) beliefs as to administrators' responsibilities

concerning community relations are echoed by Stellar (1973, p. 19). As

the number of organizations competing for support increases, and as

their legitimate purposes expand, administrators' quests for public

support grow more urgent and intense."

Nolte and Murrey (1969) indicted superintendents for their lack

of knowledge about public communication techniques. They concluded:

The tragic results are familiar to all: more school ad-
ministrators are fired for failure to maintain effective
communications than for any other reason. In many cases,
school officials get in trouble because they do not have
the help of specialists in educational public information.
Some do not know if they need assistance; others are un-
able to make effective use of specialists in this field
on their staff; some cannot find specialists to employ
(p. 87).

Research appears to be lacking in the area of public relations

involving the superintendent and his responsibilities. The vast

majority of research in the area indicated that superintendents are

deeply involved with and concerned about public relations. However,

superintendents lack information about what should and needs to be

done. A particular area of public relations upon which superintend-

ents need to be informed involves the relationship between themselves

and professional newsmen (Jones, 1966), primarily regarding the bar-

riers which may exist between them (Kindred, 1965). Several research-

ers have studied the relationship between school administrators and

professional newsmen in an attempt to break down this barrier.

Stellar (1973) summarized the works of several researchers such as Zapytowski, Frum, Schmidt, Ackourny, and Reed in reference to news media representatives' perceptions and needs involving superintendents. They include recommendations such as: (1) the school superintendent should definitely be involved in school public relations, (2) the school superintendent should attempt to utilize newspapers in school public relations, (3) the school superintendent should attempt to utilize radio in school public relations, (4) the school superintendent should attempt to utilize television in school public relations, (5) the school superintendent should attempt to utilize all the major news media, if they are available, (6) a positive relationship between the school superintendent and managers of the major news media should be developed, (7) the findings concerning the superintendent and the newspaper editor are not unanimous, although the editor seems to understand the school system better than the superintendent understands the newspaper operation, (8) superintendents may be more oriented towards the newspaper than television, (9) regular contacts between the school superintendent and the major news media managers should improve understanding, and (10) the school superintendent does not completely understand the role of the newspaper editor or the television station manager, nor do they completely understand his role (Stellar, 1973).

American Values as Faced by Superintendents

Stewart (1972), who is from Great Britain, used his visits to the United States as an opportunity to observe American education interaction as an outsider and to list some interesting opinions of

the American people. His observations point to many of the "social pressures" superintendents must contend with daily in their job responsibilities. He states:

> The American stress on the individual as a concrete point of reference begins at a very early age when the American child is encouraged to be autonomous. The self-centeredness of the child is seldom questioned. It is implicitly accepted that each child or person should be encouraged to decide for himself, develop his own opinions, solve his own problems, have his own things, and in general, learn to view the world from the view of the self (p. 70).

On the other side of the coin, these same children referred to by Stewart (1972) need to get along with everybody, to make many friends in the classroom, and to show team spirit in extracurricular activities. Their adult models are viewed as people who are group-minded, need to be liked, and fall into conformity. Stewart further states:

> The pressures on the individual are usually informal, since he is assumed to be a free agent. If he conforms to the pressures from his group, family, or associates, he belongs. If he chooses to deviate from his group, family, or associates, he belongs. If he chooses to deviate from the norms expected of him, then he runs against the American intolderance of 'rate-busters,' 'nonconformists,' etc. He fails to receive the fruits of approval, esteem, and popularity which are so important in American culture (p. 70).

King (1973), also from Great Britain, focused on activity and anxiety on the American educational scene. Such items as societal mobility and consumer behavior were attributed to the mass media by King. While this is yet another foreign opinion of American education, some key items are listed which directly relate to the all encompassing and everlasting function of the school. Referring to the mass media, King states:

Whether printed or on the radio or televised, advertise-
ments tell you what to buy, eat, and use; how to 'have
it now' on increasingly easy terms; what things you and
your family must have to be modern Americans; how to
enjoy life; how to have your food and yet avoid the
calories; even how to 'enjoy your fun.' Whatever it
is you want you must have a lot of it, have it now,
and have it typically. Also, as everybody must have it
. . . it is not surprising that in education too, every
American child comes to expect 'the whole works.' Every-
one must have it and have it now (pp. 296-297).

The opinions of foreign colleagues presented in this study drive

home the snow-balling point that American education is subject to

many outside influences. The necessity for school boards and partic-

ularly school administrators, to recognize these unique characteris-

tics of our society and ready a game plan to successfully deal with

them is of the utmost importance. The ability to deal with individ-

uals' needs one minute and incorporate those needs into a group situa-

tion the next has become vital in dealing with school/community

relations.

Ellena (1975) sums up the current situation regarding school/

community relations quite well in a speech delivered to the 107th

Annual Convention of American Administrators. Ellena presented nu-

merous suggestions and guidelines for the school administrators. He

focused on school/community relations at one point and stated:

Since the schools are the people's own work, the public
has vital concerns in them and must be kept informed of
achievements and needs. Although the child who is a
satisfied customer is probably the most potent avenue
for good public relations with adults, the superintend-
ent and his staff should plan the ways best presented
to all the people. Naturally, press, radio, and tele-
vision loom large in this matter (p. 9).

Ellena (1975) went on to caution administrators to use careful

consideration while walking the thin line that exists between inform-

ing the public of favorable achievements and explaining realistically

the serious defects and needs. The superintendent cannot describe the schools as being superior in all ways and at the same time make an urgent appeal for money to correct glaring defects or weaknesses. Ellena warns that a superintendent desiring to contradict criticism or to just "sell" the schools to the public may paint such a rosy picture that the public may fail to listen when he appeals for a bigger budget to improve the programs.

Ellena (1975) like others, cites these ideas and suggestions as a base for the development of further study and urges all new superintendents to accept their responsibilities with both eyes open.

Statement of the Problem

Several questions arise as to why many superintendents succeed in their responsibilities, yet many others fail in the eyes of the district, as was pointed out in the review of the literature.

The problem appears to be one of searching out and identifying occupational and organizational characteristics faced by superintendents in their roles concerning community relations and media relations. The following selected factors were presented as occupational and organizational characteristics of the superintendency believed by this researcher to have either a positive or negative impact on the views of public school superintendents regarding school/community and school/news media relations within their respective districts:

1. Tenure as a superintendent in the community now served.

2. Enrollment size of the district in which the superintendent serves.

3. Professional assistance in terms of news media relations and community relations within the formal organization available to the superintendent.

4. The presence or absence of news media within the school district the superintendent serves.

Tenure, or length of service as a superintendent in the current school district, was introduced as a contributing factor having an impact on the views of public school superintendents. Tenure was broken down into categories of 0-1, 1-5, 5-10, and 15 or more years of experience.

Size of the school district was introduced as a contributing factor also having an impact on the views of superintendents of schools. Size of school was based on enrollment in the top three grades (10, 11, and 12), and broken down into categories of less than 250 students-- 251-500, 501-700, 751-1,000, and more than 1,000 students.

The lack of professional assistance was presented as a possible underlying factor in school/community relations and school/news media relations breakdown at the superintendents' level of the school organization.

A vast amount of research indicated superintendents are deeply concerned about school/community relations and school/news media relations within their district but do not possess the skills or information to develop needed relationships between themselves, the community, and the news media, as pointed out by Jones (1966) and Kindred (1965).

With these factors in mind, the following research questions have been postulated for the purpose of identifying possible problem areas

faced by superintendents of schools when dealing with the community and news media.

Research Questions

Question One - Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media as a single entity within the community?

Question Two - Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on the enrollment size of their individual districts?

Question Three - Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their individual tenure as a superintendent?

Question Four - Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their employment of a full-time public relations/communications specialist within their district?

Question Five - Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their degree of inter-action with the local news media?

Summary

As indicated in the review of literature, the position of super-intendent of schools is an everchanging role. The multifaceted re-sponsibilities have reached the point where several areas must be considered when rating or plotting the performance of school superin-tendents. The focus of the review of the literature has been pri-marily on school/community relations and responsibilities as faced

by school superintendents. The sections presented in the review of literature included: The Role of the Superintendent in School Public Relations; The Changing School Environment as Faced by Superintendents; The Superintendent as an Organization Leader; The Superintendent's Role in Communication Satisfaction; The Superintendent and Media Relations; and American Values as Faced by Superintendents.

These sections all point to the superintendents' areas of responsibility, related activities, and individual traits. These sections emphasize the demands placed on superintendents which lead directly to the question, "In Terms of school/community relations, what factors influence the views of superintendents concerning the community and news media?"

