

THE IMPACT OF STRESS FROM FEDERAL INFLUENCE
ON THE STRUCTURE OF LOCAL
EDUCATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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The primary purpose of this research is the investigation of the impact on the structural posture and governmental principle of the board of education produced by federal policy making in local educational government. In addition, it seeks to determine if political science theory can offer reliable insight into and permit prediction of the political relationships in educational government. The research procedures used and the discoveries made in pursuit of these objectives are reported in this dissertation.

Essential to the realization of the objectives previously mentioned is the thinking and political theorizing of David Easton, whose study of the general political system provides a conceptual and theoretical basis for the systematic analysis of the political behavior of local educational governments. His significant contributions to this endeavor will be apparent to the reader of the chapters which follow.

This study could not have been completed without the assistance, the advice, and the assurance of many individuals. Special recognition must be given to my Advisory Committee -- Dr. Kenneth St. Clair, Dr. Richard Jungers, Dr. Robert Meisner, and Dr. Bertil Hanson -- whose guidance has furnished direction and dimension to this task. The contribution of Dr. Wayne Hoy, currently an associate professor at Rutgers University, is acknowledged. Through his instruction and influence the idea for this investigation was conceived.

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE AND PERSPECTIVE

The inseparable relationship between education and politics is the object of extensive comment and intensive concern in the field of educational administration. From the planning of educational purpose to the operation of educational enterprise, the school and the state are inveterate allies. Supporting this contention, Campbell, et al.,¹ and Iannaccone² maintain that educational policy making at all levels of consideration is immersed in politics. Masters and Pettit, both distinguished observers of political behavior and its concomitant effect on educational variables, profess: "The mantle of politics impinges upon every societal activity that involves the distribution of costs and benefits."³ Since educational endeavor involves both the acquiring and the applying of societal resources, it includes the dimensions of the political process.

In practice, as well as in principle, schools serve the society which sponsors them; and in so doing, they are responsive to the political powers and pressures of the environment. Numerous studies indicate that educational policy is politically determined. Kimbrough examines the effect of political power on educational decision making and concludes that informal behind-the-scenes power groupings radically affect major public decisions involving education.⁴ Lutz reveals that the sentiments of school board members reflect the sentiments of the

component substructure of the school district.⁵ Bloomberg and Sunshine support the belief that political values are reflected in the determination of the allocation of public resources among alternative interests.⁶ These and other investigations support the thesis that political variables function as essential correlates of educational policy and that a thorough investigation of the educational process must involve a consideration of politics and political science.

While the interrelationship between education and political science appears clear, scholars recognize a paucity of substantive research relating the two disciplines. In a 1957 article David Easton makes a candid appraisal of the existing relationship between political analysis and the field of formal educational endeavor and concludes: "Research regarding educational institutions has receded to a distinctly peripheral position in the discipline of political science."⁷ Two years later his assessment is given further substantiation by Eliot, who states:

...neither educators nor political scientists have frequently engaged in the examination of public education. Educators have shied away not only from the word politics but from the political scientists as well.⁸

These assessments do not ignore the plethora of studies devoted to the description of political variables which impinge on educational decision and policy making. However, careful analysis of the majority of these studies reveals that they suffer from a distinct lack of systematic synthesis. This is not to deny the significance of these investigations to the educational practitioner, but the failure of such studies to display relevance to comprehensive political theory depresses their heuristic value and leaves the educational analyst

with only an isolated view of the political relationships. Dye supports this position: "The most obvious void in the research literature on state educational policies is in systematic efforts to understand the impact of political variables on educational outcomes."⁹

In view of such a pronounced disparity between educational practice and political science theory, the objective of future research in this area seems clear -- to relate discoveries and descriptions of associated educational phenomena to the principles and theoretical propositions of political science. This task is emphasized by Weiler, who contends:

Major help in conceptualizing the relationship has come from recent efforts in the field of comparative politics to establish a framework for the analysis of political development. ... Much more empirical research will be needed, however, before present theoretical propositions about the effects of education on political development can claim any predictive value.¹⁰

