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PARRISH, Lonny Ray, 1921-
A STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR
OF THE LOCAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS.

The University of Oklahoma, Ed.D., 1968
Education, administration

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

A STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR OF THE LOCAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

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Tahlequah, Oklahoma

1968

A STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR OF THE

LOCAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Approved by

Dissertation Committee

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express sincere appreciation to Dr. Robert Ohm, Chairman of my Dissertation Committee, and to the following members of the committee: Dr. O. D. Johns, Dr. Glen Snider, and Dr. Jack Parker. Their assistance was invaluable in the development of this study.

Special appreciation is extended to Dean Ohm who gave information and made recommendations that were pertinent and wise, but allowing me the freedom to make determinations in certain areas that I felt were crucial.

I am grateful to Dr. Mitchell Mann for his interest in the study and the valuable stimulations and support he gave.

Last, my special thanks to Betty, Lonnetta, Becky, Nancy, Marjorie, and Jennifer Sue whose interest has been a constant source of support and encourgement to me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		iii
LIST OF TABLES		v
Chapter		
I.	THE PROBLEM	1
II.	REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	11
III.	PROCEDURES OF THE INVESTIGATION	27
IV.	PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	38
V.	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS	81
APPENDIX		96
BIBLIOGRAPHY		101

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Size and Number of School Districts from Which Sample Was Selected.	28
2.	Distribution of Instruments--Dates and Number.	31
3.	Total Number and Per Cent of Responses from Each Size Category.	32
4.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communication by School District Size.	39
5.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communications by Governmental Levels and School District Size.	40
6.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communications by Channel Used and School District Size.	41
7.	Frequency, Length, and Per Cent of Superintendents Time Devoted to Communications, by Channels Used.	42
8.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communications Referring to School Personnel, by Governmental Levels and School District Size.	43
9.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communications Referring to Professional Activities, by Governmental Levels and School District Size.	44
10.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communications Referring to Curriculum, by Governmental Levels and School District Size.	45
11.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communications Referring to School Finance by, Governmental Levels and School District Size.	46
12.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communications Referring to Federal Programs, by Governmental Levels and School District Size.	47
13.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communications Referring to Physical Plant and Site, by Governmental Levels.	48
14.	Frequency and Per Cent of Communications Referring to Legislation, by Governmental Levels and School District Size. .	49

Table		Page
15.	Age of Superintendents by School District Size.	51
16.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communications by Age Groups and School District Size.	52
17.	Frequency and Per Cent of Superintendents Communications by Experience and School District Size.	53
18.	Frequency and Per Cent of Communications by Experience Groups and School District Size.	54
19.	Educational Attainment of Superintendents by School District Size.	56
20.	Educational Attainment of Superintendents by Age Groups. .	57
21.	Number of Contacts by Superintendents Educational Attainment.	58
22.	Memberships in Professional, Service, Civic, and Fraternal Organizations by School District Size.	59
23.	Memberships in Professional, Service, Civic, and Fraternal by Age Groups.	60
24.	Frequency of Contacts by Memberships Held in Professional, Service, Civic, and Fraternal Organizations.	61
25.	Levels on Which Offices Were Held in Professional Organizations by School District Size.	62
26.	Levels on Which Offices Were Held in Professional Organizations by Age Groups.	63
27.	Frequency of Contacts by Levels on Which Offices Were Held in Professional Organizations.	65
28.	Levels of Participation on Educational Committees by School District Size.	66
29.	Levels of Participation on Educational Committees by Age Groups.	67
30.	Frequency of Contacts by Levels of Participation on Educational Committees.	68
31.	Areas of Participation in Politics by School District Size.	69
32.	Areas of Participation in Politics by Age Groups.	70

Table | Page

33. Frequency of Contacts by Areas of Participation in Politics. 71

34. Preference of Superintendents for Information, Action, and Decision Behavior by Levels of Participation in Professional Organizations. 73

35. Preference of Superintendents for Information, Action, and Decision Behavior by Levels of Participation on Educational Committees. 74

36. Preference of Superintendents for Information, Action, and Decision Behavior by Areas of Participation in Politics . 75

37. Comparison of Selected Variables With School Size. 76

38. Comparison of Communication Content Categories With Regard to Per Cent of Frequency, Governmental Level Preference, and School District Size. 77

39. Comparison of Selected Status Variables With Frequency of Communications. 78

40. Comparison of Participation in Professional, Educational, and Political Organizations With Age, School Size, and Frequency of Contacts. 79

41. Comparison of Requests for Information, Action, and Decision With Selected Status Variables. 80

A STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR OF THE LOCAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Since the third decade of the 19th century, the local superintendent of schools has been a key person in the educational process of the school district in which he worked. The broad outlines of the community's educational program emerges as he marshals resources, gathers and supplies information, stimulates discussion, and judiciously weighs alternative courses of action. He also evaluates, recommends, and initiates action.

It has been only recently, however, since the advent of the federal government into education at the elementary and secondary level, that the superintendent has been torn between so many diverse alternatives, obligations, and responsibilities. As a result of this increased federal participation, the American public school system today has evolved into a complex partnership with responsibilities distributed among the three levels of government, local, state, and federal.

In most states the legislature is required by the state constitution to establish and maintain a system of free public education. The fact that this duty has been exercised by creating local school administrative units does not remove the authority from the state legislature.

Although this is a cooperative effort of the three partners, the state has the fundamental legal responsibility.[1]

The federal government's role in the partnership until recently has been basically noncoercive and supplementary. Except for the enforcement of federal policy pertaining to issues such as civil rights and religious freedom, federal action has been limited to advice and financial contributions, both of which may be rejected by state and local authorities.[2]

Background of the Problem

Recent expansion of federal programs in elementary and secondary education and the aggressive leadership exerted by the United States Office of Education and the State Department of Education, has brought about changes in the relationship of the local school district to the state and federal partners. There is recent evidence that the increasing influence of the state and federal government of local schools has upset the equilibrium in which school boards and superintendents have traditionally operated.

Campbell writes: "I would contend that recent federal activity in education has created a disequilibrium for many school boards, and that a new equilibrium is being established in which the role of the school boards will be somewhat more restricted than it has been."[3]

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[1] American Association of School Administrators, The Federal Government and Public Schools, A Report Prepared by the American Association of School Administrators (Washington: American Association of School Administrators, 1965), p. 59.

[2] Ibid, 60.

[3] Roald F. Campbell, "Federal Impact on Board's Decisions," The American School Board Journal, CLIV (March, 1967), 40.

Campbell further asserts:

> One of the most obvious consequences of the increased federal activity in education has been a re-adjustment within the partnership of the board and the superintendent. Prerogatives ordinarily thought to belong to the board have been shifted to the superintendent and his staff. Although the board's legal status has not changed, its functions have been somewhat transformed.[1]

Under these conditions it appears school boards have had to rely even more than usual on the superintendent's judgment and as a result he has been given wide latitude in dealing with governmental officials. This generalization is supported by Nystrand in his recent study on Community Action Programs in three middle-size cities. He states, "The most important findings of the study with regard to relations between Boards of Education and Community Action Committees (OEO) was that these relations were dominated by experts.....both agencies relied upon the same experts, the school district administrators."[2]

If the school board's role seems to be diminishing in this school government relationship, the opposite appears to be true of the superintendent. These developments seem to have enhanced his role, especially as a collector of information and interpreter of governmental rules and regulations. This in turn has brought about significant changes in his role as a communicator with governmental officials as he attempts to initiate, coordinate, and evaluate school programs within the framework of state and federal guidelines. A closer liaison between superintendent and governmental agencies seems imperative if the local school district

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Raphael O. Nystrand, "An Analysis of Community Action Programs for Educational Decision-Making" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation Northwestern University, 1966).

is to take advantage of the many and varied governmental subsidized programs available to elementary and secondary schools.

Although several studies within the framework of role theory have examined dimensions of the role of the superintendent of schools, there has been little investigation of this role with respect to his behavior as a communicator with governmental officials. Gross, who did a rather extensive analysis of roles of superintendents in Massachusetts, pointed out:

> By legal definition the school board is the legal policy making organ of a public school system and the superintendent is its chief executive officer. These two positions are located at the top of the formal social hierarchy of a school system. Through the deliberation and actions of these incumbents, decisions are reached that clearly affect the organizational purpose and the manipulation of its human and material resources.[1]

The foregoing statement clearly places the legal responsibility for the making of decision regarding the operation of the school system, for the most part, with the local board. It does, however, imply that the superintendent, as the chief administrative officer, must assume the responsibility of providing the board with information to form the basis of these decisions.

The Oklahoma School Board Handbook lends support to the above findings by Gross.[2] In discussing the role of the superintendent, it is pointed out that he has no statutory powers or duties under Oklahoma law. McCarty emphasized the superintendent was the executive officer of the

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[1]Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason and Alexander W. McEachern, Explorations in Role Analysis (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968), p. 100.

[2]Oklahoma School Board Handbook, A Handbook Prepared by The Oklahoma State School Boards Association, (2d ed. rev., Oklahoma City), 1958.

board, subject to the policies of the board.[1] Both suggested the superintendent has a role as a professional resource person and one of his important fuctions is that of fact finding. One of his tasks then, is to offer the board his professional judgment on all school matters.

It is apparent that increasing government intervention is producing profound change in the historical roles of the local, state, and national governments. Each level of government is attempting to find its unique role in improving American public education. As changes in the relationships of local school districts to other governmental agencies become even more accelerated, it is of paramount importance that the nature of the role of the school superintendent be continually reexamined.

The Purpose

The superintendent's task of communicating with governmental officials in an effort to gather, compile, and interpret data is the basis for this study. The purpose was to discover the nature of this emerging task and to determine if a distinct body of practice has developed among the practitioners of the profession in light of the increasing state and federal intervention into local educational policy and practice.

This study included superintendents who work in school with as few as nine teachers to schools with more than 700 teachers. An additional purpose was to investigate the communication patterns of the superintendent in relation to the size of the school which he represents.

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[1] Donald J. McCarty, "Community Power Structures and Administrative Tenure," Education Digest, (1964), 1-4.

Monahan stated, "The size and nature of school districts in the nation varies from the subline to the ridiculous."[1] That there has been, and continues to be, a definite trend toward reduction in the number of school districts in the United States is apparent to anyone who examines the issue. However, Monahan reports that in the state of Oklahoma less than one-half (45.4%) of the high schools have an average daily attendance of 100 or more.[2] This reluctance to follow the national trend in school district reorganization is possibly the result of Oklahoma politics having long been influenced if not actually controlled by rural elements.

A related purpose has been suggested by such comments as that of Forrest E. Conner who writes, "As education has become more clearly identified with the nation's well being, the schools have become more visible in the political arena."[3] Roald Campbell states it this way, "Obviously we are ascribing a political role to the superintendent, but it is a political role with educational underpinnings."[4] Thus, an attempt was made in this study to determine if the degree of a superintendent's participation in politics influenced his behavior as a communicator with governmental officials.

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[1]William G. Monahan, Attitude Toward School District Reorganization, (A Report Sponsored by the Oklahoma Commission on Educational Administration, University of Oklahoma, 1962), p. 9.

[2]Ibid, 14.

[3]Forrest E. Conner (ed.), Federal Policies and the Public Schools, The School Administrator, (September, 1966), No. 1, p. 42.

[4]Roald F. Campbell, Luven L. Cunningham, Roderich F. McPhee, The Organization and Control of American Schools, (Columbus, Ohio) Charles E. Merrell Books, Inc., 1965, p. 214.

The Problem

The problem was to analyze the communication patterns of local school superintendents. More specificly it is intended to determine the degree to which these communication patterns are influenced by governmental involvement in elementary and secondary education, by the size of the school district they serve, and by the degree of their participation in politics.

Method

Practitioners in the field of school administration are indebted to researchers in the communications field for their contribution to a growing knowledge of communication practices in the social sciences. Through the efforts of these men a number of techniques have been developed that are useful for communication researchers. This study employs one of these techniques--content analysis. The content analysis technique was used in a study by H. S. Irons which was concerned with communication patterns of superintendents' annual reportes to boards of education and to the public.[1] This study was conducted through an analysis of communications initiated by the local superintendent of schools to officials at each of the three levels of government local, state, and federal.

According to Best, content analysis deals with the systematic examination of current records or documents as sources of data. He further states that it should serve a useful purpose in research, adding important knowledge to a field of study, or yielding information that is

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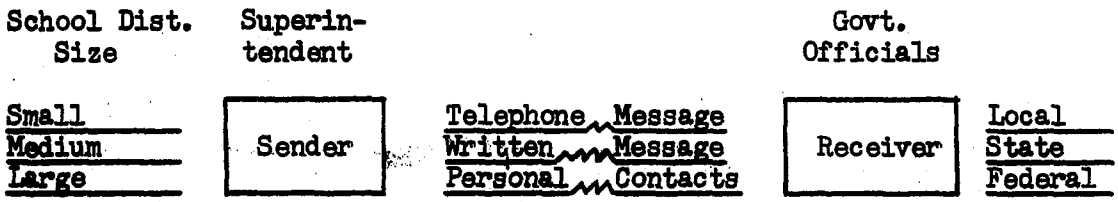
[1] H. S. Irons, The Development of Characteristics in Superintendents' Annual Reports to The Board and The Public (unpublished Doctors thesis, University of Pittsburg, 1942), pp. 214.

helpful in evaluating and improving social or educational practices.[1] In his book, Content Analysis in Communication Research, Bernard Berelson relates one of the values of content analysis as a research method is the identification of trends over time.[2]

The study was investigative in nature with a number of variables examined. The following model will show the schematic relations within the superintendent-governmental dyad upon which this investigation was based. These relations are who sends what message to whom over which channel.