Many of the researchers cited in this review point to the fact that the position of superintendent of schools can quickly fall out of favor with their communities, should their responsibilities to the school district not be met. The review of literature points out community relations as one area of responsibility quick to erupt if not handled in a proper and versatile fashion by superintendents.

Several questions have been postulated for the purpose of this study regarding views of school superintendents relating to school/community relations and school/news media relations. These questions will be reviewed and analyzed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

The research design will be described in this chapter, including
the sampling techniques, instrumentation, pilot study, method of ad-
ministering the instrument and collecting the data, and a description
of the statistical procedures used to analyze the data.

Population for the Study

The population employed in this study included member superintend-
ents of the Oklahoma Public School Research Council. The Oklahoma
Public Schools Research Council members are made up of school districts
interested in the study and research of public school administration,
as well as the ongoing improvement of Oklahoma schools. The selection
of this group was based on several key points. First, the group has
no limitations or restrictions placed on membership in terms of school
or community size or location, other than being from within the state
of Oklahoma. Second, the selected population approach was intended
to reflect the views of superintendents and their levels of tenure
and/or experience. Third, the selected population approach was in-
tended to measure not only the views of those superintendents dealing
with the community and media daily, but also those dealing with the
community and media on an occasional basis. Fourth, this researcher

30

perceived this council as willing respondents which would result in a higher percentage of respondents. The Oklahoma Public School Research Council was believed to be made up of members with the varied backgrounds needed to conduct this study as previously described.

The number of superintendents surveyed in the study totaled 90 of the 99 Oklahoma Public School Research Council member superintendents. Nine members were not included in the population. These superintendents were excluded due to their previous participation in the pilot study as members of the Eastern Oklahoma School Advisory Council. This was an attempt to avoid any previous bias being reflected within the data base.

Instrumentation

The literature and research pertaining to the public school superintendents' views on the community relations and news media was reviewed. The review of the literature indicated a need for a study which would examine the superintendents' views regarding school/ community relations, as well as views concerning the media as related to the school district.

The instrument used to measure the views of superintendents concerning school/community relations was developed by the researcher for the purpose of this study and was titled the "School/Community Relations Survey" (see Appendix B).

In the initial stages of development, an intensive review was made of research instruments designed to measure comparable or similar properties. These included: Downs and Hazens' (1979) "Communication Survey"; Powells' (1981) "Communications Behavior Description

Questionnaire"; Roberts and O'Reillys' (1974) "Communications Dimen-sions Survey"; and Halpin and Winers' (1952) Ohio State University "Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire."

Each item on these questionnaires and surveys was carefully reviewed for applicability to the measure of a superintendents' view on school/community relations and school/community relations as in-fluenced by the news media. Items selected were carefully reworded as necessary. In addition, several other items were added to the list through an interview process with superintendents and other school administrators.

The individual questions were reviewed by a reference group con-sisting of a superintendent from a large public school district, a public school community relations director, and two public school ad-ministrators who deal with the community and media on a regular basis. These individuals were asked to give consideration to: (1) relevancy of items, (2) clarity of expression, (3) duplications or omissions, (4) sequence of items, (5) degree of built-in bias, and (6) other sug-gestions deemed appropriate.

Through a process of consensus, a final list of 59 items was reached. Three items related to the background of responding super-intendents and their school districts, while 28 items dealt with super-intendents' views on their communities, and 28 items dealt with superintendents' views of media within their communities. Five areas of response were afforded superintendents to measure their views. The listed responses included: "always," "often," "sometimes," "seldom," and "never" (see Appendix B).

The following statements are examples of survey items intended to establish views of superintendents regarding the community:

"Pressure is placed on education to be all things to all people within the community."

"The school system would be much better off if community patrons would mind their own business."

"Board members are in touch with community feeling regarding the school system."

In addition to the community items, survey items were developed regarding the news media. The intent here was to establish views of superintendents concerning the news media and to determine if a relationship existed between the two defined areas. The following examples of survey items indicate typical news media-related statements:

"The present working relationship between the local school district and the media is satisfactory."

"Media representatives spend more time editorializing and dramatizing existing situations than they do reporting facts and intents of the school district."

"The superintendent feels secure in discussing 'off the record' information with media representatives."

In addition to determining if a relationship did indeed exist between the variables of community and news media, as viewed by the superintendents, demographic variables were introduced as factors possibly effecting those views. Demographic variables such as tenure of superintendents, enrollment size of school (grades 10-12), district employment of full-time public relations/communications specialist, and superintendents' degree of interaction with local news media were

reviewed in determining views of superintendents regarding the community and news media.

The Pilot Study

Member superintendents of the Eastern Oklahoma School Advisory Council were selected for the pilot study. The selection of this group was based on the fact that these superintendents represented various sized school districts within the state of Oklahoma and would be willing to cooperate in the pilot study.

Superintendents were presented the survey instrument at the February, 1982, meeting of the Eastern Oklahoma School Advisory Council and asked to carefully complete the survey and promptly return the form within a two week time period. A total of 45 surveys were distributed to member superintendents. Thirty-five surveys were returned to the researcher in the two week time frame previously established. The remaining 10 superintendents were contacted through the Council's monthly newsletter. No further response was received.

Program TESTAT was used to establish reliability of the pilot instrument. Program TESTAT calculates internal consistency based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Cronbach's formula is a generalization of the Kuder-Richardson formula for dichotomous items and reflects an estimated reliability among items of a scale in terms of overlapping variance (Nie, 1975). The tabulated data returned an acceptable reliability coefficient of .9057 for the instrument.

Administration of the Instrument

The member superintendents of school districts which comprise the

Oklahoma Public School Research Council were contacted by mail and asked to complete a survey (see Appendix A). Superintendents were informed that all responses would be held in confidence, due to the somewhat sensitive nature of the subject matter.

The survey instrument, a cover letter, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope were mailed on April 20, 1982, to all superintendents in districts which were members of the Oklahoma Public School Research Council, except the nine superintendents who were members of the Eastern Oklahoma School Advisory Council and who participated in the pilot study. A total of 90 superintendents were contacted out of 99 members. They were informed concerning the purpose of the study and asked to participate and respond promptly. Within two weeks, 68 responses had been received, totaling 77 percent of the surveys returned by May 4, 1982. Due to the excellent rate of return, no follow-up was deemed necessary. Two additional surveys were received but were too late to be included in the scoring of the data.

Scoring and Processing of Data

Responses to the 59 items of the School/Community Relations Survey were punched into data cards and scoring was completed by computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The initial data analysis involved descriptive statistics. Frequency distributions were established for the purpose of supplying an actual count and percentage of occurrence for each classification requested using the SPSS Program Frequencies.

Tables were compiled for the review of frequencies involving the following classifications or categories of data:

1. Size of district by enrollment related to grades 10-12 based on ADA (1981-82) information secured from the Okalhoma Department of Education.

2. Tenure classification of superintendents (item 1).

3. Yes/no response concerning full-time employment of public relations/communications specialists within the district (item 2).

4. Yes/no response concerning weekly reporting news media within the district (item 3).

In addition to the frequency of data previously mentioned, the SPSS Condescriptive Program was employed. This program computes means range, variance, and other descriptive statistics for each variable requested.

The SPSS Pearson Correlation Program was also employed. The intent of this program was to examine the relationship between the views of school superintendents regarding the community and news media items that were used on the survey instrument.

The research questions were analyzed using several types of analysis within the SPSS package for inferential statistics and were tested for significance at the .10 level.

The first research question was stated as follows:

"Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media as a single entity within the community?"
This research question was analyzed using the SPSS Program T-TEST in an attempt to test for significant differences between the two group means.

Research question two was stated as follows:

"Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and

news media differently based on the enrollment size of their individual districts?"

Question two was analyzed using the SPSS Program BREAKDOWN with subprogram ANOVA, which tests for difference between categories on the means of dependent measures. An asymmetric statistic, ETA, was also employed in analyzing questions two through five.

> The purpose of ETA is to measure association when the independent variable is nominal level data and the dependent variable is interval level data. ETA basically computes an indication of how dissimilar the means on the dependent variable are within categories of the dependent variable. ETA reflects an intuitive interpretation as the proportion of variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable when the value is squared (Nie, 1975, p. 108).

Research question three was stated as follows:

"Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their individual tenure as a superintendent?"

Question three was analyzed using SPSS Program BREAKDOWN with subprogram ANOVA. ETA was again used in analysis of question three.

The fourth research question was stated as follows:

"Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their employment of a full-time public relations/communications specialist within their district?"

Research question four was also analyzed using the SPSS Program BREAKDOWN with subprogram ANOVA. ETA was also employed in the analysis of question four.