The Theory of Systems Analysis

One recently developed conceptual framework which appears to offer the researcher a viable analytic tool for systematic investigation is that proposed by David Easton in A Framework for Political Analysis.¹¹ The theory presented in this 1965 publication and in a later volume¹² he calls the "theory of systems analysis." Predicated on the argument that all political life may be viewed as a special system of behavior, this framework, while highly abstract in its construction, offers a set of concepts and proposes a pattern of logically deduced principles which have instrumental value for an interpretation of political life. Commenting on the utility of this theory, Weiler declares:

Easton attempted to develop a logically integrated set of categories, with strong empirical relevance that would make possible the analysis of political life as a system of behavior. ... To perceive the educational system as a part of the environment with which the political system interacts provides the possibility of further conceptualizing the relationship between educational processes and political behavior.¹³

Considering every political unit of government as a political system, Easton presents the thesis that a political system is a set of unique interactions in which the human being engages. Since society itself is a type of suprasystem encompassing all social interactions, the political system is a subsystem involving only those interactions conceptually distinct from other processes to permit their classification into an identifiable genotypic category.¹⁴ This position is essentially that of Max Weber, who argues that political systems can be distinguished as a special class of social systems because they alone comprise all that affects or threatens the use of legitimate force.¹⁵ Interactions which cannot be subsumed under this distinct class are considered part of the environment of the political system. Implicit in the analysis is the belief that the political system has a boundary, a line which separates it from its surrounding environment.¹⁶

Essential to the understanding of the political system is a clear conceptualization of the nature of the interactions which it encompasses and which distinguish it from its environment. Easton reasons that political interactions are those which are predominantly oriented toward the authoritative allocation of values.¹⁷ They are the source from which originate binding policies or regulations for the control of the society. Therefore, an understanding of the political system

requires that the pattern of interactions through which environmental demands are collected, sorted, and processed into compulsory obligations be identified and explained.

Five descriptive propositions prescribe the salient properties of the Easton¹⁸ framework for a political system. These are as follows:

1. A political system is composed of members who function in an interdependent relationship. Changes within the system or its membership will have an effect on the total system structure.
2. The political system seeks to persist throughout time.
3. The political system will defend its jurisdictional boundaries against invasion by contradictory forces. The authorities of the political system work to maintain the system boundaries consciously and may overtly initiate structures to reduce and redirect outer-societal stress. This conscious structuring of the system's processes and patterns permits the belief that the authorities could alter the equilibrium of the system deliberately to direct it to a more desirable state.
4. Political systems are viewed as open systems receiving demands from the environment and allocating binding outputs.
5. A political system is characterized by a rather specific mode of operations determined by both legal and extra-legal constraints. If stress on the system displaces the system beyond the critical range of its existent operational principles, the system will respond by altering its structural character in order to persist. The critical range is passed when the system can no longer enact required policy in its present form.

These generic propositions underpin this study and guide the content of its inquiry. They furnish perspective and proportion to its three-fold purpose, which is (1) to explore the applicability of political systems theory to educational investigation, (2) to examine a relevant problem area in educational life through the use of the conceptual tools developed from this theory, and (3) to evaluate by empirical process the fruitfulness of this theory to the study of education.

Statement of the Problem

Intrinsically, Easton considers the political theory of systems analysis to be a molar or general theory applicable to all political systems.¹⁹ The five propositions which he presents furnish explanation for the behavior of all political units be they small, such as a tribe, or large, as in the case of a nation or a world government. This underlying assumption includes the unit of political control in education, the board of education.

That the board of education is a political system needs little verification. As Campbell observes:

The board of education fills the interstice between the school and the larger society. This means that the board becomes the major articulating element between the school and its norms and the larger society and its values.²⁰

Cunningham refers to the school district and its board of authorities as extensions of state government, established for purposes of regulating local-state interests in education. He summarizes his position in the following words: "Through these governments local decisions are reached, relative to the management and operation of schools; likewise, through these districts the policy of the state is implemented."²¹

Minar supports this position by contending that school districts are political systems with defined geographic jurisdictions, a constituency, and methods for the popular election of decision makers who possess both legislative and fiscal powers.²²

Since from both a conceptual and an operational viewpoint the board of education is a political system, it is possible to describe the character of the board of education in terms of the five Easton generic propositions.