Communication Model



In his effort to gather, compile, and interpret data the superintendent may initiate communication with persons other than those who represent some governmental agency. This aspect of his task of communicating is peripheral to the major focus of this study and will not be considered in this investigation.

The Guiding Questions of the Study

In order to examine the communication behavior of superintendents

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[1] John W. Best, Research in Education, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), pp. 117-20.

[2] Bernard Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research, (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1952), p. 29.

in their relations with governmental officials, the following guiding questions have directed this study:

1. Are superintendents from small school districts more frequently disposed to communicate with governmental officials than superintendents from medium and large school districts?

2. Does the governmental level preference of superintendents from small school districts differ from the level preference of medium and large school superintendents?

3. Is the preference for a channel of communication from superintendents of small school districts different from that of superintendents from medium and large school districts?

4. Do superintendents from small school districts devote more time to communicating with governmental officials than superintendents from medium and large school districts?

5. Does the contents of communications from superintendents of small school districts differ from the contents of communications from superintendents of medium and large school districts?

While it is an assumption of this study that school size bears a positive relationship toward discernable patterns of communication behavior of superintendents, status characteristics may also influence communication patterns. In order to consider factors, other than school size alone, the following status characteristics as displayed by superintendents were examined.

How does the communications behavior of superintendents relate to:

1) their age,
2) the number of years employed as a superintendent,
3) their training,
4) the number of professional, service, civic, and fraternal organizations to which they belong,
5) their participation in professional activities,
6) their participation on educational committees,
7) their participation in party politics.

Other questions examined as they relate to certain status characteristics were:

1. Does the communication initiated by the superintendent most frequently request information, require action, or ask for a decision?

2. Is the superintendent's preference influenced by the degree of his participation in professional, educational, and political activities?

Statement of Limitation

This study is limited to the investigation of superintendents from Oklahoma state supported public high school districts. Superintendents from private and pahrocial high schools are excluded. The information, therefore, obtained from this study pertains only to the public schools.

Organization of Study

Chapter I of this investigation introduces the study. It also presents the purposes, the guiding questions, and the organization of the study. Chapter II reviews the literature related to the study. Chapter III describes the study instruments and explains the methodology of the study. Chapter IV is devoted to the presentation of data obtained by responses of the superintendents, and a discussion of the findings. The summary, conclusions, and implications are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The pattern followed in the review of research and literature was to investigate the literature according to three aspects of this study. The first two deal with conditions which tend to influence the behavior of the local superintendent of schools as he performs the task of communicating with various governmental officials in an attempt to initiate, coordinate, and evaluate school programs. The third deals with the research technique employed in gathering data for this communications study.

Thus, the chapter is organized around the following categories: 1) increased government intervention into local educational policy and practice, 2) the influence of politics on local school administration, 3) communication research, and 4) summary.

Government Intervention

Writing in the School Administrator, Forrest E. Conner states, "Perhaps at no other time in our history has education occupied such a prominent place on the agenda of the United States Congress. The growing awareness of the federal government's responsibility for education

reflects a new and evolving national posture."[1]

Campbell reported that for most of our history the federal government chose to do little in the field of education, with the notable exception of congressional authorizations of land-grant colleges in 1862 and support for vocational education in 1917. Since 1944 there has been a sharp increase in federal activities pertaining to education.[2] The increased governmental activities into public education referred to by Campbell began in 1944 with the passage of the G. I. Bill of Rights. The momentum of this involvement began to intensify and in 1958 the National Defense Education Act was passed by Congress.

According to William P. McLure it was the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 that has led to an intervention of the federal government in the direct managment of public schools to an unprecedented extent, resulting in confusion and disunity throughout the educational system.[3] McLure goes on to say, "The approach to massive federal support through categorical aids in proving what most leaders and students of education predicted: a cumberson method that does violence to long established principles of administration by an enlightened profession."[4]

Richard Wynn lends support to the above observations when he stated that the power of decisions over public education is shifting rapidly from the state and the local to the federal level and from the

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[1]Conner, op. cit., No. 1, p. 4a.

[2]Campbell, op. cit., p. 40.

[3]William P. McLure, "Financing Education at the Federal Level," The School Administrator, (February, 1967), No. 6, p. 4a.

[4]Ibid.

old educational establishment to a new, more highly centralized one.[1]

Elaine Exton charged the recent Great Society education and training laws also are increasing federal power to change and direct the course of American education. She writes, "An important way in which the power balance is being tipped toward federal domination is through a far-flung network of federal partnerships with local, state and non-governmental elements."[2]

In a paper presented at the 1966 Cubberly Conference at Stanford University, Campbell made reference to these new federal partnerships. He related that by accepting federal money, the local board of education is being obliged to share its decision-making with groups specified in the new federal law. Campbell cites Title III of P. L. 89-10:

> This legislation states that public funds are to be allocated only after there has been assurance that persons broadly representative of the cultural and educational resources of an area have participated in the planning. Cultural and educational resources include, state educational agencies, institutions of higher education, non-profit private schools, public and non-profit private agencies such as libraries, museums, musical and artistic organizations, education radio and television, and other cultural and educational resources.[3]

Campbell also explained the OEO (Office of Economic Opportunity) requirement that there be local participation in organizing the programs, together with the sensitivity of OEO to political forces, gives boards of education both new partners and a new framework within which decisions

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[1] Richard Wynn, "Centralizing Tendencies in Education," The School Administrator (December, 1966), No. 4, p. 4a.

[2] Elaine Exton, "The Emerging Federal Partnerships," The American School Board Journal, CLIV, (May, 1967), p. 7.

[3] Campbell, op. cit., p. 41.

are to be made.[1]

Acknowledging that the multiplicity of agencies at the federal, state, and local levels of government puts new pressures on local boards of education and superintendents, U. S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe, in addressing the American Association of School Administrators 1967 Convention reported: "Now suddenly, school boards and superintendents have to face an array of organizations and private citizens, all of them demanding or sometimes simply seizing a piece of the educational action."[2]

Exton observed that:

> One of the significant factors in the growing federal impact on school board decision-making is that many of the universities, business firms, and other citizens groups and institutions that normally try to influence school board members now are federal education partners either as mandated consultants under federal laws or as direct recipients of federal aid, or as the state or local affiliates of federal-aided national organizations.[3]

Harry N. Scheiber wrote, "School districts which have long maintained the P. T. A. as their only concession to community participation are suddenly drawn into programs that must change their established professional orientation, to say nothing of their cherished insulation from the political storms that rage outside school walls."[4]

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[1] Campbell, op. cit., p. 41.

[2] Harold Howe II, Change and American Schools, a report to the American Association of School Administrators Annual Convention and Work Conference on Facing the Issues, Atlantic City, February 10-11, 1967, (Washington: Official Report A.A.S.A., 1967), pp. 81-2.

[3] Exton, op. cit., p. 9.

[4] Harry N. Scheiber, The Condition of American Federalism: A Historian View, (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 8.

Politics in Education

Writing in the March 1967 issue of The American School Board Journal, David W. Minor asserted that it is not unique to discuss the school system as a system of politics. He pointed out the reality that lies behind the discussion, the fact that school systems do political things in political ways, has been around a long time, probably as long as education has been thought an important matter for social discourse. Recently, both educators and social scientists alike have begun to view the political facet of education as a topic for discussion and systematic research.[1]

Local Politics

In his essay "Toward an Understanding of Public School Politics," Eliot stated that school administration as a profession is a relatively new profession. In terms of understanding the politics of the public schools it is perhaps the most important political facet of the educational program.[2] Furthermore, Eliot asserted that the whole school system has been blighted by the intrusion of certain aspects of politics. He believed political patronage is especially exercised in the issuance of educational contracts which disregard sound educational practices.[3] According to Eliot, school board members and school superintendents are engaged in political activity whether they like it or not. He feels the

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[1] David W. Minor, "Community Politics and School Board," The American School Board Journal, CLIV, (March, 1967), p. 33.

[2] Thomas H. Eliot, "Toward an Understanding of Public School Politics," American Political Science Review, Vol. LIII, (Dec., 1959), pp. 1032-51.

[3] Ibid.

standard professional terminology for political involvement is community relations, or rather--he must be a good politician.[1]

Regarding politics in the educational system, a study by Howe concluded that the entire educational system is political in nature. Our schools, according to Howe, are political grounds in which our students begin to learn about society's rules. If we wish to alter out students and our society, we must alter out schools.[2] Wayson, however, feels this determination is not the responsibility of the local school administration because he believed that there has never been local control of education. This, he maintained, is especially true in recent decades. Wayson cited numerous laws, universal American values, cultural ideals, nation wide distribution of tests and materials, local and regional competitiveness, mass media, state and national politics, and various political pressures, both explicit and covert, that dictate local educational practices and policies.[3]

Campbell's study stressed national and international events as influential in determining local educational policies, and he has written on numerous occasions about the "fokelore" of local control.[4] The Armstrong study concluded that the superintendent of schools is not considered to be a strong community leader by a large proportion of

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Florence Howe, "Mississippi's Freedom Schools: The Politics of Education," Harvard Educational Review, XXXV, (Spring, 1965), p. 159.

[3] W. W. Wayson, "The Political Revolution in Education," Phi Delta Kappan, XLVII, (March, 1966), pp. 333-39.

[4] Roald F. Campbell, Policy Formation in Education: An Introduction Educational Administration, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon Co., 1962, pp. 240-47.

governmental officers and Chamber of Commerce presidents.[1] Some studies seem to minimize the importance of local control and the influence of the school superintendent and board members in determining local educational policies while other sociologists and political scientists do not underestimate the role of the boards of education and the chief school officer in local school politics.

According to the Gross study, eighty-three per cent of the superintendents in Massachusetts believed that pressure was exerted upon them in hiring of new teachers.[2] Furthermore, Gross found that one of every five Massachusetts superintendents viewed his school board as a major obstacle in the execution of administrative policy. In addition, Gross maintained that Massachusetts superintendents believed twenty-nine per cent of their boards consisted of members who represented special interests groups while San Francisco Bay Area superintendents reported almost half (forty-seven per cent) of their boards had members who represented interest groups for the community.[3] Finally Gross stated that the Massachusetts superintendents indicated twenty-one per cent of their board members had political aspirations while the San Francisco Bay Area superintendents reported would be politicians made up twenty-seven per cent of their board membership.[4]

McCarty investigated the power structure of educational

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[1]Louis W. Armstrong, "Community Expectancy Concerning the Superintendency," (Unpublished Doctoral Project: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1935), p. 129.

[2]Neal Gross, Who Runs Our Schools, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1959), p. 38.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

administration. He referred to local power structure in terms of an elite power concept, a fractional power structure, a pluralistic or diffused power structure, and an inert structure.[1] Regardless of the type of power structure present, McCarty maintained that the role of the superintendent is primarily one of integrating the interest of the local power structure with the interest of the school. Educational responsibilities exercised directly by the state, in contrast to those assigned to the local school districts are numerous, thereby also subjecting the local district to an interplay of politics at the state level.

State Politics

The responsibility for public education is defined within the constitution of each state. Although the legal structure for educational administration varies from state to state, the final authority rests with the political structure of the individual state.

In education and its administration, the uniqueness of both structure and process tends to disappear in the arena of politics, where issues are decided in the realm of state government. Pierce found that State Departments of Education functioning in the same field as other state agencies are also influenced by the process of practical politics. He maintains State Department members frequently find themselves in the position of using and yielding to the same tactics.[2]

Pierce further asserts, "that state-wide educational policy,

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[1] McCarty, op. cit., p. 3.

[2] Truman M. Pierce, et al., Community Leadership for Public Education, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), p. 275.

is subject to the pressures and forces characteristic of any civil government."[1] It is therefore subject to the same shortcoming as other political entities although reverence for public education sometimes provides a brake on unscrupulous political pressures.

Educational measures of course are influenced by each branch of the state government, yet it is in the legislature that most educational questions are decided. Legislators are pressured by special interest groups which attempt to influence legislation to their own desire.

Max Rafferty's article, Politics in Education, appearing in the October 1966 issue of The Journal of Secondary Education said:

> It was not until I had lived in Sacramento for some months and worked almost daily with the legislators and with problems of state wide legislation, that I became aware of the constant, pervading presence of politics in education. I saw every single democrat in our California Assembly lined up on one side of a technical bill, and every single Republican on the other, both sides voting a straight party line on a matter which should have had no political significance whatever, I saw desperately needed money withheld from impoverished schools for political reasons, not educational reasons.[2]

Educational politics is not always party politics as shown by the formation of the Interestate Compact for education in 1965. Soon after Congress passed educational legislation affecting the elementary and secondary schools, state governors, legislators, and educational representatives founded the Compact. The Compact was one way of asserting state prerogatives in the new federal arena. Although its founders denied any opposition to federal participation in education, many people felt the Compact owed its founding to fear of new federal power. Levine felt this was true when he wrote:

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Max Rafferty, "Politics in Education," Journal of Secondary Education, (October, 1966), p. 44.

> The motivating force behind the Compact was fear at the state level that the growing federal initiative will further eclipse state and local control of education. . .The frequent references delegates and observers made in private conversations and in public sessions to the federal government "filling a vacuum" created by state inaction were eloquent testimony to the potency of this fear in the formation of the Compact.[1]

It should be said that the processes of practical politics are not the exclusive prerogative of local and state-level administration. We have recently become aware that federal officials are not immune to the interplay of similar forces.