Research question five was stated as follows:

"Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their degree of interaction with the local news media?"

SPSS Program BREAKDOWN with subprogram ANOVA was again employed, as was ETA, for question five.

In addition to analysis of the research questions previously stated, serendipity analysis was also employed in an attempt to review individual items of interest. The SPSS Program ONEWAY with subprogram RANGES=SHEFFÉ was used in this analysis. ONEWAY is limited to problems involving only one independent variable. In addition to the standard summary, ONEWAY provides optional tests for: (1) trends across categories of the independent variable, (2) a priori contrasts specified by the researcher, and (3) a posteriori contrasts (Nie, 1975).

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The analysis of data will be presented and discussed in this chapter. The data collected was the basis for answering the research questions presented in Chapter II. Descriptive statistics were employed to arrive at actual counts and percentages of occurrence for several areas within the study. These areas include: (1) enrollment size of sample districts according to top three grades, (2) tenure classification of superintendents, (3) employment of full-time public relations/ communications specialists, and (4) presence of media within the district reporting at least once weekly. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to achieve the computed results. Specifically, the SPSS Program Frequencies was used to arrive at the final figures.

Description of Analysis

The SPSS Program Condescriptive was also used to compute means, standard deviations, variances, ranges, and other descriptive statistics for each item on the survey instrument.

The statistical measure used to determine the relationships between views of superintendents of schools regarding the community and the media was also the SPSS computer programs expressing Pearson's

product-moment correlation coefficient "r" which is used to measure
the strength of relationship between two interval level variables.
In this case, the strength of relationship indicates both the good-
ness of fit of a linear regression line to the data and, when "r"
is squared, the proportion of variance in one variable is explained by
the other (Nie, 1975).

The results of this statistical analysis indicated a positive
correlation of .218 and points to the fact that a significant rela-
tionship does exist concerning the views of school superintendents
regarding the community items and news media items on the survey in-
strument and has a probability of error at less than .10. This re-
sult supports the information obtained from the original pilot survey
which was also tested for a relationship between community and news
media items. The pilot data produced a reliability coefficient of .91.

Inferential statistics were also utilized in the study of the
stated research questions. A brief description of purpose for each
process involved in this study was presented in Chapter III.

As noted in Chapter III, figures involving the size of school
enrollment (Table I) were based on grades 10-12. This information was
obtained from the Oklahoma State Department of Education based on each
district's 1981-82 Average Daily Attendance (ADA).

Table I indicates responding superintendents tended to represent
disproportionately those serving smaller sized districts based on
enrollment. Over 50 percent of the respondents represented school
districts with enrollment sizes of less than 500 students in the top
three grades (10-12).

TABLE I

DISTRICT SIZE BASED ON ENROLLMENT FOR
TOP THREE GRADES

Enrollment Category	Number of Responses	Total Population %	Respondents per Category %
Under 250	21	28	84
251-500	19	29	73
501-750	13	21	68
751-1,000	6	9	75
Over 1,000	9	13	75
Total	100	100	

Figures involving tenure of superintendents were based on length of service in the present school district (Table II). This information was obtained from the survey instrument as completed by the responding superintendents. Length of service was broken down into five categories of current service in an attempt to distinguish views on the basis of experience.

Table II indicates over 50 percent of the responding superintendents had held their position within the current district being served for less than five years, while 25 percent had served five to ten years. The 10 to 15 year category indicated 11.8 percent of the responding superintendents fell into this range of service. Superintendents serving their district for 15 years or more totaled 10.3 percent of the responding superintendents.

TABLE II

TENURE OF RESPONDING SUPERINTENDENTS WITHIN
THEIR CURRENT DISTRICT

Years of Experience	Absolute Frequency	%
Less than one year	10	14.7
One to five years	26	38.2
Five to ten years	17	25.0
Ten to fifteen years	8	11.8
Fifteen or more years	7	10.3
Valid respondents	68	100.0

Figures involving the employment of a full-time public relations/ communications specialist (Table III) were based on the individual response of superintendents to a survey item. The definition of "full-time" was left to the discretion of those responding.

TABLE III

DISTRICTS EMPLOYING FULL-TIME PUBLIC RELATIONS/
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS

Response	Absolute Frequency	%
Yes	1	1.5
No	67	98.5
Valid respondents	68	100.0

Table III overwhelmingly indicates the absence of full-time public relations/communications specialists within the districts of responding superintendents. One district of the 68 participating in the study employed a full-time communications specialist.

Figures involving the interaction of superintendents with the news media within their district (Table IV) were based on the individual response of superintendents to a survey item. Superintendents were asked to report if their district was served by at least a weekly reporting type of news media.

TABLE IV

DISTRICTS IN WHICH THE NEWS MEDIA REPORTS
AT LEAST ONCE WEEKLY

Response	Absolute Frequency	%
Yes	48	70.6
No	20	29.4
Valid Responses	68	100.0

Table IV reflects 71 percent of the responding superintendents are employed in districts which have some form of news media reporting at least once weekly. Almost 30 percent of the superintendents indicated an absence of news media within their school districts.

Analysis of the Research Questions

The following section will deal with the individual research questions and their statistical measurement. A brief description and the findings will be included in each analysis.

Question One - "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media as a single entity within the community?" This research question was analyzed using the SPSS Program T-TEST in an attempt to test for significant differences between the mean of superintendents' responses regarding the community and the mean responses regarding the news media (Table V).

The high positive T-value indicated a significant difference does indeed exist between the views of superintendents regarding the community and the news media with ($p < .10$). The 68 responding superintendents indicated they view the two items (community and news media) as separate entities within the district after completing the 28 community items and 28 news media items on the survey. As indicated in Table V, superintendents tend to view the community in a more positive fashion than they do the news media, as reflected in the means of each scale.

Question Two - "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on the enrollment size of their individual districts?" Question two was analyzed using the SPSS Program BREAKDOWN, with subprogram ANOVA, which tests for differences between categories on the means of the dependent measure. An asymmetric statistic, ETA, was also utilized in analyzing research question two (Table VI).

TABLE V

T-TEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND MEDIA
RESPONSES OF ALL SUPERINTENDENTS

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Community scale	1.2736	0.101	0.012
Media Scale	1.1713	0.102	0.012
T-Value 6.66	Degrees of Freedom 67		Two-Tailed Probability ≤ .10

TABLE VI

ENROLLMENT SIZE OF SCHOOL AND IMPACT ON
SUPERINTENDENTS' VIEWS OF THE COMMU-
NITY AND NEWS MEDIA

	Analysis of Variance				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Community Source					
Between groups	51.385	23	2.234	1.151	0.3369
Within groups	83.481 ETA=0.6173	43 ETA Squared=0.3810	1.941		
Media Source					
Between groups	36.470	25	1.459	0.608	0.9056
Within groups	98.395 ETA=0.5200	41 ETA Squared=0.2704	2.400		

No significant difference was found between the views of superintendents based on enrollment size of schools (grades 10, 11, and 12) regarding the community and news media as computed by Program BREAKDOWN.

Question Three - "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their individual tenure as a superintendent?" Question three was analyzed using the SPSS Program BREAKDOWN with subprogram ANOVA. ETA values were also computed for research question three (Table VII).

A significant difference was found between views of superintendents, based on their tenure, regarding the community with ($p < .10$). However, no significant difference was found between views of superintendents, based on their tenure, regarding the news media. The significant difference indicated in Table VII was broken down into individual categories of tenure. This categorical breakdown indicated the group mean concerning superintendents' views of the community, as influenced by their tenure, and is presented in Table VIII.

As indicated in Table VIII, superintendents with 15 or more years of experience view the community more positively as a group. Superintendents in the five to ten years of experience category view the community more negatively than all other categories.

Question Four - "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their employment of a full-time public relations/communications specialist within their district?" Research question four was analyzed using the SPSS Program BREAKDOWN with subprogram ANOVA. An ETA value was also computed for both the community and news media in reference to superintendents' responses (Table IX).