1. The school board is composed of members who function in an interdependent relationship. Changes within the system or its membership caused by the election or appointment of a new member affect the structure of the total system.²³
2. The school board both in its form and influence seeks to retain its position. Monypenny reiterates this point:

Interest in the maintenance of existing school organization must not be ignored. ... It can be expected, therefore, that there will be participants in any policy-making structure who will have as their primary concern the maintenance of existing arrangements.²⁴

3. The school board seeks to structure a defense against the invasion of its jurisdictional boundaries. According to Iannaccone, the characteristics of educational systems on all levels tend toward tighter boundaries, reduced inputs and outputs, and homeostasis. His argument is that schools and school boards show an amazing resilience against change and countenance the work flow patterns of the 1900s.²⁵
4. The school board receives and processes demands from the environment in which it is encased. This position is enunciated by Briner, who states: "Schools must do the bidding of the society which sponsors them but, too, schools must be free to develop, to be the self-renewing stimulus for the society they serve."²⁶
5. Finally, the school board is characterized by operational procedures prescribed by local, state, and national laws and directives. Minar concludes his review of school boards and community politics by observing:

Formally, the system of local school government reflects in one way or another the legitimation requirements imposed on governments by the American democratic culture. Its powers are derived from the state, its functions are limited, and its institutional features are circumscribed by institutional rules.²⁷

By utilizing the political systems model, the researcher can examine the impact of environmental stress on the structure of the board of education. One apparently disturbing force to the stability and the existent status of the system is the involvement of the national government in the development of local educational policy and

programming. The impact of the stress created by federal influence on the operational structure of the board of education will be the subject of this dissertation.

The set of assumptions which guide the research are as follows:

1. The local board of education is a political system as conceptualized by the Easton model.
2. The local board of education is conceived as an instrument of local-state government, and the principle of local control is the guiding philosophy of its members.
3. Federal financial participation in local educational endeavor restricts the ability of the local board to enact binding policies to the society under present conditions since the board cannot appropriate federal financial aid at its discretion.
4. In order to maintain the system's boundaries, the board will initiate new structures to reduce the impact of these restrictions on its essential governmental principle.

These assumptions serve to guide investigation of the problem proposed for this research, which is: Does federal financial assistance in local educational endeavor result in structural changes in the character of local educational government?

The research seeks to provide insight into several related questions.

1. Does educational policy associated with federal assistance threaten to displace the governmental prerogative of the board of education?
2. Does such displacement increase or decrease with varying degrees of federal assistance?
3. What behavioral changes does the school board demonstrate as it becomes more dependent on federal assistance?
4. How does the board adjust to the stress from federal regulations attached to the use of federal assistance?

The problem of this research includes all these questions since it purports to discover how the board of education changes or adjusts its

existent governmental stance to redirect or reduce the stress threatening its essential principle of local control.

The specific problem statement limits the scope of this study to an analysis of the system's reaction to federal influence. Although it may be reasonable to hypothesize that restrictions on the input variables of the board will be observed in the character of new outputs, such a proposition will not be explored. The point of critical concern is whether or not the board perceives federal assistance as carrying with it controls which conflict with its basic orientation, and, if so, what compensations the board makes in order to reaffirm its essential operational philosophy of local control. More specifically, the area of investigation is the behavioral reaction of the board to circumstances in the governmental process contradictory to the principle of local control. Typical aspects of this inquiry concern changes the board would make in its utilization of federal resources if it had complete freedom to select program designs, whether the use of federal resources arouses societal pressure to continue programs now operated, and the effects of federal support on recent program changes as compared to changes made possible by new local resources; considerations such as what programs have been started since the board began using federal assistance and the differences between federally supported and locally assisted programs are not germane to the problem area. While the latter interests have relevance to a more comprehensive study of the use of federal resources, they reveal little about the internal disagreement or philosophical conflict produced by the use of federal assistance. If the board approves the beginning of two reading classes when it had rather implement two classes in foreign language, it acts

in contradiction to its essential governmental principle of local control since the evidence implies action taken contrary to its desires. The concern then becomes what does the board, as a political system, do to reassert or readjust its governmental philosophy in order to persist as a distinct governing body. Such is the nature of the problem which this study proposes to explore.