Federal Politics

Recent federal enactments relative to public education have had a revolutionary impact upon local school administrators. Wayson stated: "Congress in 1965 enacted bills that have opened a revolution in the politics of educational policy making thereby rendering obsolete most of what we though we knew about the politics of education."[2] He also saw a re-allocation of authority and power in and among the three levels of government and their respective agencies.

Wayson believed that none of these agencies is the same as it was before the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, and each must recognize politics is occuring in and among all of these agencies and the various offices that they contain.[3] It would appear that due to this new federal influence on educational policy, old lines of communication and influence are breaking down or have broken down altogether.

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[1] Daniel U. Levine, "The States Run Scared," Phi Delta Kappan, XLVII, (November, 1965), pp. 134-35.

[2] Wayson, op. cit., p. 333.

[3] Wayson, op. cit., p. 334.

The emerging changes in local, state, and federal roles have not been brought about through formalized direct controls. Federal legislation prominently disavows such controls. If it so desires the local district can choose not to accept federal aid. ESEA for example does not dictate specific programs to be funded (although its administrators may have visions of what those programs should be). Administrative regulations require that local districts initiate requests for the aid, thereby giving the appearance that the programs and the funding are locally inspired. Campbell believes that the indirect controls prehaps are more compelling than any formal ones could ever have been, and they render all of the avowals and appearances meaningless.[1]

Although federal officials who administer the programs and most members of congress deny the intent to transfer the controll of public education to the central government, careful study of recent legislation will cause one to doubt. The American Association of School Administrators has reacted editorially against those who wish to overthrow the establishment.[2] More recently they have lashed out at those who are "unfamiliar with sound educational policy" and presume to know the weaknesses in the diverse school systems of the whole county.[3]

The interplay of politics in education at the federal level is characterized by what might be called inter-agency conflict. Wayson

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[1]Roald F. Campbell and Robert A. Bunnell (eds.), Nationalizing Influences on Secondary Education, (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1963), p. 22.

[2]"Hail the Establishment," The School Administrator, (October, 1965), p. 2.

[3]"Who Will Lead American Education," The School Administrator, (November, 1965), p. 2.

points out that federally financed educational programs are being administered currently by at least twenty seperate, uncoordinated, autonomous Washington agencies.[1] He also indicates the USOE (United States Office of Education) can expect strong opposition as it begins to assert itself.[2]

Communication Research

Researchers in the general field of communications have examined many aspects of communication practices. According to Monahan, these efforts represent a most noteworthy contribution to a growing knowledge of social behavior and therefore are important to the practitioners in all fields of school administration.[3] Berelson supports this notion when he writes:

> The field of communication research has been among the most active in the social sciences during the past fifteen years or so. Through both commercial and academic research a substantial body of information and knowledge has been constructed and an impressive set of research techniques developed.[4]

To review all the contributions dealing with either communication practices that have been observed, or with communication research techniques that have been developed is not the purpose of this study. However, one technique often used by communication researchers is called content analysis, and since this is the technique of research that was employed in this study, it deserves additional comment here.

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[1] Wayson, op. cit., p. 334.

[2] Wayson, op. cit., p. 334.

[3] William G. Monahan, "Analysis of School Content in Michigan Newspapers," (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Education Dept., Michigan State University), p. 25

[4] Bernard Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research, (Glenco: The Free Press, 1952), p. 9.

Content analysis is not a recent innovation. In a sense, the literary and music critics who have been with us a considerable number of years, employ a kind of qualitative content analysis.[1] As a method of scientific research, the most authoritative and recognized methodological work description of content analysis is Berelson's Content Analysis in Communication Research.[2] This book is a revision and expansion of The Analysis of Communication Content.[3]

Berelson derives his definition of content analysis by analyzing definitions used by a number of other researchers. By combining these various interpretations, Berelson comes up with the following definition:

> Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and qualitative description of the manifest content of communication.[4]

This definition implies certain assumptions and certain qualitative generalizations. Berelson lists three general assumptions which apply to all studies of content analysis: (1) assume that inference about the relationship between intent and content, or between content and effect, can validly be made, or that actual relationships can be established; (2) assume that the study of the manifest content is meaningful, i. e., that what it means to the analyst is what it was intended to mean by the communicator and/or understood by the audience; (3) the quantative description of communication content is meaningful.[5]

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[1] Monahan, op. cit., p. 26.

[2] Berelson, op. cit.

[3] Ibid, p. 9.

[4] Ibid, p. 22.

[5] Ibid, pp. 18-20.

Qualitative generalizations on the other hand have to do with inferences made about the intent and motivation of the communicator. These generalizations may be in terms of the relative importance of certain items. Examples of such considerations in this study would be the communicators preference for: item of content, channel of communication, and governmental level.

Evidence reveals that content analysis has been utilized for a great variety of purposes, on this point Berelson has this to say:

> The method of content analysis has been applied to so large and diverse a group of materials, with respect to so large and diverse set of problems, that it is not easy to order the uses in a single classification.[1]

Berelson identifies at least seventeen types of uses for this method but he points out that these should not be viewed as a listing but rather as a system of classification. Berelson orders the uses of content analysis under three major headings: (1) characteristics of communication content, (2) causes of content, and (3) consequences of content.[2] This study is concered with factors associated with the first two of these classifications.

Very limited research was found dealing directly with communication behavior patterns of the public school superintendent. A number of studies, however, have examined patterns of communication concerning other aspects of educational administration where the content analysis technique has been applied. Monahan used this research technique in a study to determine the quality and quanity of newspaper coverage of the

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[1] Ibid, p. 26.

[2] Ibid, p. 26.

[3] Monahan, op. cit.

educational activities of the Michigan public schools.[1] While the Gross study focused on tension in practice and procedure for collecting school news,[2] the Michigan Communications Study[3] was an interesting attempt to appraise the schools communications.

Summary

An analysis of the literature leaves little doubt that in the past five years the degree of government intervention into local educational policy and practice has reached an unprecedented high. This has brought about many changes not only in inter-government relationships in matters affecting education but also in government school district relationships.

The literature reveals that school systems are political systems and that local superintendents do live and work in a throughly political environment. In the future they can expect many new pressures from several sources. The superintendents will need to develop new types of relationships with local and state authorities in addition to the entirely new interactions with federal governmental authorities.

After an exhaustive search of the literature, it seems the communication behavior patterns of the superintendent, particulary under the influence of governmental intervention and politics, is an area that needs additional study since it has not been adequately researched up

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[1] Monahan, op. cit.

[2] Neal Gross, The School and the Press, (Cambridge: The New England School Development Council, 1954), p. 56.

[3] William Poe, Leo Hooks and Earl McIntire, "Creating An Informed Citizenry: Michigan Communications Study," Michigan Educational Journal (November, 1954), pp. 117-19.

to this time.

In this communications study, by applying a legitimate research technique--content analysis--it is felt a contribution to the general field of communications research can be made in that data has been obtained from school superintendents that was generally unavailable to the typical researcher.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES OF THE INVESTIGATION

Introduction

As previously mentioned, this study was concerned with examining the superintendent's task of communicating with various officials at the local, state, and federal levels of government. The school district size variable was used as a basis for comparison throughout the study. This chapter discusses the various operational procedures followed in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data.

Selection of Sample

The state of Oklahoma was used as the geographical locale for the study. Superintendents responded from school districts ranging in size from a nine teacher school to a 720 teacher school.

The 1966-67 Oklahoma Educational Directory[1] was used as a basis for the selection of those school systems from which the superintendents were asked to participate. The procedure for selection was as follows: All school systems which were shown in the Directory as employing a superintendent were selected. A total of 527 school districts were used on the basis of his criterion. Since school district size was assumed

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[1] Directory of Oklahoma Schools, 1966-67, Issued by Oliver Hodge, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: State of Oklahoma, 1961, Bulletin No. 109-p.

to bear a relationship to the superintendents communication behavior, these schools were then sorted into one of three groups according to the following size categories: Group I---fewer than 26 teachers, Group II---twenty six to 149 teachers, Group III---150 or more teachers. This sorting resulted in the distribution shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

SIZE AND NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS FROM WHICH SAMPLE WAS SELECTED

Group	Number of School Districts
I	354
II	151
III	21
Total	526

The school districts were then numbered consecutively so that each had been assigned an individual number as well as a group number. It was determined that a sample of approximately one-fourth of the school districts would provide an adequate representation of the groups and be within the limits of physical and other resources that could be allocated to the study. One hundred and thirty school district superintendents were selected for inclusion in the study: sixty-four in Group I, fifty in Group II, and sixteen in Group III.

To insure participation from all areas of the state it was determined that each Oklahoma Educational Association Geographical area would be represented in each size group. The exception being the Panhandle district and the Northwestern district neither of which have a school district with a sufficient number of teachers to qualify for Group III. In keeping with this decision alternate selections in each size groups

were made from each of the ten O.E.A. geographical areas until the determined percentage of school districts were selected.

Instrumentation

Development of the Message Pad

The procedure of this study was directed at determining the behavior of the local school superintendent as he goes about the task of initiating communications to officials at the local, state, and federal levels of government. It was apparent from the beginning that it would be necessary to develop some kind of instrument whereby the superintendent could easily record all his self initiated communication over a given period of time. This dictated the need for some kind of message pad.

Simon pointed out in his book, Administrative Behavior, that the most obvious media of communication was the spoken work and the written word.[1] Oral and written communication, however, takes a number of aspects. For convenience while still being discriminating enough to serve the purpose of this study, it was decided all communication would be categorized into one of three channels: telephone messages, written messages, and personal face to face conversation.

The message pad was to include space to record the name, title, and level of governmental operation (local, state, or federal) of the person to whom the message was being directed. In order to know more about what superintendents were most likely to contact governmental officials about, space was provided on the pad for: the gist of the

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[1]Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), p. 157.

message to be recorded; if the message asked for information, action, or a decision on the part of the receiver; and the amount of time devoted to each message. The final form of the message pad and the questionnaire are reproduced in Appendix B. The cover letter that accompanied these instruments is shown in Appendix A.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire solicited data regarding status characteristics of the superintendents dealt with in this study. A brief introduction describes the purpose of the questionnaire and instructions for completion. The questions may be thought of as falling into four types or categories: those having to do with name, school, age, education, and experience of the superintendent; those concerned with civic and professional activities; those having to do with participation on educational committees; and questions about participation in party politics.

Carter V. Good encourged the use of the questionnaire in educational research when he stated:

> As to uses and applications the questionnaire extends the investigator's power and techniques of observation by reminding the respondent of each item helping to insure responses to the same item for all respondents, and tending to standardize and objectify the observations of different inumerators.[1]

Scotes and Yoemons likewise added support to the questionnaire method of educational investigation when in 1962 they maintained:

> The questionnaire should be important not only to the investigator and to the particular field of knowledge, but also to the respondent, whose psychology of motivation involves his attention, sympathy, interest, cooperation, and honesty in

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[1]Carter V. Good, Introduction to Educational Research, (New York: Appelton-Centary-Crafts, Inc., 1959), pp. 190-205.

answering questions.[1]

All items selected for use on the message pad and questionnaire were designed to simplify analyzing the many variables surrounding the superintendent-governmental agency dyad which was investigated in the study. These variables are further identified later in this chapter.

Distribution of Instruments and Nature of the Responses

The message pad, the status questionnaire, the cover letter, and returned envelopes were packaged and readied for mailing to the school district superintendent chosen for this study. The cover letter asked the superintendent to complete the questionnaire and use the message pad to record all communications initiated by him to governmental officials for a period of four consecutive days, then return both questionnaire and message pad in the return envelope.

Table 2 shows the number of instruments distributed to each position group on each of the four seperate mailing dates. To eliminate

TABLE 2

NUMBER AND DATES OF QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTION

	January 27	February 24	March 28	April 21	Total
Group I	15	20	14	15	64
Group II	15	14	11	10	50
Group III	5	6	5	0	16
Total	35	40	30	25	130

[1] Douglas E. Scotes and Alice V. Yoemons, "Developing A Depth Questionnaire to Explore Motivation and Likelihood of Actions," Educational and Psychological Measurement, XII, (May, 1962), pp. 620-31.

the possibility of all samples reflecting a very short span of time it was decided to make four different mailings. The original mailing on January 27, was followed by mailings on February 24, March 23, and April 21. Returns covered a time span of the months of February, March, April, and May or one-third of the total school year.

Table 3 shows the general distribution of responses from the study population. Although the percent of responses was adequate and care was

TABLE 3

TOTAL NUMBER AND PER CENT OF RESPONSES FROM EACH SIZE CATEGORY

	No. Mailed	Responsed	Per Cent
Group I	64	39	60.94
Group II	50	28	56.00
Group III	16	11	68.75
Total	130	78	60.00

taken to randomize the superintendent in each size category, the factor governing self selection of respondents cannot be judged. Hence, no claim is made that the sample is representative of its larger population. For these reasons generalization of the findings and conclusions of this study to superintendents in Oklahoma or any larger area are not intended.