TABLE VII

IMPACT OF TENURE ON SUPERINTENDENTS' VIEWS OF
THE COMMUNITY AND NEWS MEDIA

| | Analysis of Variance | | | | |
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Community source					
Between groups	44.301	23	1.926	1.722	0.0601
Within groups	49.229	44	1.119		
	ETA=0.6882	ETA Squared=0.4737			
Media source					
Between groups	36.509	25	1.460	1.076	0.4076
Within groups	57.020	42	1.358		
	ETA=0.6248	ETA Squared=0.3903			

TABLE VIII

IMPACT OF TENURE ON SUPERINTENDENTS' VIEWS
OF THE COMMUNITY

| Categorical Breakdown | |
Tenure of Responding Superintendents	Group Mean
0-1	3.20
1-5	3.15
5-10	2.90
10-15	3.15
15 or more	3.32

TABLE IX

IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS/
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS ON SUPER-
INTENDENTS' VIEWS OF THE COMMUNITY
AND NEWS MEDIA

	Analysis of Variance				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Community source					
Between groups	0.185	23	0.008	0.443	0.9807
Within groups	0.800	44	0.018		
	ETA=0.4337	ETA Squared=0.1881			
Media source					
Between groups	0.485	25	0.019	1.631	0.0792
Within groups	0.500	42	0.012		
	ETA=0.7018	ETA Squared=0.4925			

No significant difference was found between the views of superin-
tendents related to the employment of public relations/communications
specialists regarding the community. However, a significant differ-
ence with ($p < .10$) was found between the views of superintendents re-
lated to the employment of public relations/communications specialists
regarding the news media. Special note should be made concerning the
data presented here regarding research question four. As indicated in
Table III, only one responding superintendent indicated the employment
of a full-time public relations/communications specialist. The lack
of data, therefore, indicates no conclusions should be drawn from the
existing data base. The discriminating results are reported in an
attempt to draw interest to an area in need of further research.

Question Five - "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their degree of interaction with the local news media?" SPSS program BREAKDOWN with subprogram ANOVA was again employed as was ETA concerning research question five (Table X).

TABLE X

IMPACT OF THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF LOCAL NEWS
MEDIA ON SUPERINTENDENTS' VIEWS OF THE
COMMUNITY AND NEWS MEDIA

	Analysis of Variance				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Community source					
Between groups	6.137	23	0.267	1.471	0.1337
Within groups	7.981	44	0.181		
	ETA=0.6593	ETA Squared=0.4347			
Media source					
Between groups	5.272	25	0.211	1.001	0.4863
Within groups	8.845	42	0.211		
	ETA=0.6111	ETA Squared=0.3735			

No significant difference was found between the views of superintendents, related to their degree of interaction with the local news media, regarding the community or news media.

Additional Analysis

As outlined in Chapter III, ETA values were computed for four of the five research questions. The purpose of ETA is to measure association of the dependent and independent variable when they are of differing data levels. ETA basically computes an indication of how dissimilar the means on the dependent variable are within categories of the independent variable. The ETA value reflects an intuitive approach to the proportion of variance in the dependent variable, as is explained by the independent variable when the value is squared (Nie, 1975).

Research question two was analyzed using the ETA program. Research question two states: "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on the enrollment size of their individual districts?" An ETA squared score of 0.3810 reflected the variance between the views of superintendents regarding the community and enrollment size of the school (dependent and independent variables). Also, an ETA squared score of 0.2704 reflected the variance between the views of superintendents regarding the news media and enrollment size of school, which can be accounted for due to differences between the two data levels. The ETA results for both the community and news media, when related to responding superintendents' enrollment size of school, suggest the fact that superintendents' views of the two entities may be more significant than is reflected in the computed results of program BREAKDOWN. Differences in the types of data, interval as opposed to nominal, should be kept in mind when reviewing the effect of enrollment size on responding superintendents' views of the community and news media.

Research question three was also analyzed using the ETA program. Research question three states: "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their individual tenure as a superintendent?" The significance found in research question three, via program BREAKDOWN, was accented by the fact that an ETA squared score of 0.4737 reflected the variance between the views of superintendents regarding the community and their tenure classification. The ETA squared value for superintendents' views of the news media computed as 0.3903 and reflected the variance between those views of superintendents regarding the news media and their tenure classifications. Differences in the types of data, nominal as opposed to interval, should be considered when reviewing the effect of tenure on responding superintendents' views of the community and news media.

Research question four was also analyzed using the ETA program. Research question four states: "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their employment of a full-time public relations/communications specialist within their district?" The ETA squared value for superintendents' views on the community reflected a score of 0.1881 as related to the variance between their responses, while a score of 0.4925 concerning the variance between the reported views of superintendents regarding the news media are accounted for in terms of an ETA squared value. As indicated in Table III, only one responding superintendent indicated the employment of a full-time public relations/communications specialist. The lack of data, therefore, indicates no conclusions should be drawn from the existing data base. The

discriminating results are reported in an attempt to draw interest to an area in need of further research.

Research question five was also analyzed using the ETA program. Research question five states: "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on their degree of interaction with the local news media?" An ETA value of 0.4347 computed the variance between the views of superintendents regarding the community, as outlined in question five. Additionally, the ETA value for views of superintendents, as related to question five, regarding the news media, reflected a score of 0.3735. The ETA results for both the community and news media, when related to the degree of interaction between responding superintendents and the news media, suggest the fact that superintendents' views of the two entities may be more significant than is reflected in the computed results of program BREAKDOWN. Differences in the types of data, interval as opposed to nominal, should again be kept in mind when reviewing the effect of superintendents' interaction with the news media on responding superintendents' views of the community and news media.

In addition to the analysis of the previously stated research questions, a review and analysis of particular items within the School/Community Relations Survey was made. These items were believed by the researcher to be of central importance to the study of superintendents' views on the community and news media.

Item #32 was selected for review and analysis. Item #32 states: "The community is opposed to progressive change in the existing educational programs." This statement was analyzed from two standpoints

concerning superintendents' background and subsequent responses. In
an attempt to determine if experience affected views of superintend-
ents, tenure of superintendents was selected as a factor for analysis
of item #32. Subprogram ONEWAY was employed to analyze this individ-
ual item. Tenure of responding superintendents, as related to item
#32, was found to be a significant factor in their responses with
$(p < .10)$.

As indicated in Table XI, a significant difference exists con-
cerning superintendents' responses on survey item #32. Table XII
indicates the mean response of each category of tenure for responding
superintendents.

TABLE XI

EFFECT OF TENURE ON ITEM #32

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	Mean	F	F Prob.
Between groups	5.8488	4	1.4622	2.368	2.195	0.0796
Within groups	41.9601	63	0.6660			

As noted in Table XII, superintendents in the one to five year
experience category view the community as being more opposed to
progressive change in the existing educational program in their dis-
tricts. Superintendents in the 10 to 15 year experience category

view the community as being more open to change in the existing edu-

cational programs.

TABLE XII

SUPERINTENDENTS' MEAN RESPONSE TO
SURVEY ITEM #32

Categorical Breakdown Tenure of Responding Superintendents	Group Mean
0-1	2.3
1-5	2.7
5-10	2.1
10-15	2.0
15 or more	2.3

Superintendents' interaction with the news media was also se-

lected as a factor for analysis of item #32 in an attempt to determine

if the news media affected superintendents' views on the community.

Subprogram ONEWAY was again utilized in the analysis (Table XIII). No

significant difference was found concerning item #32 as related to

superintendents' interaction with the local news media.

Item #59 was also selected for review and analysis. Item #59

states: "Media representatives are professionally responsible and

should be allowed to attend 'closed or executive' sessions of board

of education meetings for the purpose of developing background information." This statement was analyzed from two standpoints concerning superintendents' backgrounds and subsequent responses. In an attempt to determine if experience affected views of responding superintendents, tenure of superintendents was selected as a factor for analysis of item #59.

TABLE XIII

EFFECT OF INTERACTION WITH MEDIA ON ITEM #32

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	Mean	F	F Prob.
Between groups	0.4965	1	0.4965	2.368	0.693	0.4083
Within groups	47.3123	66	0.7169			

Subprogram ONEWAY was again utilized in the analysis of this survey item. Tenure, as related to item #59, was found not to be a significant factor regarding superintendents' views (Table XIV).

An analysis of the degree of superintendents' interaction with the news media, based on superintendents' responses to a survey item, was also computed in an attempt to determine if the news media affected superintendents' views on the community. Subprogram ONEWAY was again utilized in the analysis of the item (Table XV).

TABLE XIV

EFFECT OF TENURE ON ITEM #59

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	Mean	F	F Prob.
Between groups	1.0366	4	0.2592	1.2537	0.679	0.6088
Within groups	23.6499	62	0.3815			

TABLE XV

EFFECT OF INTERACTION WITH MEDIA ON ITEM #59

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	Mean	F	F Prob.
Between groups	1.1834	1	0.1834	1.2537	3.273	0.0751
Within groups	23.5031	65	0.3616			

A significant difference was indicated in the responses of super-
intendents with ($p < .10$) concerning superintendents' interaction with
the news media and item #59. Superintendents not working with the
news media on a regular basis tended to view the news media in a more
negative light than those superintendents working with the news media
on a regular basis.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Review

The main purpose of this study was to examine the views of se-
lected Oklahoma school superintendents concerning their views of
communities and news media within their school districts. Ninety
superintendents from school districts affiliated with the Oklahoma
Public School Research Council were asked to cooperate and support
the study.