Conceptual Framework

In order for the Easton theory of political systems analysis to be applied to a study of the problem area designated, the conceptual propositions implicit in this thesis must be formulated in language appropriate for the investigation. From these propositions four diacritical hypotheses are derived. These will serve as guidelines for research and furnish a conceptual framework through which findings can be evaluated. The hypotheses are presented as follows:

1. Boards of education which are highly dependent on federal assistance in the processing of educational demands will experience more boundary stress than will those which are less dependent.
2. Boards of education which are highly dependent on federal assistance will display a greater dependence on their administrative staff than will those which are less dependent.
3. Boards of education which are highly dependent on federal assistance will demonstrate a greater inclination to share their policy-making prerogative than will those which are less dependent.
4. Boards of education which are highly dependent on federal assistance will display a greater reluctance toward organizing societal acceptance of federal support than will those which are less dependent.

The nature of these hypotheses reveals that the relationship to be investigated is one of high dependency on federal assistance

verses minimal dependency. Each hypothesis assumes that factors inherent in a high dependency relationship will conflict with the present governmental philosophy, posture, and position of the board and predicts that these conflicts will generate pressure on the existent structural arrangements.

Rationale for Hypotheses

The most pronounced tenet of the Easton theory is that a political system will seek to persist through time. This belief lends support to its corollary: the political system will view as threatening or stressful any influence from the environment which reduces its existent authority. To such stress the system will react either by the initiating of new structures to support the maintenance of its present policy position or by the sacrifice of some of its policy boundary in order to reduce the stress to a tolerable level.

The board of education which becomes highly dependent on federal assistance will find itself unable to meet the demands of its constituency without accepting certain categorical directions. Categorical federal assistance, such as ESEA Title I and NDEA Title III, carries with it an agreement to appropriate funds only as directed. By accepting federally restricted help, the board threatens to reduce its policy-making prerogative. This threat will be met either by attempts at open resistance to federal aid or by certain structural changes, such as granting more power for policy making to the administrative staff or by sharing its policy-making prerogative with other groups or superordinate boards.

It is conceivable also that the board may be willing to accept a

noticeable reduction in its existent power or narrow its governmental boundaries provided it continues to persist. However, the board is not likely to publicize any great loss in its ability to control policy outputs to the society it serves. It may develop various other coping or defense structures instead, structures which this study will attempt to reveal.

In order that precision in research be assured, certain terms employed in discussing these hypotheses are operationally defined as follows:

Political System will be treated as it is conceptualized by Easton. This study views the local board of education as a political system. Expert opinions cited previously describe the board as a political system. The origin of the systems concept is found in the natural sciences and refers to any recognizable delimited aggregate of dynamic elements that in some way are interconnected and interdependent and which operate together to produce a total effect.²⁸ Governments, whether large or small, are comprised of such an inter-related aggregate of dynamic elements so that a change in any facet of their political lives initiates a series of reactions which eventually affect the total stance of the governing unit.

Stress denotes a severe strain on the policy boundaries of the political system. Pressures from the system's environment, restrictions from other political units, or cleavages within the system restrict the ability of the political system to enact binding governmental policy for the society. One example of a restriction from another political unit is Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which provides federal aid to the local

political system but limits its use to the special educational needs of the educationally deprived child.²⁹ This study will regard stress as the extent to which federal restraints and policy restrictions displace local control over program outputs. For purposes of clarification, any board which surrenders a substantial amount of local control in order to obtain federal financial assistance may be said to be under a high level of stress since it acts in direct contradiction to its fundamental governmental principle.

Boundary, as described by Easton, is the thin skin or imaginary line established by prevailing law, custom, group norms, or policy agreement within which the system operates.³⁰ A boundary is penetrated when an exchange is made between the system and its environment. For purposes of investigation, the boundary of the board of education will be conceptualized as the outer limits of the area for which the board can make binding educational policy by the principle of local control. When the federal government enters this area to provide assistance, it invades the policy boundary of the board of education.

Structure will be operationalized as any prescribed arrangement or organizational procedure developed by the board of education for the purpose of reaching its objectives. For example, the appointing of a special administrator to develop federally supported educational programs would be considered as initiating a new system structure. It is assumed that as a different set of situations impinge upon the political system, it will respond by establishing appropriate procedural mechanisms to permit the continuation of its governmental operations. Two specific structures will be considered. These are administrative staff dependency and cooperative decision-making procedures.