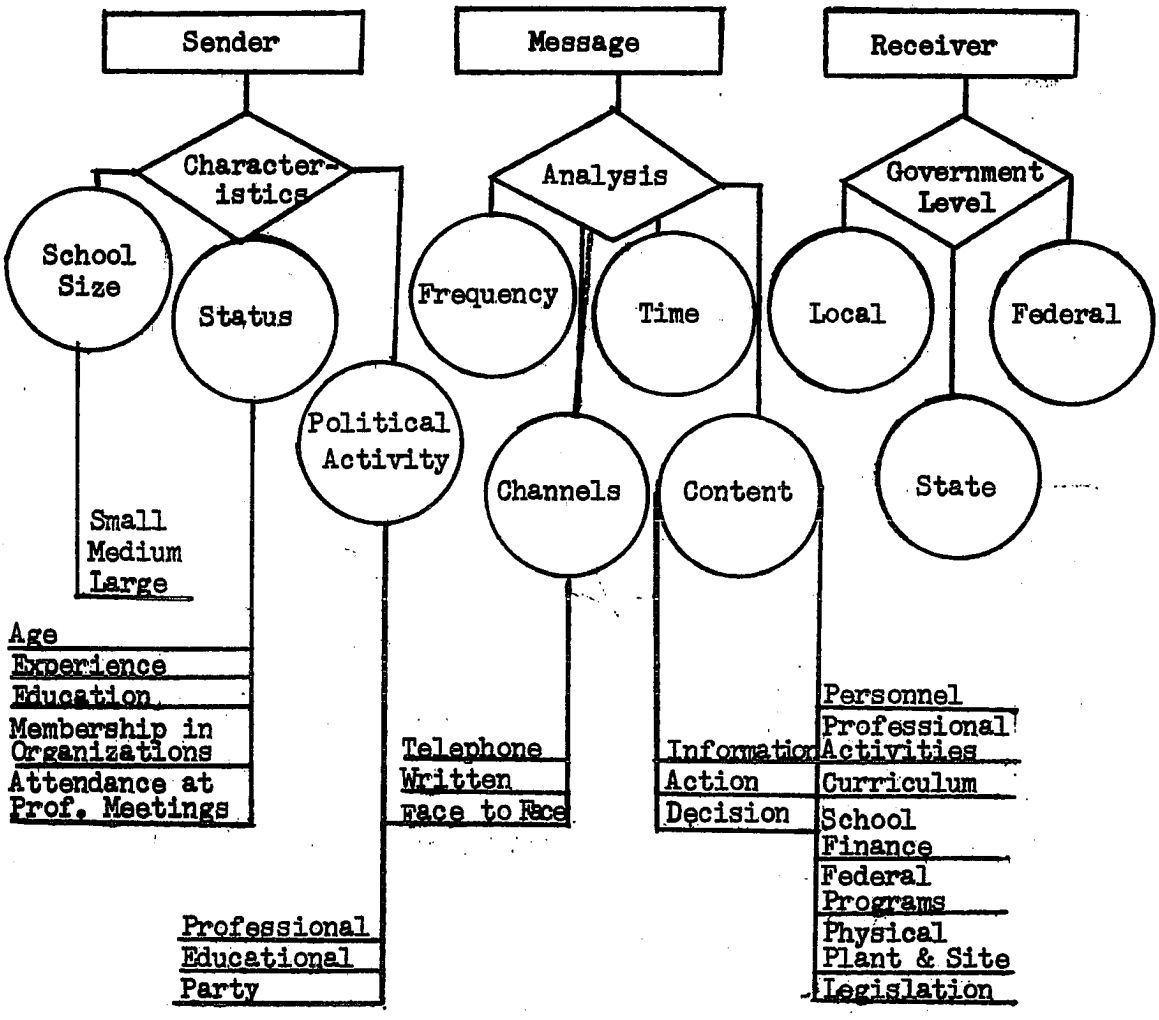
The lowest per cent of returns were from those superintendents representing the medium size district. The per cent of returns were larger from Group III superintendents. Thus the sample is biased with larger percentage representation from the larger school districts. However, the absolute number of responses from the smaller school district

superintendents is as large as the combined number from the other two groups.

Variables Examined

In an effort to be more specific in the identification of the many variables investigated in this study, a Communication Process Flow Chart is presented. This chart is an extension of the basic model shown on page seven.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS FLOW CHART



The superintendent or sender, was observed in terms of certain characteristics. These characteristics were school size, status, and political activity. The messages were analyzed in terms of frequency, channels of communication used, time, and content. The receiver was considered in terms of his governmental level of operation: local, state, or federal.

The flow chart attempts to show relationship established within and between the variables surrounding the sender, the receiver, and the messages. Specific relationships of the following variables examined were:

1. Frequency of contacts -- school size.
2. Frequency of contacts -- school size -- to governmental levels.
3. Frequency of contacts -- school size -- channels of communication.
4. Time devoted to messages -- channels of communication.
5. Frequency of contacts -- communication contents -- school size -- governmental levels.
6. Number of superintendents -- school size -- age groups.
7. Frequency of contacts -- school size -- age groups.
8. Administrative experience of superintendents -- school size.
9. Frequency of contacts -- school size -- administrative experience.
10. Superintendent's educational attainment -- school size.
11. Superintendent's educational attainment -- age groups.
12. Frequency of contacts -- educational attainment.
13. Superintendents memberships in organizations -- school district size.

14. Superintendents memberships in organizations -- age groups.

15. Frequency of contacts -- organizational membership held.

16. Offices held in professional association -- school size.

17. Offices held in professional association -- age groups.

18. Frequency of contacts -- offices held in professional associations.

19. Levels of participation on educational committees -- school size.

20. Levels of participation on educational committees -- age groups.

21. Frequency of contacts -- participation on educational committees.

22. Participation in party politics -- school size.

23. Participation in party politics -- age groups.

24. Frequency of contacts -- levels of political party participation.

25. Participation in professional activities -- frequency of request for information, action, or decision.

26. Participation on educational committees -- frequency of request for information, action, or decision.

27. Participation in party politics -- frequency of request for information, action, or decision.

Treatment of Data

The data for determining frequency of contact, governmental level preference, the channel of communication used, and the time spent on each contact at each group level were tabulated. Percentages were calculated for all sub-columns in order to verify the accuracy of computation since scores within each major column should total 100 per cent.

For each category a score of greater numerical value indicates a

higher preference with regard to the communication behavior of the superintendent. Thus for example, a score of 60 per cent contacts at the state level for one group of superintendents shows more preference, for that level of government than a score of 40 per cent by another group of respondents.

The analysis of the message content reported in the study showed each message could be placed into one of seven general categories. Those being: personnel, professional activities, curriculum, school finance, federal programs, physical plant and site, and legislation. Data concerning these content categories was treated in the same manner as described above and presented in percentages.

Status Characteristics

Some data obtained concerning status characteristics of incumbents were tabulated and presented in percentages scores. For other data, means of contact scores were determined for different categories and position groups. Respondents were categorized as high contactors, or low contactors, as their scores were above or below the mean scores of the combined distribution for each type or group. Where appropriate the chi square stastic was used to test for significance of difference between frequencies of "high" versus "low" categories.

Comparison were made of the preference scores within and between the groups as structured by other status characteristics and attitude variables. Means of contact scores for each message type--request information, require action, and ask for a decision--were determined for the combined position groups. As described above respondents were categorized as "high" or "low" in their preference for each as their scores

were above or below the mean scores of the combined distribution for each type. The chi square was used to test for significance of difference between "high" versus "low" categories. Differences of scores regarded as significant was at or beyond the .05 level of confidence when probabilities were read for a two-tailed test.

Chi square is a statistical technique which enables the investigator to evaluate the probability of obtaining differences between the actual and expected frequencies in the categories of one or more classifications as a result of sampling fluctuation.[1] According to Garrett: a) chi square is computed from frequences, b) the theoretical or expected frequencies in any cell must be at least 5.0 to be valid, c) observed and expected frequencies should add up to the same total, and d) categories or items should be independent and not overlapping.[2] Where the chi square statistical measure was used, the data presented satisfies the four assumption of chi square according to Garrett.

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[1] James E. West, Charles O. Neidt and I. Stanley Ahmann, Statistical Methods in Educational and Psychological Research, (New York: Appleton-Crafts, Inc., 1954), p. 146.

[2] Henry E. Garrett, Statistics in Psychology and Education, (New York: Longsmans, Green and Co, 1959), pp. 262-64.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections with each section presenting data pertinent to selected study variables that influence the communication behavior of superintendents. In the first two sections of this chapter the findings were reported as those centered around the first five guiding questions of this study. The third sections examines the influence of certain status characteristics of superintendents. The concluding section examines the question: Does the communication initiated by the superintendent most frequently request information, require action or ask for a decision; what influence does the degree of his participate in professional, educational, and political organization influence these requests?

Analysis of the Frequency, Modes of Communication, Governmental Level Preferred, and Time Devoted to Each Contact

Frequency of Contact

The first guiding question of the study was "Are superintendents from small school districts more frequently disposed to communicate with governmental officials than superintendents from medium and large school districts?"

An analysis of Table 4 reveals that superintendents from small school districts are more frequently disposed to communicate with governmental officials than superintendents from large schools but less frequently than superintendents from medium size schools. The average

TABLE 4

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS BY SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

Size	No.	Contacts	Per Cent	Contacts Per Supt.	Average Contacts Per Day
Group I	39	269	49.27	6.89	1.72
Group II	28	220	40.29	7.85	1.96
Group III	11	57	10.44	5.15	1.29
Total	78	546	100.00	7.00	1.75

number of contacts for all superintendents, over the four day reporting period was seven. This breaks down to 1.75 contacts per day with various governmental officials by each superintendent in the study.

The above findings seem to be consonant with the rational position that the complexity of larger as contrasted with medium and small district may require increased formality of organization structure and role specialization and hence, more specialists in various fields of the school operation are often employed to assist the superintendent in larger districts. Moreover, these specialists may assume much of the responsibility for communicating with various governmental officials and tend to lessen the frequency with which the superintendent become a communicator.

Governmental Level Preferred

The second question examined was "Is the governmental level preference of small schools superintendents different from the preference level of medium and large school superintendents?" Table 5 shows that superintendents from each position group expressed the same preference for communicating with governmental officials at the state level. The

TABLE 5

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS BY GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

	Local		State		Federal		
Size	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Total
Group I	91	33.82	170	63.20	8	2.98	269
Group II	64	29.09	141	64.09	15	6.82	220
Group III	11	19.29	37	64.92	9	15.79	57
Total	166	30.40	348	63.73	32	5.87	546

local level was the next preference of each group. Group III superintendents had more communication with officials at the federal level than either of the other groups.

All federal programs that deal with elementary and secondary education has a state director within the framework of the State Department of Education. The above findings indicate that local superintendents, in each school size position group, were working with these state officials.

Communication Channels

The third guiding question of the study was "Is the preference

for a certain channel of communication from superintendents of small school districts different from that of superintendents from medium and large school districts?"

Table 6 indicates that superintendents from the small school position group showed more preference for the personal face to face mode of communicating with governmental officials than either of the other two groups. Group III superintendents made greater use of the telephone.

TABLE 6

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS BY CHANNELS USED AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

	Telephone		Written		Face to Face		
Size	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Total
Group I	110	40.89	23	8.55	136	50.56	269
Group II	102	46.36	22	10.00	96	43.64	220
Group III	33	57.89	3	5.26	21	36.85	57
Total	245	44.87	48	8.97	253	46.34	546

All position groups were essentially in agreement in their reluctance to use the written message as a preferred channel for expression. The written communique was used only 8.97 per cent of the time. The data also shows responding superintendents as group expressed nearly equal preference for the use of the telephone and the personal face to face approach.

The last item on the message pad asked the question: "How much

time did you devote to this message?" Table 7 shows the lenght of time superintendents devoted to each channel while communicating with governmental officials during the course of this study. Over 78 per cent of

TABLE 7

FREQUENCY, LENGTH, AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS TIME DEVOTED TO COMMUNICATIONS BY CHANNELS USED

Mode	Frequency	Minutes Required	Per Cent	Average Minutes
Telephone	245	2,492	14.53	10.17
Written	48	1,196	6.97	24.91
Face to Face	253	13,465	78.50	53.22
Total	546	17,153	100.00	31.41

the time spent communicating was through personal face to face contacts. Less than 15 per cent of the time was spent on the telephone while less than 7 per cent of the superintendents communication time was composing or dictating written messages.

It was found the average telephone conversation lasted 10.17 minutes. Nearly twenty-five minutes were devoted to each written message while slightly more than fifty minutes were used in all personal face to face contacts.

Analysis of Contents of the Communications

The fourth guiding question of this study was "Is the content of communications from superintendents of small school districts different from the content of communications from superintendents of medium and

large school districts?

The analysis of the contents of the communications reported in this study showed each message could be placed into one of seven general categories: personnel, professional activities, curriculum, school finance, federal programs, physical plant and site, and legislation. As in the previous section reporting is done in terms of percentage scores.

Personnel

Table 8 indicates that about 13 per cent of the contacts made by Group I and II superintendents is in reference to school personnel, whereas out of 57 contacts, with governmental officials, by Group III

TABLE 8

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS REFERRING TO SCHOOL PERSONNEL, BY GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

		Local		State		Federal			
Size	Total Contacts	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	Per Cent of Total
Group I	269	22	8.17	13	4.83	1	.38	36	13.38
Group II	220	15	6.81	11	5.00	2	.91	28	12.72
Group III	57	0	0	1	1.75	0	0	1	1.75
Total	546	37	6.77	25	4.58	3	.55	65	11.90

superintendents reference was made to personnel only one time. A very slight preference was given the local level over the state level in matters of personnel by Group I and II superintendents.