The survey instrument, composed of 59 Likert-type statements,
was mailed to each member superintendent. Previously, an acceptable
reliability coefficient was established through the cooperation of a
smaller but similar group of superintendents in a pilot study.

The data provided by the survey instrument dealt with views of
the superintendents regarding both the community and the news media.
This data was tested statistically to determine the relationship be-
tween the view of the superintendent and several demographic vari-
ables. These variables included such areas as size of school, tenure
of the superintendent, utilization of a full-time public relations/
communications specialist, and interaction with news media on a reg-
ular basis.

The relationship between the views of the superintendents of
schools concerning the community and the news media was computed

utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS).
Specifically, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient
"r" was used to measure the strength of the relationship between
the community and the news media.

The results of the statistical analysis indicated a positive
correlation of .218 between the variables of community and news
media as viewed by school superintendents with (p < .10).

The five research questions were also individually analyzed
with an appropriate test for each. The following section will
briefly summarize each question:

Research Question One - Research question one stated: "Do
superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news
media as a single entity within the community?" This research ques-
tion was analyzed using the SPSS program T-TEST in an attempt to test
for significant differences between the two group means. Analysis of
the data revealed significant differences do indeed exist between the
views of superintendents regarding the community as opposed to their
views regarding the news media with (p < .10). This analysis indi-
cated a higher mean for the community view; thus, a more favorable
view of the community.

The conclusion was drawn from this data that superintendents
view the community and news media as separate entities within the
school district. This fact suggests that superintendents may indeed
feel the community does not necessarily believe everything the news
media reports, good or bad, pertaining to the school district. There-
fore, superintendents may need to establish two separate lines of
communication when dealing with the community as a whole. This points

directly to the need fo superintendents to have an all-encompassing, well-defined, program when dealing with the community and news media.

Research Question Two - Research question two stated: "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media differently based on the enrollment size of their individual districts?" This research question was tested using the SPSS program BREAKDOWN with subprogram ANOVA. Analysis of the data revealed no significant difference between the views of superintendents of schools, based on the enrollment size of their district, regarding the community and news media. However, the ETA value concerning enrollment size and the community reflected a score of 0.3810 concerning variance between the two variables, while 0.2704 was computed as the ETA value regarding enrollment size and the news media. These ETA results amplify the significance figures reported in Table VI and suggest enrollment size of school should be considered when reviewing superintendents' views on the community and news media.

The conclusion was drawn from this data that the superintendents' views of the community and news media was not affected based on size of enrollment within the individual school districts. This fact suggests superintendents work from a common base of opinion regarding the community and news media and face similar types of problems within their districts, regardless of the size of the district. This points to the fact that superintendents may realize great benefit in the implementation of a formal community relations program, regardless of the size of the district.

Research Question Three - Research question three stated: "Do superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media

differently based on their individual tenure as a superintendent?"
Analysis of question three involved the SPSS program BREAKDOWN with
subprogram ANOVA also utilized. A significant difference was found
between the views of superintendents regarding the community based
on their tenure classification with (p < .10). As indicated in Table
VIII, superintendents with 15 or more years of experience viewed the
community more positively, while those with five to ten years viewed
the community in a more positive light. However, no significant dif-
ference was found concerning superintendents' views regarding the
news media based on their tenure classification. In addition to the
BREAKDOWN analysis, ETA values were also calculated for the two vari-
ables and related to tenure. The ETA value regarding the community
reflected a score of 0.4737, while the ETA value related to the news
media reflected a score of 0.3903 concerning the variance between the
two variables of tenure and the news media. These ETA results amplify
the significance figures, reported in Table VII, and suggest tenure
should be considered when reviewing superintendents' views on the
community and news media.

The conclusions drawn from this data are based on the signifi-
cance of superintendents' views regarding the community as related
to tenure of the respondents. The data suggests superintendents
differ in their views of the community based on length of tenure.
This points to the fact that superintendents new to their posi-
tions, must find some successful manner in dealing with the com-
munity or perhaps find themselves eased out of their administrative
responsibilities. Such factors as length of community tolerance,
superintendents' tolerance, and organizational support may cloud the

issues from district to district. The tendency of superintendents
to view the community in a more positive light than the news media,
as was reflected in research question one, indicates a concern for
the community opinion and a subsequent refinement of communication
channels more open to the community. The fact that tenure does not
change the outlook of superintendents toward the news media sug-
gests one of two possibilities: superintendents are either well
equipped from day one to interact with the news media in all phases
of the school program, or are not willing to include the news media
in their school/community relationships regardless of tenure, and
prefer to keep them at a distance simply to report the facts about the
school district. Again, in light of research question one, the latter
is more likely.

Research Question Four - Research question four stated: "Do
superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media
differently based on their employment of a full-time public relations/
communications specialist within their district?" Research question
four was analyzed using SPSS program BREAKDOWN with subprogram ANOVA.
The raw data, as was presented in Table III and Table VIII, indicated
only one respondent reporting the employment of a full-time public
relations/communications specialist within the district represented.
This fact must be accounted for when analyzing or reporting the find-
ings. The lack of a data base, therefore, resulted in no conclusions
being formulated from the analysis of research question four.

Research Question Five - Research question five stated: "Do
superintendents of schools tend to view the community and news media
differently based on their degree of interaction with the local news

media?" Research question five was analyzed using the SPSS program BREAKDOWN with subprogram ANOVA. Analysis of the data revealed no significant difference was found between the views of superintendents working with some form of news media, reporting at least once weekly, regarding the community or the news media. However, the ETA value reflected a score of 0.4347 concerning the variance between the variables of superintendents' interaction with the news media and the effect it has on their view of the community, while ETA scores for superintendents' interaction with the news media and the effect it has on their view of the news media computed a value of 0.3735 for these two variables. The ETA results amplify the significance figures reported in Table IX and suggest superintendents' interaction with the news media may have a more profound impact on their views of the community and the news media and should be considered when reviewing research question five.

The conclusions drawn from this data are based on the fact that no significant difference was indicated in superintendents' responses based on their interaction, or lack of interaction, with the news media regarding their views on the community and news media. This fact suggests several possibilities in terms of the superintendents' role in community relations.

First, the data may suggest that superintendents place little emphasis on the role of the news media within their communities in terms of school/community relations.

Second, the data may suggest superintendents avoid becoming overly involved with the news media, if at all possible, due to a lack of understanding or communication with the representatives of print and electronic news media.

Third, the data may suggest superintendents lack training or skills in dealing with the news media in a positive, profitable sense and therefore avoid involvement with the news media.

In addition to the findings in the analysis of the previously stated research questions, a review and analysis of chosen items listed within the School/Community Relations Survey was made.

Item #32 stated: "The community is opposed to progressive change in the existing educational program." This item was tested using the SPSS subprogram ONEWAY. Tenure of superintendents and superintendents' interaction with the news media were selected as factors for analysis. Tenure of superintendents proved to be a significant factor (p < .10) concerning the views of community attitude toward educational progress. As indicated in Table XII, superintendents in the one to five year experience category view the community as being more opposed to progressive change in the existing educational programs, while those in the 10 to 15 year category view the community as being more open to progressive change in the educational programs. Interaction with the news media was not a significant factor regarding the views of superintendents concerning community attitude toward educational progress.

The conclusions drawn from the analysis of item #32 indicate superintendents' views are markedly different based on their tenure or experience background regarding the community; in this case, "progressive change in the educational program." It could well be that superintendents begin to see the community in a different light as they become more experienced and perhaps more comfortable with their individual job responsibilities and ability to deal with them.

The degree of interaction between the news media and the superintendent had little impact on the views of superintendents regarding the community and "progressive change in the educational program." This again points to the fact that superintendents place little value on the news media's role in the workings of the school system and simply rely on the news media as an entity reporting about the community.

Item #59 stated: "Media representatives are professionally responsible and should be allowed to attend 'closed or executive' sessions of board of education meetings for the purpose of developing background information." This item was tested using the SPSS subprogram ONEWAY. Tenure of superintendents and superintendents' interaction with the news media were selected as factors for analysis. Tenure of superintendents proved not to be a significant factor concerning superintendents' views of "media representatives attending 'closed or executive' sessions of the board of education meetings." However, the degree of interaction between the news media and superintendents proved not to be a significant factor ($p < .10$).