Process will be viewed as a descriptive construct in this study to describe the specific activities within the system devoted to the development of a single output. For example, when the board authorities accept a societal demand for a program of compensatory education, this demand is shaped (processed) by the authorities into a specific policy output appropriate for the satisfaction of the demand.

Authorities are the controlling members of the political life of the system.³¹ The elected representatives of the school community to the board of education, the board members, are the board's authorities. In addition, the superintendent of schools, who acts as the executive officer of the board, will be regarded as one of the system authorities.

Authoritative Allocation, according to Easton, is one of the essential variables of political life.³² The system must be capable of issuing compulsory directives if it is to govern. In the area under study, these directives will take such forms as attendance guidelines, curriculum requirements, and controls over which type of children may be included in a program. As stated previously, the critical consideration of this study is not the allocation itself but the restrictions over the allocation.

Dependency denotes a state of contingency. Dependency will be conceptualized in this study to describe the degree or amount of support which the school board accepts from federal sources in order to maintain educational output at the local level. School boards which apply for and receive large amounts of federal assistance will be viewed as highly dependent systems. A more precise distinction is made between highly dependent, moderately dependent, and minimally dependent systems in the description of the population sample.

Restricted Assistance, or categorical aid, describes federal financial assistance which can be appropriated only to specific curricular or program areas. For example, Title I funds from P.L. 89-10 are limited in use to providing educational opportunities for the educationally deprived student. NDEA Title III aid is available only for enriching certain critical subjects designated by the federal government.

Non-restricted Assistance is federal financial assistance to be appropriated by the board of education at its discretion. Typical of such assistance is P.L. 874, Impacted Area Aid, which the board may apply to any program it chooses.

System Constituency is that segment of society governed by the board of education. In this study the term will be used interchangeably with the school system's public to describe those individuals subject to the directives of a specific board.

As defined, these concepts shall serve to provide clarity and consistency to this study and furnish an operational basis for measuring the variables under investigation.

Review of Literature

Hartley,³³ Halpin,³⁴ and Campbell³⁵ are among the many astute observers of the educational milieu who contend that educational theorists can profit from the adaptation of successful conceptual models from sociology, anthropology, social psychology, economics, and other disciplines to explore the sometime murky and ill defined parameters of educational administration. The research literature is replete with reports investigating educational phenomena through the

use of role theory, equilibrium theory, decision-making theory, social systems theory, organizational theory, self theory, and other conceptual frameworks. However, there is a noticeable failure of researchers to utilize political science models to interpret educational behavior of a governmental or political character. Eliot indicates that this void is the fault of both the educator and the political scientist.³⁶ Educational dictum views politics as anathema to education, and political science expresses little concern for the governing of schools.

In spite of the inadequacy of conceptual inquiry into the politics of education, numerous descriptive studies provide valuable insight into the nature of the phenomena existent in this area. The research concentrates on identifying power relationships and institutional components affecting the posture of educational government in the local community setting.

Studies in the decade of the fifties focus on local variables and their effect on education. Hunter,³⁷ Dahl,³⁸ Kimbrough,³⁹ Goldhammer,⁴⁰ and other students of community power and influentials note that educational decisions are dependent on such factors as political position, economic level, social change, personal interests, and political belief. Even though some of the findings from these studies conflict, they demonstrate that educational government is influenced significantly by local determinants.

Toward the end of the decade the pattern of research changes. Students of educational government observe that educational policy and governmental outputs are influenced by other than local referents. Typical of this change is the position expressed by Campbell:

It is quite clear that the public schools of this country have always operated within a framework established by the various states and that federal influences of some kind have always been prevalent. In recent decades, state controls over schools have been strengthened and federal activities in education, widely dispersed among many agencies, have multiplied. Federal influence has been piecemeal, haphazard, perhaps even surreptitious and often clothed in pious affirmation of state and local control. . . . The time seems ripe for a realistic view of circumstances as they are....⁴¹

In an attempt to discover the variance in local or absolute control presently exercised by boards of education, recent research has revisited the area of educational government. In a 1966 review of personnel regulations and administration in the school districts of California, Chamberlain reports no loss of local control by boards of trustees from 1929 to 1963.⁴² Parks' findings of school board practices in Colorado reveal that local control was exercised by the boards of education in such a way that 57.25% of their decisions were classified as absolute in nature. His research shows small school districts exercise more absolute control than large districts while the inverse is true for discretionary control.⁴³ Manz demonstrates that the size of a school district is related significantly to how the board perceives educational issues. School board members in large districts generally perceive issues which come before the board to be of less concern than do board members in small districts.⁴⁴

Advancing from a consideration of local control, Rice calls attention to state influence on educational outcomes.