Professional Activities

The preference of position groups to make contacts regarding professional activities are listed in Table 9. As a whole, fewer contacts were reported with reference to professional activities than in

TABLE 9

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS REFERRING TO PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES, BY GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

Size	Total Contacts	Local		State		Federal		Per Cent of Total
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Group I	269	8	2.97	6	2.23	0	0	14	5.20
Group II	220	5	2.27	5	2.27	0	0	10	4.54
Group III	57	1	1.75	4	7.02	1	1.75	6	10.52
Total-	546	14	2.56	15	2.75	1	1.75	30	5.49

any of the other six general content categories. There was more of a tendency by Group III superintendents to make contacts regarding professional activities than by either of the other two position groups. Professional activity at the national level seemed to be of little concern to any of the groups as no contacts were made by Group I and II superintendents and only one by Group III superintendents. Only 5.49 per cent of all contacts made in this study had reference to professional activities and exactly 50 per cent of them were with the state level.

Considering all the recent publicity given teacher sanctions,

strikes, unions, negotiation, etc., it was surprising to find so few of the Oklahoma superintendents communications devoted to matters of professional activities.

Curriculum

Next to professional activity, fewer contacts were made regarding curriculum than in any of the other content categories. Table 10 shows no contacts referring to curriculum were made at the federal level by

TABLE 10

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS REFERRING TO CURRICULUM, BY GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

Size	Total Contacts	Local		State		Federal		Per Cent of Total
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Group I	269	5	1.86	12	4.46	0	0	17	6.32
Group II	220	7	3.18	15	6.82	0	0	22	10.00
Group III	57	0	0	3	5.26	2	3.51	5	8.77
Total	546	12	2.20	30	5.49	2	.36	44	8.05

Group I or II superintendents and only two by superintendents from Group III schools. Of the total forty-four curriculum contacts made, thirty were at the state level. Most of the curriculum regulations are handled at the state level. Therefore, it was to be expected that these contacts be directed to the state office. There seemed to be little preference among the three groups regarding curriculum contacts as this

content category accounted for only 8.05 per cent of the total.

Finance

In this study the term "finance" refers only to those messages concerning local and state supported budgetary items. Messages concerning financial matters pertaining to federal supported programs were placed in the content category headed "federal programs."

As expected Table 11 reveals that superintendents from each position group hesitate to contact governmental officials at the federal level and involve them in local school financing. No contacts were made

TABLE 11

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS REFERRING TO SCHOOL FINANCE, BY GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

		Local		State		Federal			
Size	Total Contacts	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	Per Cent of Total
Group I	269	4	1.49	25	9.25	0	0	29	10.78
Group II	220	3	1.36	14	6.36	0	0	17	7.72
Group III	57	2	3.51	2	3.51	0	0	4	7.02
Total	546	9	1.65	41	7.51	0	0	50	9.15

with the federal level regarding this category. A slightly higher per cent of the contacts from Group I superintendents referred to school finance than from either of the other two groups. Group I and II

superintendents show a distinct preference for the state level over the local level in financial matters, but Group III respondents were divided equally between these two governmental levels.

Federal Programs

The preference of position groups to make contacts regarding federal programs is shown in Table 12. The preference of superintendents in regard to contacts concerning federal programs were quite similar regardless of the size school represented. All three groups of

TABLE 12

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS REFERRING TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS, BY GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

Size	Total Contacts	Local		State		Federal			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	Per Cent of Total
Group I	269	22	8.18	82	30.48	6	2.23	110	40.89
Group II	220	20	9.09	64	29.09	11	5.00	95	43.18
Group III	57	2	3.51	15	26.31	4	7.02	21	36.84
Total	546	44	8.06	161	29.48	21	3.85	226	41.39

administrators indicated a strong preference for the state level with very few contacts, regarding federal programs, being made at the local and federal levels of government. This finding was to be expected as most federal programs are coordinated through state agencies. This shows

a tendency to minimize the use of either local or federal agencies in regard to these programs.

Over 40 per cent of all contacts reported in this study were in reference to federal programs of one kind or another. This finding supports the original thesis that the advent of the federal government into elementary and secondary education has considerably increased the amount of time devoted to communicating with various governmental officials.

Physical Plant and Site

In Table 13 are presented the data surrounding position groups concerning contacts made with each governmental level regarding physical plant and school sites. The reactions were varied in regard to the local

TABLE 13

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS REFERRING TO PHYSICAL PLANT AND SITE, BY GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

		Local		State		Federal			
Size	Total Contacts	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	Per Cent of Total
Group I	269	25	9.29	10	3.72	1	.37	36	13.88
Group II	220	8	3.63	7	3.18	1	.46	16	7.27
Group III	57	4	7.02	5	8.77	1	1.75	10	17.54
Total	546	37	6.77	22	4.03	3	.55	62	11.89

and state levels, however, similar actions were in evidence toward the federal government. The small schools were overwhelming in their

preference of the local level with the medium size schools showing a slight degree of favoritizm toward the state level. The large schools expressed a preference for the state level although this choice was slight. All groups preferred the local and state agencies rather than federal agencies.

The over-all preference for the local level is not surprising in this category as a very high percentage of all funds used for capital improvements are acquired from taxation at the local school district level, and there is little or no state or federal control.

Legislation

Table 14 reveals a distinct preference, by each position group, for the state level of government and little occasion to make contacts with local and federal government officials regarding legislation.

TABLE 14

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS REFERRING TO LEGISIATION, BY GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

		Local		State		Federal			
Size	Total Contacts	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	Per Cent of Total
Group I	269	5	1.86	22	8.18	0	0	27	10.04
Group II	220	6	2.73	25	11.36	1	.45	32	14.55
Group III	57	2	3.51	7	12.28	1	1.75	10	17.57
Total	546	13	2.38	54	9.89	2	.37	69	12.64

The Oklahoma Legislature and the National Congress both were in session during most of the reporting period covered by this study. With so many bills pertaining to elementary and secondary education being introduced, it was surprising so few contacts were made by Oklahoma superintendents concerning school legislation. This finding indicates that public school superintendents of Oklahoma attempts to exert little influence upon the lawmakers for public school legislation. Of the 69 contacts made regarding legislation 78 per cent were made with state level officials.

Status Characteristics

This section is devoted to an analysis of the status characteristics of the superintendent in regard to certain patterns of communication behavior. The variables examined were:

1) age,
2) years employed as superintendent,
3) training,
4) membership in organizations,
5) participation in professional activities,
6) participation on educational committees, and
7) participation in party politics.

Age

Table 15 presents the age of the superintendents by the size of the schools which they represent. Examination of the data seems to suggest a tendency of the smaller school to employ superintendents of a younger age than was true of the larger school systems. Less than 10 per cent of the large schools had a superintendent who was in the age group of thirty-nine years or less. This is in comparison with 39 per cent of the small schools employing persons in this age group.

Each size category of schools seemed to prefer superintendents in the age group of forty to forty-nine years. The large schools were

TABLE 15

AGE OF SUPERINTENDENTS BY SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

		Age Groups									
		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+			
Size	No. Supts.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Total	Avg. Age
Group I	39	15	38.5	12	30.75	11	28.20	1	2.55	1737	44.53
Group II	28	8	28.57	10	35.71	8	28.57	2	7.15	1303	46.54
Group III	11	1	9.1	5	45.46	3	27.27	2	18.20	553	50.27
Total	78	24	30.77	27	34.61	22	28.20	5	6.42	3593	46.06

more prone to follow this pattern than either the small or medium size schools. This is confirmed by the data showing 45 per cent of the large school districts employing superintendents in this age bracket. Only 36 per cent of the superintendents from medium size schools and 31 per cent of superintendents from small school districts were in this age group.

The frequency of contacts by age groups, and by school size is shown in Table 16. The data reveals a communication behavior pattern of very low participation by superintendents in the sixty and over age group of the small and medium size schools. All three groups showed moderately low participation for those superintendents in the fifty to

fifty-nine age bracket, and average participation for those superintendents in the thirty to thirty-nine age category. High communication

TABLE 16

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS BY AGE GROUPS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

		Age Groups							
		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+	
Size	Total Contacts	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Group I	269	100	37.17	97	36.09	62	23.03	10	3.71
Group II	220	56	25.45	96	43.64	47	21.36	21	9.55
Group III	57	5	8.77	22	38.59	12	21.06	18	31.58
Total	546	161	29.48	215	39.38	212	22.16	49	8.98

participation was reported for those superintendents in the forty to forty-nine age classification.

The very small number of contacts by the older age group may be due to less need for information, or fewer benefits derived from high communication with governmental officials. The low communication behavior of this group could be interpreted as being a period of less concern, thus, fostering less activity during these years just prior to retirement.

Experience

The experience of superintendents by size of school is shown in

Table 17. The data in this table indicates that the Group I schools have a much smaller percentage (30%) of superintendents with twelve or

TABLE 17

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS BY EXPERIENCE AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

		Experience Categories									
		1-2		3-5		5-6		12+			
Size	No. Supts	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Total Yrs.	Avg. Exp.
Group I	39	5	12.82	7	17.95	15	38.46	12	30.77	362	9.28
Group II	28	1	3.57	6	21.43	6	21.43	15	53.57	375	13.40
Group III	11	1	9.09	2	18.18	3	27.27	5	45.46	133	12.10
Total	78	1	8.97	15	19.24	24	30.77	32	41.02	870	11.15

more years experience than either of the other two groups. Over 53 per cent of Group II superintendents and more than 45 per cent of Group III superintendents had twelve or more years experience. This finding indicates more superintendents begin their careers in small schools and move into larger schools as they gain experience rather than moving into a larger school superintendency from some other subordinate administrative or teaching position within a larger system.

More than 41 per cent of the seventy-eight respondents in this study had twelve or more years experience as a public school superintendent while less than 9 per cent had as few as two years

experience.

Group II respondents led in total experience with an average of 14.4 years while the Group I respondents had the lowest average experience with 9.28 years. It may be that small school systems cannot afford to be as selective as the larger school systems.

Table 18 reflects a very clear pattern of the superintendents communication behavior as it relates to his administrative experience.

TABLE 18

FREQUENCY AND PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS COMMUNICATIONS BY EXPERIENCE GROUPS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

		Experience Categories							
		1-2		3-5		6-11		12+	
Size	Total Contacts	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Group I	269	37	13.67	47	17.47	113	42.0	72	26.77
Group II	220	13	5.91	45	20.45	36	16.37	126	57.27
Group III	57	1	1.75	10	17.54	15	26.32	31.	54.39
Total	546	51	9.34	102	18.68	164	30.04	229	41.94

A close analysis of this table shows that the superintendent progressively becomes a more active communicator with governmental officials as he gains additional experience in his profession. Superintendents with two years experience or less accounted for less than 10 per cent of the total contacts; those with 3-5 years experience less than 19 per cent; those with 6-11 years experience reported slightly more than 30 per cent; while

superintendents with twelve years or more experience accounted for nearly 42 per cent of the total number of contacts reported in this study.

While the contact to experience relationship is clearly revealed in Table 18, no clear cut pattern is evident within and between experience groups and school district size. For example, Group I respondents within the six to eleven years experience range made 42 per cent of that group's total contacts and less than 17 per cent of the Group II contacts were made by respondents in the six to eleven years experience range. Conversely more than 57 per cent of the Group II contacts were made by respondents with twelve or more years experience while less than 27 per cent of the Group I contacts were made by respondents with twelve or more years experience. Group II and Group III schools did have a tendency to parallel rather closely through each experience category.

As a superintendent makes wider acquaintances and gains confidence through years of administrative experience it seems reasonable to assume that he would be disposed to pursue a more active role in communicating with governmental officials on educational matters.

Educational Attainment

Of the seventy-eight superintendents in the study, nine held a Doctor's degree, thirty-five held a Master's degree plus 20-45 hours, and thirty-four held a Master's degree with less than twenty additional graduate hours. No respondents in this study held less than a Master's degree.

Table 19 shows a similarity in the educational attainment level

of Group I and Group II superintendents. Each of these categories indicates larger percentages for the lower level of educational attainment

TABLE 19

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS BY SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

	Masters		Masters+ 20-45 Hrs.		Doctor		
Size	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Total Supts.
Group I	21	53.85	17	43.59	1	2.56	39
Group II	11	39.28	12	42.86	5	17.86	28
Group III	2	18.18	6	54.55	3	27.27	11
Total	34	43.59	35	44.87	9	11.54	78

and smaller percentages for the upper level while just the opposite is true for Group III superintendents. Only one of thrity-nine Group I superintendents had acquired a Doctor's degree, while five of twenty-eight Group II superintendents, and three of eleven large school superintendents held the Doctorate.

This may indicate that superintendents from small schools are not inclined to do advanced graduate work or it could be interpreted to mean they do not remain long in the small schools once the Doctorate degree is acquired.

Table 20 presents data relating to the superintendents educational attainment by age groups. Of the seventy-eight superintendents

participating in this study, fifty-one were under fifty years of age and twenty-seven were fifty or over. There does not, however, seem to be a

TABLE 20

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS BY AGE GROUPS

	Masters		Masters+ 20-45 Hrs.		Doctors		
Age Group	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Total Supts.
30-39	8	33.33	14	58.33	2	8.34	24
40-49	10	37.03	13	48.15	4	14.82	27
50-59	12	54.55	7	31.82	3	13.63	22
60-Up	4	80.00	1	20.00	0	0	5
Total	34	43.59	35	44.87	9	11.54	78

clear pattern of educational attainment established for either of these age groups. For example, the percentage of those superintendents in the two younger groups holding the Master's degree and those holding a Master's degree plus twenty to forty-five hours paralled rather closely. For those superintendents holding the Doctor's degree, the two middle groups are more alike.