The conclusions drawn from the analysis of item #59 indicate once again the fact that superintendents place little value or trust in the role of the news media in the developmental or internal workings of the school regardless of the superintendents' tenure or experience background.

The degree of interaction between the news media and the superintendent had a significant impact on the views of superintendents regarding the media representatives attending "closed or executive sessions" of the board of education meetings with ($p < .10$). This

suggests that the more superintendents know about the news media, the more pronounced their views are concerning the news media. The data suggests the fact that under the best of circumstances, super- intendents are cautious in their dealings with the news media.

Additionally, two informal questions were posed in Chapter I and referred to support or disruption of the educational process within the superintendents' respective districts. These questions were informally addressed in the analysis of the formal research questions. The review of the findings suggest that selected Okla- homa school superintendents do not necessarily view the community as a supportive body, enhancing the local educational process. Further, the opinions of superintendents were much more pronounced regarding the news media. These same superintendents, based on the analysis of the formal research questions, showed little faith in the news media as a school support mechanism enhancing the educa- tional process within their respective districts.

<div align="center">

Conclusions and Recommendations for

Further Research

</div>

Recognizing the superintendent as a community and state educa- tional leader, change agent, and key to educational excellence is a must for future educational enhancement. At attempt must be made to facilitate the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan designed to broaden the skills and perspectives of practicing and potential school superintendents.

Quite often individuals become satisfied with the status quo because opportunities are not available to broaden skills and perspec- tives. The same holds true for superintendents of schools. As

pointed out in research question one, the community and news media
are viewed as separate entities within the school district by super-
intendents. This suggests that superintendents would benefit if
a realization was made on their part that both entities must be
dealt with and may likely require two completely different approaches.
The need to develop and maintain an all-encompassing, well-defined,
community relations program is therefore of great importance to the
superintendent.

This conclusion points to the recommendation that the area of
administrative staff development should be investigated as well as
the impact such training may have in boosting the confidence level
of administrators along with their capabilities in the community
relations and news media relations area. Skills must be improved
for operating the schools of tomorrow. The future needs superintend-
ents who are aware of community, state, and national conditions that
have an impact on local schools. In order to accomplish this objec-
tive, a statewide staff development program for practicing Oklahoma
school administrators as well as potential administrators should be
developed. Staff development programs for administrators should in-
clude the school/community relations area. Such areas as writing and
communicating skills should be strengthened through this effort.
Additionally, methods of communicating school district needs, as well
as news media needs, should be developed. Administrators should be
informed as to some of the problems news media personnel are faced
with to bolster their understanding of the area. These recommenda-
tions might serve as the foundation for a refined and critical staff
development program for administrators.

The thought of utilizing an administrative staff development program brings many concerns to mind. Differences in needs of school districts clearly comprise a difficult problem area. Each school district has its own unique characteristics such as location, size, and presence of media. The selected sample reflected all of these characteristics within the study. Location of responding superintendents' school districts ranged from rural to urban. Size, as was viewed in research question two, was not a significant factor concerning superintendents' views of the community and news media. The same findings hold true for superintendents' views of the community and news media regarding their degree of interaction with the news media, as was related in research question five.

These characteristics of school districts showed little significance when individually addressed. Therefore, the idea concerning staff development in community relations and news media relations for school administrators may not need to be broken down in terms of differences in school districts. The data in this study suggests that superintendents, regardless of differences, work from a common ground of fairly negative feelings when dealing with the community and news media. This suggests the possibility that superintendents are cautious at best, when dealing with the news media.

A significant point made in this study is based on the tenure of responding superintendents. Tenure has an impact on the views of superintendents regarding the community as was reflected in research question three. The fact that superintendents have or will find successful approaches to the community relations problem in order to keep their jobs is a substantial point. Obviously, some

superintendents do a better job than others. These individuals may indeed be the backbone of a meaningful administrative staff development program. The sharing or identifying of potential problems as faced by superintendents may lead to a better understanding of why problems arise as well as how they can be overcome or avoided. The voice of experience can and should weigh heavily in any attempt at a staff development program for administrators in the community relations area. A more refined study of superintendents' approaches to community relations as related to tenure is a suggested area for further research.

Other studies of school/community relations which should be addressed in staff development programs following further research might include: a study comparing the approach to school/community relations involving superintendents operating under community fire and those operating under stable conditions; a study concerning the knowledge and support within the school organization for the superintendent's community relations program; and a study comparing pre and post views of superintendents participating in administrative staff development programs relating to community relations and news media relations.

Summary

> Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions (Lincoln, Congressional Address, 1864; cited by Bagin, 1981, p. 6).

This statement holds true for public school superintendents in everything they do or say. As pointed out in the research material,

superintendents have learned many things regarding their communities.
Important is the fact that superintendents view the community and
news media as separate entities within the community, while at the
same time a correlation exists between the two variables as depicted
in the School/Community Relations Survey. This looms extremely impor-
tant, due to the fact that many superintendents do not have a formal
community relations program established within their districts.
Equally important is the fact that few districts employ full-time
public relations/communications specialists, as reflected in the
data base. However, results of this study indicate a possible ad-
vantage exists for those superintendents utilizing this approach when
dealing with the news media, based on the limited data available
through this study. In addition to these facts, the data reflects an
indication that tenure has an impact on the views of superintendents
regarding the community. This indication supports the idea that
superintendents begin to view the community in a more positive sense
as they become more adapted to their position. It appears the ques-
tion is not "Shall there be a community relations program within the
district?" These programs already exist on either a formal or in-
formal basis. The question is "What kind of community relations pro-
gram will benefit the school district?" There are two choices in
this researcher's opinion: (1) superintendents can act, or (2) super-
intendents can react. As Barnard (1938) maintains, the first essen-
tial function of the executive and the first look of the organizer
is to provide the system of communication for the organization.
Should the superintendent of schools choose to act, he will be ori-
ented toward community relations thinking on a daily basis. He will

try ideas to make the community more aware of services the school has to offer. He will be quick to point out good characteristics of the school as well as his points of concern. The superintendent will be aware of the importance of making employees feel important and recognize their efforts as an important part of his community relations program. He will have clear policies and procedures, regarding community relations, for employees so that they feel secure and are prepared to deal with problems as they arise. And, the superintendent will keep the community fully informed about school operations and changes as they take place.

On the other hand, should the superintendent of schools decide to base his community relations program on reaction, he will wait until problems arise and then "do what comes naturally." His program will be based on the premise, "I'll run this operation any way I see fit and if the community doesn't like it, tough!" This approach appears to be one of the critical factors in problems faced by superintendents as was related in the review of literature.

Therefore, relating all these considerations to the findings of this study and allowing for the fact that community relations programs exist, either formally or informally, it would appear the ideal school/community relations situation would involve a superintendent who is capable of: (1) recognizing the fact that the community and news media are separate entities and should be handled differently, and (2) using his experience base (or that of other successful superintendents if the experience base is limited) as a practical point to work from when dealing with the community.

As McCloskey (1967, p. 14) stated, "In a democratic social order where people freely read, listen, speak, formulate opinions, and vote, leadership is largely a matter of communication." Effective school communication and leadership is critical to the community. The superintendent's approach to this area is the key.

In conclusion, Oklahoma will increase its odds for meeting its long-range educational goals if the professional skills of school superintendents are further developed as outlined here. Skill in administering a school or school district in the future will not be enough. Superintendents must develop the skills that will be required to lead the schools in our rapidly changing world, starting with their own communities. Unless opportunities are made available to practicing and potential school superintendents to identify and define what the future of education should be, and unless opportunities are provided for superintendents to acquire the skills to make such areas as community relations a realistic success, public school systems will fall short in meeting our responsibilities to the citizens and youth of Oklahoma.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Association of School Administrators. Public Relations for America's Schools. Twenty-Eighth Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: The Association, 1960.

Bagin, D. "The School and the Community." Paper presented to the National School Public Relations Association Convention. Phoenix, Arizona, 1981.

Barnard, C. I. The Functions of the Executive. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938.

Batten, J. D. "Face-to-Face Communication." The Personnel Administrator (February, 1976), pp. 51-54.

Becker, L. B., M. E. McCombs, and J. M. McLeon. "The Development of Political Cognitions." In Political Communication, S. H. Chafee, ed. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1975, pp. 21-64.

Cubberly, E. Public School Administration. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929.

Culbertson, J., P. Jacobson, and T. Reller. Administrative Relationship. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1960.

Dennis, H. "Communication Climate Questionnaire" and "Communication Survey." (Unpub. research materials, Oral Roberts University, Department of Speech Communications, 1979.)