The forty to forty-five age category represented the highest educational attainment and the over sixty category the lowest. This could mean that many superintendents who obtain the doctorate leave the position and go into college work before reaching the sixty year age group.

It is interesting to note that of the five respondents in the sixty and over age group four held a Master's degree, only one had as much as twenty hours above the Master's degree, and only one held a Doctor's degree. Sixteen of the twenty-seven respondents over fifty years of age did not go beyond a Master's degree.

Table 21 indicates that a superintendent's educational attainment has little influence on his communications behavior with governmental officials. Forty-three per cent of the superintendents with Master's degrees accounted for nearly 43 per cent of the total contacts,

TABLE 21

NUMBER OF CONTACTS BY SUPERINTENDENTS EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational Attainment	Supts.		Contacts		
	No.	%	No.	%	Average
Master's	34	43.59	234	42.86	6.88
Master's Plus 20-45 Hours	35	44.87	251	45.97	7.17
Doctor's	9	11.54	61	11.17	6.77
Total	78	100.00	546	100.00	7.00

while 45 per cent of those holding a Master's degree plus 20-45 hours made nearly 46 per cent of the contacts and the eleven per cent with Doctor's degrees accounted for eleven per cent of the total contacts. The superintendent in the Master's degree plus twenty to forty-five hours seem to be slightly more inclined to communicate with governmental

officials than the other two groups.

Membership in Community Organization

The data presented in Table 22 shows that the average number of memberships held in organizations by superintendents increases as the size of the school increases. However, the difference in average

TABLE 22

MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL, SERVICE, CIVIC, AND FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS BY SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

		Profes-sional		Service		Civic		Fraternal			
Size	No. Supts.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Total	Avg.
Group I	39	166	60.80	31	11.36	42	15.39	34	12.45	273	7.00
Group II	28	144	57.37	37	14.74	39	15.54	31	12.35	251	8.96
Group III	11	62	59.62	12	11.54	18	17.30	12	11.54	104	9.45
Total	78	372	59.24	80	12.74	99	15.76	77	12.26	628	8.05

membership per superintendent is slight. Group I respondents held an average of 7.00 memberships. Group II superintendents held 8.96 memberships while Group II administrators held an average of 9.45 memberships.

There was an overall average of 8.05 membership held in community organization for each respondent. The percentage of memberships in each type of organization is fairly evenly distributed among each position group. Membership in professional organization, as expected, lead all others. Membership in service, civic, and fraternal

organizations seem to be about equally divided in each position group.

It must be pointed out that while the question of whether more memberships by Group III superintendents is due primarily to increased opportunity in large districts, or to differing attitudes toward civic group participation of superintendents in large and small districts cannot be answered from the data in this study. It seems reasonable to assume that a combination of these factors may be operative.

The number of superintendents memberships in organizations by age group is presented in Table 23. The thrity to thirty-nine and the fifty to fifty-nine age groups placed the larger percentage of their respondents

TABLE 23

MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL, SERVICE, CIVIC, AND FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS BY AGE GROUPS

	Number of Membership									
	3-5		6-8		9-11		12+		Total	
Age Groups	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
30-39	7	8.97	8	10.25	4	5.13	5	6.41	24	30.76
40-49	4	5.13	11	14.10	12	15.38	0	0	27	34.61
50-59	7	8.97	10	12.83	3	3.85	2	2.57	22	28.22
60-Up	0	0	1	1.28	3	3.85	1	1.28	5	6.41
Total	18	23.07	30	38.46	22	28.21	8	10.26	78	100.00

in the six to eight memberships category, while the forty to forty-nine

and the sixty and above age groups placed the larger percentage of their respondents in the nine to eleven memberships category.

The sixty and over group had no respondents in the three to five memberships category, while the thirty to thirty-nine and the fifty to fifty-nine age group had one third or more of their respondents in this membership group.

Tables 22 and Table 23 reveal characteristics of the relationship between membership held in community organizations to the age of respondents and to the size of the school district in which the superintendent works. A close inspection of data in Table 24 shows the number of memberships held in professional, service, civic and fraternal

TABLE 24

FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS BY MEMBERSHIPS HELD IN PROFESSIONAL, SERVICE, CIVIC, AND FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

	Superintendents		Contacts		
Memberships Held	No.	%	No.	%	Average
3-5	13	16.67	92	16.85	7.08
6-8	34	43.58	222	40.66	6.53
9-11	22	28.21	168	30.77	7.63
12-Up	9	11.54	64	11.72	7.11
Total	78	0	546	0	7.00

organization has little influence upon his communication behavior with

governmental officials. The percentage of total contacts made by each membership category was similar to the percentage of respondents in each of those categories.

Professional, Educational, and Political Activity

This section examines the question: Does the degree of a superintendent's participation in professional, educational, and political organizations influence his communication behavior with governmental officials? Consideration was given to school district size and the age variables.

Professional Activities

Respondents were asked the question: Have you ever held office in one of your professional associations? If so, at what level: local, county, district, state, or national? Table 25 presents the results of the responses to the above questions in relation to school district size.

TABLE 25

LEVELS ON WHICH OFFICES WERE HELD IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BY SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

	Local		County		District		State		National		Held No Office	
Size	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Group I	16	41.02	34	87.18	19	48.72	5	12.82	0	0	5	12.82
Group II	26	92.86	27	96.43	25	53.57	15	53.57	1	3.57	0	0
Group III	8	72.73	6	54.54	6	54.54	8	72.73	2	18.18	2	18.18
Total	50	64.10	67	85.90	50	64.10	28	35.90	3	3.84	7	8.98

The pattern seems to indicate the Group II and Group III superintendents have more of a tendency to actively assume responsibilities for the success of their professional organizations than Group I superintendents. Table 25 shows that 87 per cent of the Group I respondents had at one time or another held office in a county organization. The low participation at the local level for Group I respondents probably reflects the absence of local association in many of the smaller school districts. Nearly 13 per cent of Group I respondents and 18 per cent of Group III respondents reported no offices held in professional organizations at any level. All twenty-eight Group II respondents had held at least one office in a professional organization.

Table 26 reflects the different levels in professional organizations in which respondents hold some kind of an office by age groups. At

TABLE 26

LEVELS ON WHICH OFFICES WERE HELD IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BY AGE GROUPS

	Local		County		District		State		National		Held No Office	
Age Groups	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
30-39	15	62.50	21	87.50	12	50.00	4	16.67	1	4.17	24	30.76
40-49	21	77.78	21	77.78	22	81.48	10	27.37	0	0	27	34.64
50-59	12	54.54	16	72.73	15	68.18	12	54.54	1	8.18	22	28.20
60-Up	3	60.00	4	80.00	4	80.00	4	80.00	1	20.00	5	6.40
Total	51	65.38	62	79.49	53	67.95	30	38.46	3	3.84	78	0

the local, county, district, and federal levels there seemed to be no set pattern of participation. However, it is most noticeable that a uniform pattern emerges at the state level. Participation as office holders in professional organizations at this level increases as the age of the superintendents increase. This trend could be due in part to the size of schools represented as well as the age of the respondents. It should also be pointed out that by tenure alone the older the superintendent the greater the opportunities for participation. It is likely that more influence can be exerted by officials of state professional organizations than by officials of any other level. If this be true, most of the leadership in professional organization seem to be provided by the older superintendents.

As indicated earlier this section examines the superintendents participation in professional, educational, and political organizations. Tables 25 and 26 reveal some interesting data regarding behavior patterns and trends of the respondents, but Table 27 shows there is no significant difference in the number of contacts with governmental officials by the number of levels in which he has held office in one of his professional organizations.

Means of the contact scores were determined and respondents were categorized as their scores were above or below the mean score of the combined distribution for each category. The Chi Square statistic was used to test for significance of difference between frequencies of "high" versus "low" contacts. Difference in distribution of scores regarded as significant was at or byond the .05 level of confidence.

TABLE 27

FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS BY LEVELS ON WHICH OFFICES WERE HELD IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

No. Levels	Superintendents		
	No.	High	Low
0-1	16	(7)[a]	(9)
	%	43.75	56.25
2-3	44	(26)	(18)
	%	59.09	40.91
4-5	18	(9)	(9)
	%	50.00	50.00
Total	78	(42)	(36)
	%	53.85	46.15
Chi Square	2 d.f.	1.254	p > .05

[a]Number of cases shown in parenthese

Educational Activities

Respondents were also asked the question: Have you ever been asked to serve as a participant or consultant on a committee where educational problems were being explored: If so, at what level: local, county, state, or national?

Table 28 presents the results of the responses to the above questions in relation to the school district size variable. More than 71 per cent of Group I respondents reported they had never served on a committee where educational problems were being discussed, as did over 35 per cent of Group II respondents. Less than 10 per cent of the Group

III superintendents had failed to serve on any educational committee.

TABLE 28

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION ON EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

	Local		County		State		National		No. Participation	
Size	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Group I	5	12.82	8	20.51	7	17.95	0	0	28	71.80
Group II	8	28.57	14	50.00	13	46.31	3	7.69	10	35.71
Group III	5	45.45	7	63.64	6	54.55	4	36.36	1	9.90
Total	18	23.07	29	37.18	26	33.33	7	8.97	39	50.0

The data also reveals that none of the thirty-nine Group I superintendents and only three of the twenty-eight Group II superintendents had ever served on a national committee. Four of the eleven Group III superintendents had participated on national committees where educational problems were being discussed. The above table reflects a definite increase in the participation patterns of superintendents, as the size of the school represented increases. Only one-half of the respondents had served at all.

Table 29 presents the superintendent's levels of participation on educational committees by age groups. This data indicates a tendency for greater participation on educational committees with an increase in age. More than 66 per cent of the respondents from age group thirty to thirty-nine and 62 per cent from the forty to forty-nine group reported they had never participated on any committee where educational problems were being discussed. Age groups fifty to fifty-nine and sixty and over

reported about 80 per cent participation. It is evident in the data presented in Table 29 that a uniform increase in the superintendent's participation behavior, on educational committees, increases as his age and the size of school district he represents increases.

TABLE 29

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION ON EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEES BY AGE GROUPS

	Local		County		State		National		No. Participation	
Age Groups	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
30-39	3	12.50	6	25.00	1	4.16	2	8.33	16	66.67
40-49	4	14.82	9	33.33	6	22.22	2	7.41	17	62.96
50-59	9	40.91	11	50.00	12	54.54	1	4.54	5	22.73
60-Up	3	60.00	3	60.00	3	60.00	2	40.00	2	20.00
Total	19	24.36	29	37.18	22	28.20	7	8.97	39	50.0

Table 30 indicates, however, there is no real significant difference in the number of a superintendent's contacts with governmental officials and the degree of his participation on educational committee of one kind or another. This table does show there is a tendency for a greater percentage of superintendents with no participation on educational committees to be higher contactors with governmental officials than those with some participation.

TABLE 30

FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS BY LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION ON EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEES

		Superintendents		
No. Levels	No.	High		Low
0	39	(24)[a]		(15)
	%	61.54		38.46
1-2	28	(13)		(15)
	%	46.43		53.57
3-4	11	(5)		(6)
	%	45.45		54.55
Total	78	(42)		(36)
	%	56.82		43.16
Chi Square	2 d.f.	1.887	p>	.05

[a] Number of cases shown in parentheses

Political Activities

The final series of questions in this section that superintendents were requested to answer were:

a) Do you now serve as a county coordinator for the Oklahoma Education Association Citizenship Committee?

b) Have you ever actively participated in organizations meetings of either the Democrat or Republican Central Committees?

c) Do you plan to attend either of these party organizational meetings this year?

d) Do you now hold or have you ever held a Central Committee office in either of the two major political parties?

These questions were designed to determine the degree of political activity of the respondents in this study, and to see if the degree of their political involvement influenced their communication behavior with governmental officials.

Question a) refers to a new position created by the Oklahoma Education Association. It was the responsibility of the O.E.A. County Coordinator to keep members informed as to the date, time, and place of party precinct meetings of the respective political parties, and to encourage O.E.A. members to be present and active in these meetings. Data gathered from the responses to the above questions are presented in the following three tables.

Table 31 indicates little difference in political participation by superintendents according to school size. Over 50 per cent of the

TABLE 31

AREAS OF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS BY SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

		O.E.A. Co. Coord.		Attend Party Meetings		Attend This Year		Held Party Office		No. Political Activity	
Size	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Group I	39	2	5.13	14	35.90	13	33.33	6	15.38	19	48.72
Group II	28	2	7.15	7	25.00	9	32.14	2	7.15	16	57.15
Group III	11	0	0	4	36.36	3	27.27	0	0	7	63.64
Total	78	4	5.55	25	32.05	25	32.05	8	10.26	42	53.85

superintendents reported they had never participated in politics either

by holding an office in the Central Committee or by attending a precinct or county party organizational meeting. This may lend support to the idea that the majority of the respondents were little concerned about the suitability of candidates who run for office.

The data found in Table 32 suggest that involvement in politics becomes progressively greater as the age of the superintendent increases up to the 60 and over age group. This is confirmed by the following participation patterns by age groups.

TABLE 32

AREAS OF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS BY AGE GROUPS

		O.E.A. Co. Coord.		Attend Party Meetings		Attend This Year		Held Party Office		No. Political Activity	
Age Groups	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
30-39	24	1	4.16	6	25.00	9	37.50	2	8.33	14	58.33
40-49	27	2	7.41	8	29.62	7	25.92	1	3.70	15	55.55
50-59	22	1	4.54	9	40.91	8	36.36	4	18.18	10	45.45
60-Up	5	0	0	2	40.00	1	20.00	1	20.00	3	60.00
Total	78	4	5.13	25	32.05	25	32.05	8	10.25	42	53.85

More than 58 per cent of the thirty to thirty-nine age group reported no direct involvement in politics. The forty to forty-nine group followed closely with 55 per cent reporting no participation. The data further reveals that 45 per cent of the fifty to fifty-nine age

group reported having never participated in politics and the sixty and over respondents reported 60 per cent with a history of no direct formal participation involvement in politics. Only 5.13 per cent of all superintendents reporting accepted the responsibility of O.E.A. Coordinator in their home county and less than 33 per cent attended, or planned to attend, a party precinct meeting this year. Only eight of the seventy-eight superintendents reporting had ever held an office in either political party organization.

One of the purposes of this study was to determine if the degree of a superintendent's participation in politics influenced his communications behavior with governmental officials. Table 33 reveals no significant difference in the degree of superintendents' participation in

TABLE 33

FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS BY AREAS OF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

	Superintendents		
No. Areas	No.	High	Low
0	42 %	(24)[a] 57.14	(18) 42.86
1	20 %	(10) 50.00	(10) 50.00
2 or More	16 %	(8) 50.00	(8) 50.00
Total	78 %	(42) 53.85	(36) 46.15
Chi Square	2 d.f.	.406	p > .05

[a]Number of cases shown in parentheses

politics and the frequency of their communication contacts with governmental officials. Though the difference is not statistically significant, there seems to be more contacts from superintendents with a history of no political involvement than from those with some involvement. The lack of significant difference between those superintendents with a history of no political activity and those with some active political involvement, does not support the conjecture that the more one participates in politics the more he becomes disposed to communicate with governmental officials.

Information - Action - Decision

When public school superintendents initiate communication to governmental officials, it is usually to seek information, expect some kind of action be taken, or to ask for a decision on the part of the receiver. Respondents in this study were asked the question: Does this message request information, require action, or ask for a decision? This section examines responses to the above question in relation to the degree of the superintendent's participation in professional, educational, and political activity and the frequency of his communication contacts.

Professional Activities

Data revealed in Table 34 shows that superintendents did not differ significantly in any of the three kinds of communication behavior. Request for information, however, closely approached significance. The pattern showed more preference for such behavior by superintendents with less professional activity and less preference for superintendents with more professional activity. This findings seem to be consonant with the rational position that the less participation in professional

organizations the greater the need to acquire information in other ways.

TABLE 34

PREFERENCE OF SUPERINTENDENTS FOR INFORMATION, ACTION, AND DECISION BEHAVIOR BY LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

No. Levels		Superintendents: Information High	Information Low	Action High	Action Low	Decision High	Decision Low
0-1	16	(11)[a]	(5)	(9)	(7)	(5)	(11)
	%	69.75	30.25	56.25	43.75	30.25	59.25
2-3	44	(27)	(17)	(29)	(15)	(23)	(21)
	%	61.36	38.64	65.91	34.09	52.27	47.73
4-5	18	(6)	(12)	(12)	(6)	(10)	(8)
	%	33.33	66.66	66.66	33.33	55.55	44.45
Total	78	(44)	(34)	(50)	(28)	(38)	(40)
	%	56.72	43.28	64.10	35.90	48.22	51.78
Chi Square 2 d.f.		.3282	p>.05	.54	p>.05	1.64	p>.05

[a] Number of cases shown in parentheses

Superintendents did not differ significantly across participation categories in preference for requiring action or asking for a decision. There was a tendency, in both areas, for superintendents in the higher participation categories to prefer relatively more requests for action and decisions than those superintendents in low participation categories. This trend lends support to the assumption that superintendents with more participation in professional activities expects more action and more positive decision on the part of governmental officials, where less

participating incumbents tend to avoid such requests.

Educational Activities

No significant differences in preference scores for requesting information, action, or asking for a decision were found when comparisons were made of the respondent's participation on educational committees. Though not statistically significant Table 35 revelaed that no participation on educational committees was associated with relatively high preference for requesting information.

TABLE 35

PREFERENCE OF SUPERINTENDENTS FOR INFORMATION, ACTION, AND DECISION BEHAVIOR BY LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION ON EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEES

		Superintendents					
No. Levels	No.	Information High	Information Low	Action High	Action Low	Decision High	Decision Low
0	39	(30)[a]	(9)	(24)	(15)	(19)	(20)
	%	76.46	23.54	61.54	38.46	31.28	68.72
1-2	28	(15)	(13)	(20)	(8)	(16)	(12)
	%	53.57	46.43	71.43	28.57	57.14	42.86
3-4	11	(7)	(4)	(8)	(3)	(4)	(7)
	%	63.63	36.37	72.72	27.28	36.36	0
Total	78	(52)	(26)	(52)	(26)	(39)	(39)
	%	66.66	33.34	66.66	33.34	50.00	50.00
Chi Square	2 d.f.	4.554	p> .05	.9291	p>.05	1.4150	p>.05

[a]Number of cases shown in parentheses

While the question of cause and effect cannot be answered from the data in this study one might speculate that superintendents who are more active in cooperative educational planning, at various levels, tend to be relatively more oriented, thus, lessening the need to seek information from governmental officials.

Political Activities

Table 36 reveals no significant difference for superintendents requesting information, action, or asking for decision based upon participation in political activities.

TABLE 36

PREFERENCE OF SUPERINTENDENTS FOR INFORMATION, ACTION AND DECISION BEHAVIOR BY AREAS OF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

		Superintendents					
No. Areas	No.	Information High	Information Low	Action High	Action Low	Decision High	Decision Low
0	42	(28)[a]	(14)	(25)	(17)	(20)	(22)
	%	66.66	33.34	59.52	40.48	47.55	52.45
1	20	(13)	(7)	(14)	(6)	(11)	(9)
	%	65.00	35.00	70.00	30.00	55.00	45.00
2 or More	16	(12)	(4)	(13)	(3)	(7)	(9)
	%	75.00	25.00	81.25	18.75	43.75	56.25
Total	78	(53)	(25)	(52)	(26)	(38)	(40)
	%	67.95	32.05	66.67	33.33	48.72	51.28
Chi Square 2 d.f.		.48 p> .05		2.60 p> .05		.49 p> .05	

[a]Number of cases shown in parentheses

Summary

The findings reported earlier in this chapter are presented in summary form in Tables 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41.

TABLE 37

COMPARISON OF SELECTED VARIABLES WITH SCHOOL SIZE

Variables	Small	Medium	Large
Frequency of contacts	More than large but less than medium.	Highest of the three groups.	Lowest of the three groups.
Governmental preference level	State level	State level	State level
Preference for channel of communication	Face to face	Telephone	Telephone
Time spent communicating	1 hr. 5 min per day.	1 hr. 10 min per day.	44 min. per day.
Age	44 yrs. 6 mo.	46 yrs. 6 mo.	50 yrs. 6 mo.
Experience	9 yrs. 3 mo.	13 yrs. 4 mo.	12 yrs. 1 mo.
Educational Attainment	43% with Masters+ 20-45 hrs. 2.56% with Doctors.	42% with Masters+ 40-45 hrs. 17% with Doctors.	54% with Masters+ 20-45 hrs. 27% with Doctors.
Average number of membership held in organizations	7.00	8.96	9.45

TABLE 38

COMPARISON OF COMMUNICATION CONTENT CATEGORIES WITH REGARD TO PER CENT OF FREQUENCY, GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL PREFERENCE, AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

Variables		Small	Medium	Large
Personnel	%	13.38	12.72	1.75
	Level	Local	Local	State
Professional Activities	%	5.20	4.54	10.52
	Level	Local	Local	State
Curriculum	%	6.32	10.00	8.77
	Level	State	State	State
Finance	%	10.78	7.72	7.02
	Level	State	State	State
Federal Programs	%	40.39	43.18	36.84
	Level	State	State	State
Physical Plant	%	13.38	7.27	17.54
	Level	Local	Local	State
Legislation	%	10.04	14.55	17.57
	Level	State	State	State

TABLE 39

COMPARISON OF SELECTED STATUS VARIABLES WITH FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATIONS

Variables	Frequency
Age groups	The 40-49 group were the most active communicators while the over 60+ group were the least active.
Experience	12 yrs. plus group were the most active communicators and the 1-2 yrs. groups the least active.
Education Attainment	The Masters plus 20-45 hrs. were the most active communicators and the Doctors were the least active.
Memberships in Organizations	The 6-8 membership category held were the most active communicators and the 12 plus group were the least active.

TABLE 40

COMPARISON OF PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH AGE, SCHOOL SIZE, AND FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS

Variables	Office Held in Professional Organizations	Participation on Educational Committees	Participation in Politics
Age	Irregular pattern except for the state level where participation increases with age.	Tendency for greater participation with increases of age.	Tendency for greater participation with increase of age.
School District Size	Medium and large school superintendents has more tendency to hold office.	Uniform increase in participation with increase in size of school.	Little difference.
Frequency of Contacts	No significant difference.	No significant difference but tendency for more contacts from respondents with no participation.	No significant difference but tendency for more contacts from respondents with no participation.

TABLE 41

COMPARISON OF REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION, ACTION, AND DECISIONS WITH SELECTED STATUS VARIABLES

Variables	Superintendents		
	Information	Action	Decision
Participation in Professional Organizations	No significant difference.	No significant difference.	No significant difference.
Participation on Educational Committees	No significant difference.	No significant difference.	No significant difference.
Participation in Politics	No significant difference.	No significant difference.	No significant difference.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The Problem

Superintendents are directly concerned, in learning the ways in which the complicated job of the superintendent should be performed. The present study has examined the preference of certain superintendents regarding one important facet of that job--the behavior of the superintendent as he participates in the communication process with governmental officials at the local, state, and federal level.

Variables examined were frequency of contacts, channels of communication, the governmental level preferred, the time devoted to each contact, and the subject contents of the communications by school district size. The preferences for these modes of communication behavior as expressed by the respondents constitute the data of this study. To aid in analyzing these preferences certain other information regarding variables displayed by respondents was gathered.

Five major questions guided the direction of this study. These were:

1. Are superintendents from small school districts more frequently disposed to communicate with governmental officials than superintendents from medium and large school districts?

2. Is the governmental level preference of superintendents from small school districts different from the level preference of medium and large school superintendents?

3. Is the preference for a channel of communication, from superintendents of small school districts different from that of superintendents from medium and large school districts?

4. Do superintendents from small school districts devote more time to communicating with governmental officials than superintendents from medium and large school districts?

5. Does the contents of communications from superintendents of small school districts differ from the contents of communications from superintendents of medium and large school districts?

The ancillary questions were:

How does the communications behavior of superintendents relate to: (1) their age, (2) the number of years employed as a superintendent, (3) their educational training, (4) their memberships in professional, service, civic, and fraternal organizations, (5) their participation in professional activities, (6) their participation on educational committees, (7) their participation in party politics?

Other questions examined were:

1. Does the communication initiated by the superintendent most frequently request information, require action, or ask for a decision?

2. Is the superintendent's preference, for one of the above influenced by the degree of his participation in professional, educational, and political activities?

Methodology

In order to analyze each communication initiated by the superintendent to governmental officials, a message pad was developed for respondents to record the following information: (1) name of official contacted, (2) title of official contacted, (3) his level of operation, (4) the channel of communication used, (5) the gist of the message, (6) the amount of time devoted to the message, (7) does the message request information, require action, or ask for a decision? Twelve items were orginally included on the message pad. From these twelve items, seven were ultimately used in the final form of the instrument. Five items were eliminated through the process of independent evaluation by superintendents asked to review the items. Care was taken in the selection of items for the message pad and in determining the desired information for this study. No claim beyond that of reasonable judgment can be made that the seven items included in the final instrument are typical or all-inclusive of the problem situations a superintendent may face when communicating with governmental officials.

Responses for the items were categorized in such manner that a per cent score could be obtained which would describe the relative preference of each respondent's communication behavior. The message pad was tested in a pilot study involving three superintendents from each school size category. Respondents were invited to comment on the message pad. All of these persons returned the message pad. The comments of these superintendents indicated that items and response categories were meaningful. Inspection of replies indicated the instrument did discriminate among respondents regarding their preference for items under study.

A questionnaire designed to obtain personal data regarding status characteristics of respondents was developed. These questions elicited from each superintendent the following information: (1) name, education, age, school, and experience, (2) memberships in civic and professional organizations, (3) participation on educational committees, (4) participation in politics.

The message pad, the questionnaire, a cover letter, and a return envelope were packaged for mailing to superintendents of the 130 school districts from which superintendents were invited to participate in the study. These school districts were chosen by the following process: (1) All schools shown in the 1966-67 Oklahoma Educational Directory[1] as employing a superintendent were assigned to one of three size categories established on the basis of number of teachers employed (Group I, fewer than twenty-six teachers; Group II, twenty-six to 149 teachers; Group III, 150 or more teachers). (2) Schools were numbered consecutively within size categories. (3) Schools were grouped according to the ten Oklahoma Educational Association geographical areas in which they were located. (4) Alternate selection in each size group were made from each of the ten O.E.A. geographical areas until the determined percentages of school districts were selected.