Downs, C. W. Organizational Communicator. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.

Downs, C. W. and M. D. Hazen. "Communications Satisfaction Questionnaire." (Unpub. speech and research materials, Oral Roberts University, 1979.)

Ellena, W. J. "Blueprint for the Beginning Superintendent." Paper presented at American Association of School Administrators' Annual Convention. Dallas, Texas, 1975.

Emery, F. E. and E. L. Trist. "The Causal Texture of Organizational Environments." Human Relations (February, 1965), pp. 21-32.

Engelhardt, F. Public School Organization and Administration. New York: Ginn and Co., 1931.

Farley, B. School Publicity. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934.

Fiedler, F. E. A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Fisk, R. "The Task of Education Administration." In Educational Administration: Selected Readings, W. Hack et al., eds. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1965, p. 13.

Fusco, G. Improving Your School/Community Relations Program. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967.

Gallup, G. et al. "Eighth Gallup Poll of the Public Schools." Kappan (October, 1977), pp. 33-37.

Griffiths, D. et al. Organizing Schools for Effective Education. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Printers, 1962.

Grinnell, J. E. Interpreting the Public Schools. New York: McGraw Hill, 1937.

Gross, N. Who Runs Our Schools? New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958.

Halpin, A. W. and B. J. Winer. The Leadership Behavior of the Airplane Commander. Washington, D.C.: Human Resources Research Laboratories, 1952.

Harris, W. T. "How to Improve the Qualifications of Teachers." Education (July, 1882), pp. 47-61.

Hecht, M. L. "Measures of Communication Satisfaction." Human Communication Research (Summer, 1978), pp. 350-368.

Herzberg, F. et al. The Motivation to Work. New York: Wiley, 1959.

Hoy, W. K. and C. G. Miskel. Educational Administration: Theory, Research, and Practice. New York: Random House, 1978.

Jones, J. School Public Relations. New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1966.

Jones, J. and I. Stout. School Public Relations: Issues and Cases. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960.

Keckly, P. "The Increasing Importance of Employee Relations." Public Relations Review (Fall, 1977), pp. 70-76.

Keenan, R. B. "Why They Got Fired." (Unpub. speech, American Association of School Administrators, 1961.) (Mimeographed.)

Kindred, L., ed. Communications Research and School/Community Relations. Washington, D.C.: Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1965.

King, E. J. Other Schools and Ours: Comparative Studies for Today. London: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973.

King, N. "Clarification and Evaluation of the Two-Factor Theory of Job Satisfaction." Psychological Bulletin, 1970.

Kirk, G. V. "Critical Requirements for Public School Superintendents." (Unpub. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1969.)

Lawler, E. E., III and L. W. Porter. "The Effect of Performance on Job Satisfaction." Readings in Organizational Behavior and Human Performance. Glenview, Illinois: Cummings and Scott, pp. 103-104.

Likert, R. New Patterns of Management. New York: McGraw Hill, 1961.

Maslow, A. H. Motivation and Personality. New York: Harper and Row, 1954.

McCloskey, G. Education and Public Understanding, 2nd ed. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

Miller, C. and F. Charles. Publicity and the Public School. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924.

Moehlman, A. et al. School Public Relations. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957.

Moore, H., Jr. Studies in School Administration. Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, 1957.

Mort, P. R. "Educational Lag--Cause and Cure." Nations Schools (June, 1941), pp. 66-75.

Nie, N. et al. Statistical Package for Social Sciences, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 1975.

Nolte, C. W. and W. A. Murrey, eds. "Aurora: A Case Study of Public Relations Strategy." Abstract No. Ed. 025-983, Educational Resources Information Center. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education, 1969, p. 87.

Powell, F. "The Gatekeeping Function of Public School Superintendents." (Unpub. Ed.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1981.)

Ramseyer, J. et al. Factors Affecting Education Administration. Columbus: College of Education, Ohio State University, 1955.

Reeder, W. G. An Introduction to Public School Relations. New York: Macmillan Co., 1937.

Roberts, K. H. and C. A. O'Reilly. "Measuring Organizational Communication." Journal of Applied Psychology, 1974, pp. 321-326.

Roethlisberger, F. J. et al. Management and the Worker. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939.

Scribner, J. D. "The Politics of Educational Reform." Urban Education (January, 1970), pp. 348-374.

Sergiovanni, T. "Factors Which Affect Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction of Teachers." Journal of Educational Administration, 1967.

Stellar, A. W. "A Study Determining and Contrasting Perceptions of School Superintendents With Perceptions of Managers of the Major News Media Regarding the Reporting of School News." (Unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio University, 1973.)

Stewart, E. American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. Washington, D.C.: Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, 1972.

Stogdill, R. M. and A. E. Coons. Leader Behavior: Its Description and Measurement, Research Monograph No. 88. Columbus: Ohio State University, 1957.

Terreberry, S. "The Evolution of Organizational Environment." Administrative Science Quarterly, 1968, pp. 590-593.

Thayer, L. O. Administrative Communication. Homewood, Illinois: Irwen, 1961.

Walton, J. Administration and Policy-Making in Education. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969.

Webster, D. Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, Massachusetts: G and C Merriam Co., 1971.

Wiio, O. "Organizational Communication: Interfacing Systems in Different Contingencies." Paper presented to the Annual Convention of the International Communications Association, Portland, Oregon (April, 1976). (Mimeographed.)

Williams, T. "Urban Schools and External Communication." Administrator's Notebook (January, 1969), pp. 108-117.

Yeager, W. A. Home - School - Community Relations. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1939.

Young, R. J. and B. R. Dillman. "A Study of Relationships Between the Importance of a School Superintendent's Functions and His Practices, Based on Authoritative Opinion." Journal of Experimental Education (June, 1960), pp. 321-336.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE

December 15, 1981

Dear Committee Member:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data in an attempt to determine if superintendents of public schools, in a great number of instances, approach community relations in a "can't win" manner. The views of superintendents concerning the community attitude toward the educational process in their respective districts is an identified problem area to be explored.

The general area under investigation in this study is the view of the superintendent with regard to community relations in the working environment. The questions to be answered are:

1. Do superintendents view their relationships with the community and news media as negative, potentially dangerous aspects of their job responsibilities?

2. Do superintendents, for the most part, feel comfortable in their dealings with the news media?

3. Do superintendents, for the most part, feel comfortable in their dealings with the community?

The responses of superintendents to the attached questionnaire will be compiled and analyzed according to such factors as size of school, tenure of superintendents, utilization of public relations staff, and interaction with the news media, in an attempt to establish if superintendents' views are affected by these factors. Your comments, suggestions, and ideas concerning the questionnaire will help determine the validity of this instrument. Please be open in your review and do not hesitate to write on your copy of the instrument.

A consensus of all committee members will be compiled and submitted to my adviser for final approval. The instrument will be piloted sometime in Feburary, 1982.

Your review of this material is of great assistance. Again, please feel free to add your comments, ideas, or suggestions to the tentative work presented here. A critical eye will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Darrell Gwartney
Graduate Student

4304 S. Elm Street
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
March 1, 1982

Dear Superintendent:

We are writing to enlist your cooperation in a study which is designed to determine views of local school superintendents concerning school/community relations. Due to the increasing role of the media in reporting educational matters an attempt to determine if superintendents have developed views in this related area will also be made.

You can be of help with this research by completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire. The form of the instrument has been designed for ease in answering as it takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. A pre-addressed and pre-stamped envelope has been provided for returning the questionnaire. Please rest assured that your name, the name of your school system, and your responses will be held in strictest confidence.

We appreciate your willingness to share your experiences and knowledge so vital to the success of this study. An early return would be beneficial. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Darrell Gwartney
Graduate Student

Dr. K. St. Clair
Professor, Educa. Adm.
Oklahoma State Univ.

APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENT

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS SURVEY

The following questions deal with views of superintendents as related to the school/community relations within their districts. Two partic- ular terms, school/community relations and media representatives will be used throughout the survey. School/community relations is defined as the interaction of the educational process and the common interests of the people living in a defined district or area. Media representa- tive is defined as a news reporter or broadcaster, editor, publisher, etc., charged with the responsibility of furnishing coverage of news- worthy events to an audience of readers, listeners, or viewers.

Each participant's responses will be considered strictly confidential. Honest, sincere answers will insure all conclusions drawn from this data base are accurate. Please circle the appropriate response which best relates to your school district.