The original mailing on January 27, was followed by additional mailings on February 24, March 23, and April 21. A total of seventy-eight responses were received. Thirty-nine superintendents (61 per cent) responded from Group I schools; twenty-eight superintendents (56 per cent) responded from Group III schools.

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[1] Directory of Oklahoma Schools, 1966-67.

Preferences of respondents to message pad items were tabulated and presented in percentages. Some data obtained concerning status characteristics were tabulated and presented in percentage scores. For other data means of contact scores were determined and respondents were categorized as high or low contactors. In these comparisons the statistic used to test for significance of difference was chi square. Tables were read and differences were considered significant that were beyond the .05 level of confidence.

Findings

In the material that follows, the relative effects of the study variables on superintendents' communications behavior are considered. Attention is given to size, frequency, channel, time, contents, governmental level preference, and status characteristics. Also examined was the question: Does the message request information, require action, or ask for a decision?

Frequency

Superintendents from medium size school districts led the other two groups in frequency of communications with governmental officials. Small school superintendents while making fewer governmental contacts than superintendents from medium size school did find a need to communicate more frequently than his counterpart from large school districts.

This findings may be the result of more specialists in the large school district who may assume much of the responsibility for outside communicating.

Governmental Level Preference

Each position group expressed an overwhelming preference for communicating with officials from the state level of government. The next preference of each group was for the local level, with very little interest shown in communicating with officials at the federal level by either group.

Communication Channels

As a group, all superintendents expressed a slight preference for the personal face to face method of communication while the telephone was a close second. By school size, medium and large school superintendents showed a preference for use of the telephone. All groups were reluctant to use the written message. This finding is possible the result of the time consuming feature of written communications.

Time Spent Communicating

Superintendents reported that an average of fifty-three minutes were spent in each personal face to face meeting held with governmental officials. They also reported an average of nearly twenty-five minutes were spent on each written message while slightly more than ten minutes were devoted to each telephone conversation.

Superintendents from medium size schools spend an average of one hour and ten minutes per day communicating with governmental officials, compared to one hour and five minutes per day by small school superintendents, and forty-four minutes per day by large school superintendents.

Content Categories

The content analysis of superintendents' communications with

government officials showed messages could be placed into one of seven general categories: personnel, professional activities, curriculum, finance, federal programs, school plant and site, and legislation.

Forty-one per cent of all contacts reported in this study concerned federal programs. This finding lends support to the original assumption that the need for public school superintendents to communicate with governmental officials has increased sharply as a result of increased financial support of the federal government. The significance of this finding is further emphasized by the fact that the next most frequently used content category received less than 13 per cent of the total number of contacts used. School size seemed to make very little difference in the superintendent's need to initiate communication regarding federal programs.

At the other end of the scale superintendents found less need to contact governmental officials regarding professional activities than for either of the other categories. This finding was somewhat surprising in view of recent demands by teacher organizations for increased expenditures for education. This finding would indicate that Oklahoma superintendents have not felt the full impact of the activities of their professional organizations. Teachers are becoming more insistent and militant. They are demanding a larger and more meaningful share in the shaping of educational policies, procedures, and decision making, which in turn may alter the superintendents behavior regarding professional activities. No other content category seemed to require more than a normal number of communication contacts.

Age of Respondents

The average age of all respondents was forty-six years with small school superintendents having the youngest average age and large school superintendents the oldest average age. Data showed that superintendents in the forty to forty-nine age classification communicated more frequently with governmental officials while those in the sixty age group found less need for communication than other age classifications.

Experience as a Superintendent

The average experience of superintendents responding was slightly over eleven years. Superintendents from medium size schools served longer as the chief school officer while small school superintendents had less experience. The data suggests that the superintendent progressively becomes a more active communicator with government officials as he acquires experience in his profession. It would appear as the superintendent acquires more experience he gains the confidence needed to persue a more active role as a communicator with government officials on matters of an educational nature.

Highest Degree Earned

There seemed to be a tendency for superintendents who held the doctorate to represent larger school districts. The data indicated that the level of a superintendent's educational attainment had little influence on his communications behavior.

Memberships in Organizations

The average number of memberships held in organizations by respondents increase as the size of the school district increases. This could

be due primarily to increased opportunities in larger school districts. The age of the respondents seemed to have very little influence upon the number of memberships held in professional, service, civic, and fraternal organizations. It was also found that the number of memberships held had little or no influence upon the superintendent's communication behavior with governmental officials.

Professional Activities

Superintendents from medium and large school districts showed a tendency to assume more responsibility for the success of their professional organizations than small school superintendents. The percentage of participation as office holders seemed to increase as the age of the group increased. The data indicated that there is no significant difference in the number of contacts made by a superintendent and by the number of levels on which he has held offices in professional organizations.

Educational Activities

Fifty per cent of the superintendents in this study reported they had never served as a participant or consultant on a committee where educational problems were being explored at either the local, county, state, or national level. The data reflects a trend for an increase in participation as the size of school represented increases and for greater participation with an increase in age. There is no significant difference in the number of a superintendent's contacts with governmental officials and the degree of his participation on educational committees.

Political Activity

Data were gathered in order to determine the degree of the respondents formal participation in politics. Over one-half of the superintendents reported they had never participated in politics either by holding an office of the central committee, in either political party, or by attending a precinct or county organizational meeting. The size of school and age variables seemed to have very little influence on the superintendents participation in politics. It was also found that no significant difference exists between the degree of a superintendent's participation in politics and the frequency of his contacts with government officials.

Information, Action, and Decision as Related to Professional, Educational, and Political Activity

Respondents in this study were asked the question: Does this message request information, require action, or ask for a decision? Responses to these questions were examined in relation to frequency and the degree of the superintendents participation in professional, educational, and political activities.

Professional Activities

The professional activities of superintendents were examined in relation to the number of levels (local, county, district, state, and national) in which they had held office in some professional organization. Superintendents were categorized according to the number of levels in which they had held office in professional organizations.

The mean scores of these categories did not differ significantly

in the three types of messages--information, action, and decision--that were examined. Requests for information closely approached significance. The pattern revealed more requests for information from superintendents reporting little or no involvement in professional organizations and fewer requests for information from those superintendents with a history of considerable participation in professional organizations.

In requiring action or asking for a decision superintendents did not differ significantly across participation categories but there was a tendency for superintendents in the higher participation categories to make more requests for action and decisions that those superintendents in the low participation categories.

Educational Activities

The educational activities of respondents were examined in relation to the number of levels (local, county, state, or national) in which they had participated either as a participant or consultant on committees where educational problems were being explored and discussed. The mean scores did not differ significantly in the three types of messages, information, action, and decision. Though not statistically significant the data suggested that no participation on educational committees was associated with relatively high requests for information.

Political Activity

Respondents' political activities were examined in relation to their participation as reported on a series of questions designed to determine the degree of their involvement in one of the two major political parties. They were categorized according to levels of party

participation. The mean scores of superintendents did not differ significantly in the three types of messages being studied.

Conclusions

This study was designed to explore the communication behavior of local school superintendents with governmental officials at the local, state, and federal levels of government. Efforts were made to determine if superintendents communication behavior is influenced by the size of school district they represent, by certain status characteristics, or by the degree of their formal participation in party politics. The data support the following conclusions:

1. Superintendents from small school districts communicate more frequently with governmental officials than superintendents from large school districts but less frequently than superintendents from medium size districts.

2. Superintendents communicate more frequently with governmental officials at the state level.

3. Superintendents from small school districts prefer the face to face method of communicating while superintendents from medium and large school districts prefer the telephone. All use the written message very sparingly.

4. Superintendents from small and medium size school districts spend more time communicating with governmental officials than superintendents from large school districts.

5. More than forty per cent of all communication with governmental officials is in reference to federal programs.

6. Superintendents in the forty to forty-nine age bracket have

the highest level of communication while those over sixty have the lowest.

7. Superintendents progressively become more active communicators with governmental officials as they acquire administrative experience.

8. The educational attainment of superintendents has very little if any influence on their communication with government officials.

9. The number of memberships held in professional, fraternal, civic, and service organizations has little influence upon the communication patterns of superintendents.

10. The number of levels (local, county, district, state, and national) in which offices in professional organizations were held has little influence upon the number of contacts superintendents make with government officials.

11. The number of levels (local, county, state, and national) in which a superintendent has participated on educational committees has little effect on his communication behavior with government officials.

12. The degree of superintendents formal participation in party politics has little influence on their communication behavior with government officials.

13. Oklahoma school superintendents have shown little interest in party politics.

14. The most frequent reason for communicating with government officials is to seek information.

15. Participation in professional, educational, and political activities has little or no influence on whether or not the communication behavior of superintendents concern information, action or decision type messages.

Implications

This study has shown that a distinct body of practice has developed among public school superintendents in regard to their communications behavior with officials at the various levels of government. It has further shown that practice for certain behavior patterns vary with respect to the size of school district as well as to certain status variables. Implications of this study are considered relative to further research and to the training of those who aspire to be public school superintendents.

Implications for Further Research

A replication of this study with sufficient respondents to enable a more rigorous and systematic examination of suggested trends and patterns in the superintendents communication behavior would appear to be a useful venture. In most exploratory studies more specific questions can be raised after the study than before. Some of the questions that are suggested by this study may be stated as follows:

1. Given the fact that public school superintendents from small, medium, and large school districts differ in their communication behavior with governmental officials:

   a. To what extent are the differences across district size due to differing recruitment procedures? How does this tend to perpetuate differences in communication behavior?

   b. To what extent is the communication behavior differences across district size due to increased complexity of operation in larger districts and to what extent are these differences due to personal

characteristics of superintendents across school district size?

2. If the position of superintendents in the smaller school districts is the training ground for positions in medium and large school districts:

a. Does the superintendents communication behavior with governmental officials change as he moves from smaller to larger school districts or do only those superintendents with the "right" communication behavior move up to the larger districts?

b. How long can a superintendent remain in a smaller or larger district without taking the "set" of communications behavior of this district his own?

3. If the federal government increases its financial support of elementary and secondary education:

a. Will the local school superintendent find a need to become more sophisticated in his political orientation and if so, should this orientation be directed more toward a particular level of government?

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER SENT TO SUPERINTENDENTS

TAHLEQUAH CITY SCHOOLS
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Dear Superintendent:

In light of the increasing state and federal intervention into local educational policy and practice it seems reasonable to assume that an increasing amount of the superintendent's time is taken up in communicating with various governmental agencies.

It is expected that an analysis of communications initiated by the superintendent will provide greater insight and understanding into the nature of this task and will allow it to be performed more efficiently.

The enclosed questionnaire and message pad is part of a study I am doing under the direction of Dr. Robert Ohm, Professor in the College of Education at the University of Oklahoma. All information given will be treated as confidential and no individual superintendent or school names will be used in any way.

The questionnaire is designed so it will take a minimum amount of time to complete. All except a few of the questions may be answered by use of a check mark. It should not take more than five or ten minutes to complete all questions.

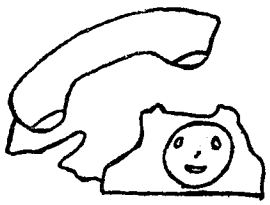
The message pad is self-explanatory. It should be kept accurately for a period of four consecutive days. Keep it on your desk and make sure each communication, with a governmental agency, is recorded. At the end of the four day recording period return the questionnaire and message pad in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope.

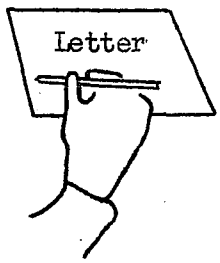
Sincerely yours,

Lonny Parrish
Superintendent of Schools

APPENDIX B

THE MESSAGE PAD AND QUESTIONNAIRE





DATE _____.

1. Name of Official Contacted _____.

2. Title of Official Contacted _____.

3. His Level of Operation _____.
(Check One) (Local) (County) (State) (Federal)

4. Type of Message _____.
(Check One) (Telephone Call) (Written) (Face to Face)

5. Gist of Message _____

_____

_____.

6. Does This Message: _____
(Check One) (Request Information) (Require Action)

_____.
(Ask For a Decision)

7. How Much Time Did You Devote to This Message? _____.

1. Name of superintendent_____School_____.

2. Age_____. Number of years employed as superintendent_____.
Highest level of education:
_____Bachelors degree _____Masters degree
_____20 to 45 hours above Masters _____Doctors degree

3. Number of teachers in your district_____.

4. Number of organizations to which you belong:
_____Professional _____Civic
_____Service _____Fraternal

5. Number of professional meetings attended during 1966_____.
Have you ever held office in one of your professional associations?
Yes_____; No_____.
If so, at what level?
Local____; County____; District____; State____; National____.

6. Do you now serve as a County Coordinator for the O.E.A. Citizenship Committee? Yes_____; No_____.

7. Have you ever actively participated in organizational meetings of either the Democrat or Republican Central Committees? Yes_____; No_____.
Do you pland to attend either of these party organizational precinct meetings this year? Yes_____; No_____.
Do you now hold or have you ever held a Central Committee office in either of the two major political parties? Yes_____; No_____.

8. Have you ever been asked to serve as a participant or concultant on a committee where educational problems were being explored? (Example: Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee) Yes_____; No_____.
If answer to above question is yes, was this committee: Local____; County____; State____; or National____; in scope?

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