1. How many years have you been employed as a superintendent in the district in which you currently are employed?

    0-1   1-5   5-10   10-15   15 or more

2. Does your district employ a full-time public relations/ communications specialist?

    Yes   No

3. Does your community have some form of media within the school district which reports at least once a week?

    Yes   No

4. The community is quick to respond to the school's needs when made aware assistance is necessary.

    Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

5. Media representatives do not anticipate the school district's needs to publish information.

    Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

6. Great improvements could be made in the school system if the community would get involved.

    Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

7. Media representatives report in a clear, concise manner relating to the school district.

    Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

8. A large percentage of community patrons are active and interested in the school system as a whole.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

9. Media representatives' practices are not acceptable to emergency situations involving the school district.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

10. Pressure is placed on education to be all things to all people within the community.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

11. Media representatives seem to have confidence and trust in the school district.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

12. Open house conducted at the school is readily accepted by the community and well attended.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

13. Media representatives often do not give the superintendent the chance to answer reports which are critical of the school system.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

14. The school system would be much better off if community patrons would mind their own business.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

15. The present working relationship between the local school district and the media is satisfactory.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

16. Community patrons believe too much of what they read in the papers which often in incorrect concerning schools.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

17. Media representatives do not act in a professional manner when dealing with the school district.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

18. Community leaders respond well to invitations to speak to student groups within the school.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

19. Media representatives know and understand the problems faced by
the school district.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

20. The present relationship between the school and community
is tense and uneasy.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

21. Media representatives spend more time editorializing and drama-
tizing existing situations than they do reporting the facts and
intent of the school district.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

22. Board members are in touch with community feelings regarding the
school system.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

23. An atmosphere of candor and frankness seems to pervade relation-
ships between media representatives and the school district.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

24. Patrons within the community cannot understand the workings of
the school system, therefore need not be aware of details con-
cerning the educational process.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

25. Media representatives do not express an interest in discussing
future trends in education and the direction the school district
is headed.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

26. The school system would benefit if the board of education would
listen more to community patrons.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

27. The reporting of school news is characterized by a balance in
news coverage as opposed to an over-reliance on extracurricular
activities, the sensational or bizarre.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

28. The school system would benefit if the board of education would
not overreact to community pressures.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

29. Media representatives do not understand the function and purpose of public education and are not properly prepared for reporting educational matters.

       Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

30. Community patrons are quick to support school administrative decisions and actions.

       Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

31. A climate of support for the school district, devoid of special interests, has been fostered by the reporting and editorials of media representatives.

       Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

32. The community is opposed to progressive change in the existing educational program.

       Awlays   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

33. The school district does not receive the amount of attention it deserves from media representatives.

       Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

34. PTA does a good job of supporting the school as a service organization and does not interfere with administrative decisions or policy.

       Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

35. The procedures of the media in gathering information about the school district are designed so that effectiveness of the district is not reduced and classes are not disrupted.

       Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

36. Patrons within the school district display an attitude that the school administration is not doing what it should for the school system.

       Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

37. The school district is not consulted by media representatives regarding the facts contained in news stories and editorials about the local school district.

       Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

38. Students seem to enjoy school and, as a whole, become involved in school programs and activities.

       Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

39. The superintendent feels secure in discussing "off the record" information with media representatives.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

40. Community patrons with no children in the school system are not interested in the schools and choose not to be involved in school issues.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

41. The public is not provided an accurate and/or unbiased means of judging the adequacy of the local school system as presented by media representatives.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

42. Advisory committees for special programs offer only opinions and do not attempt to dictate policy as a group.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

43. The school superintendent is offered the use of the media to present to the public his views on the local school, past, present, and future.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

44. Board members vote their personal feeling regarding school issues as opposed to representing those community patrons who put them in office.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

45. The school superintendent is an instructional leader and does not have time to become involved with media representatives as related to the school district.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

46. Community involvement and support for extracurricular activities is good.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

47. Media representatives are present at regularly scheduled school board meetings.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

48. Booster clubs for school sports attempt to dictate hiring and firing practices of school personnel.

     Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

49. Media representatives tend to focus on individual personalities rather than the district as a whole.

        Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

50. The needs of the community are being met through current educational programs within the school system.

        Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

51. Media representatives, in reporting meetings of the board of education, use only those items on which the board took official action.

        Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

52. Community patrons are opposed to student pep rallies, dances, etc., held at the school.

        Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

53. Media representatives report school news in a controversial manner because the media generally reflects the interests of the community.

        Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

54. The school is the focal point of the community.

        Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

55. Media representatives reserve a regular portion of their report for local educational news.

        Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

56. Businessmen and merchants within the community attempt to interfere or manipulate school procedures or policies.

        Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

57. Media representatives do not focus on a single spokesman for the school during a time of crisis and report unofficial statements from other sources.

        Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

58. Community patrons are quick to voice support in school issues such as bond and millage elections.

        Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

59. Media representatives are professionally responsible and should be allowed to attend "closed or executive" sessions of board of education meetings for the purpose of developing background information.

   Always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never

COMMENTS:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Approximate time to complete this survey:_____

APPENDIX C

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PER INDIVIDUAL

COMMUNITY ITEM TABLE

TABLE XVI

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PER INDIVIDUAL
COMMUNITY ITEM

Mean	Variance	Range
Item 4		
4.176	0.625	4.000
Item 6		
3.358	0.658	3.000
Item 8		
3.632	0.833	3.000
Item 10		
3.618	0.807	4.000
Item 12		
3.791	0.865	4.000
Item 14		
1.985	0.970	4.000
Item 16		
2.776	0.995	4.000
Item 18		
4.030	0.575	3.000
Item 20		
1.956	0.491	3.000
Item 22		
3.896	0.519	4.000
Item 24		
1.881	0.713	3.000
Item 26		
2.500	0.433	4.000
Item 28		
2.881	1.046	4.000
Item 30		
3.627	0.450	3.000
Item 32		
2.368	0.714	3.000

TABLE XVI (Continued)

Mean	Variance	Range
Item 34 3.281	2.027	4.000
Item 36 2.265	0.436	3.000
Item 38 4.044	0.580	4.000
Item 40 2.853	0.933	4.000
Item 42 3.500	0.962	4.000
Item 44 3.265	0.974	4.000
Item 46 4.059	01773	4.000
Item 48 2.015	0.880	4.000
Item 50 4.000	0.239	3.000
Item 52 1.971	0.686	3.000
Item 54 4.059	0.594	4.000
Item 56 1.925	0.434	4.000
Item 58 4.000	0.485	3.000

APPENDIX D

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PER INDIVIDUAL

MEDIA ITEM TABLE

TABLE XVII

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PER INDIVIDUAL
MEDIA ITEM

Mean	Variance	Range
Item 5		
2.647	1.127	4.000
Item 7		
3.250	0.847	4.000
Item 9		
2.567	0.795	41000
Item 11		
3.603	1.049	4.000
Item 13		
2.493	1.163	4.000
Item 15		
3.926	0.726	4.000
Item 17		
2.403	0.790	3.000
Item 19		
3.224	0.813	4.000
Item 21		
2.485	1.239	4.000
Item 23		
3.582	0.701	4.000
Item 25		
2.265	1.033	4.000
Item 27		
3.235	1.257	4.000
Item 29		
2.559	0.788	3.00
Item 31		
3.284	0.903	4.000
Item 33		
2.522	0.859	4.000

TABLE XVII (Continued)

Mean	Variance	Range
Item 35 3.794	0.942	4.000
Item 37 2.448	1.130	4.000
Item 39 3.104	1.428	4.000
Item 41 2.456	0.670	4.000
Item 43 3.824	1.192	4.000
Item 45 2.030	0.848	3.000
Item 47 3.176	2.356	4.000
Item 49 2.627	1.056	4.000
Item 51 3.531	1.174	4.000
Item 53 2.269	0.654	4.000
Item 55 3.338	0.973	4.000
Item 57 2.530	0.868	4.000
Item 59 1.254	0.374	3.000

VITA 2

Darrell Lee Gwartney

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE VIEWS OF SELECTED OKLAHOMA SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ON
SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND SCHOOL/NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Prairie Grove, Arkansas, November 26,
1952, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John P. Gwartney.

Education: Graduated from Jenks High School, Jenks, Oklahoma,
in May, 1971; received Bachelor of Science degree in Social
Science from Oklahoma State University in 1974, received
Master of Education degree from Northeastern Oklahoma State
University in May, 1979; enrolled in doctoral program at
Oklahoma State University in 1980; completed requirements
for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State Univer-
sity in December, 1982.

Professional Esperience: Teacher/Coach, Cleveland Public Schools,
Cleveland, Oklahoma, 1974-75; Teacher/Coach, Broken Arrow
Public Schools, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, 1975-79; Staff As-
sistant to the Superintendent, Broken Arrow Public Schools,
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, 1979-82.