The role of the school board is not diminishing but it is changing. . . .

State law now operates in many areas where school boards once functioned. The board, however, must measure whether or not the program is satisfactory in terms of its local educational needs.⁴⁵

Burke moves one step further in this consideration of the control of educational government. He argues:

The second half of the 20th century may be characterized by a shift of control over education from states to the federal government comparable to the shift from local units to states during the first half.⁴⁶

The impact of federal participation in local educational endeavors only recently has been subjected to empirical assessment, but the results of these investigations lend support to the position of Burke. In a study to determine the influence of the National Science Foundation, the College Entrance Examination Board, the National Defense Education Act of 1958, and other secondary school programs of national scope, Campbell notes that the shift from local-state to national policy making for education appears to be most pronounced in those school districts populated by middle and upper middle class people. These people may look upon local-state decisions in education as provincial and outdated. Campbell intimates that local boards of education have little choice except to accept nation-wide prestigious programs supported by scholarly insight and money.⁴⁷

Holt, in his extensive study of the effects of external testing, reports a correlation coefficient of .67 between certain types of communities (urban or suburban) and their tendency to accept the ratings of the National Merit Qualification Test as the measure of their school's effectiveness.⁴⁸ These findings denote a trend toward curricular standardization as a result of external and national testing programs. A similar finding to Holt's is the discovery by LaVigne that a program originating outside the control of the secondary school can become an academic incentive to students interested in a college

education. She concludes, "As local educational institutions participate in national programs, the decision-making power of the local officials decreases."⁴⁹ After examining the effect of ten national programs and their influence on local and state educational policy, Larmee points out that: (1) in a society where education is traditionally regarded as a state function, nine of the ten national programs have established direct relationships with local educational agencies without the intervention of any state or regional agency, and (2) in terms of the definition of policy used throughout this study, these national groups, both public and private, have succeeded in effecting change in local educational policy as their programs have been rapidly adopted by local school systems.⁵⁰

The implications of these studies are that the effect of national efforts and influences are beginning to be noticed and that the policy boundaries of the local board may be narrower than previously believed. Nugent concludes:

These developments also demonstrate that vacuums in local leadership are usually filled from other than local sources. ... The fact that outside agencies have found vacuums in local school programs indicates that local control has not been as aggressive as our public has wished.⁵¹

That the federal government is exerting itself in the determination of educational policy is demonstrated by Bennion. Using a framework developed by Roald Campbell for studying the formulation of educational policy, he indicates the following beliefs: (1) Since federal assistance to education under the recently passed Elementary and Secondary Education Act is categorical in nature, the federal government has assumed the role of policy maker in education; and

(2) in interpreting and providing for the implementation of the act, the administrative guidelines become a part of the policy-determining process.⁵²

The most comprehensive comment on the impact of newer federal programs on local control is made by Campbell. His thesis is that federal financial participation portends the following consequences for local boards:

1. National assessments programs, now being examined on an exploratory basis through a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, pave the way for curricular standardization in all systems.
2. Greater authority becomes invested in the superintendent and his staff in the writing and developing of programs.
3. Demands requiring matching of funds in certain federal programs impose priorities on expenditures locally. These demands often compel the local board to place scarce funds into programs which are eligible for federal matching grants and thus restrict funds to other programs.
4. Several programs make mandatory the use of representatives from outside community and cultural elements. Title I and Title III of P.L. 89-10, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, require that persons representative of the areas and cultural components to be served must assist in the planning and development of programs to be funded under these titles. In the case of OEO funded programs, the poor must be actively involved in the decision-making process.
5. Participation in the services of several programs necessitates interdistrict collaboration by school districts and creates a system of superordinate combinations superior to local school districts.
6. Boards experience difficulty when striving to equalize educational opportunities since differential inputs of federal categorical aid restrict the use of funds to prescribed areas.⁵³

That these recent shifts in educational policy making are having some interesting consequences can be demonstrated. McKnight reveals that Ohio administrators think specific purpose federal aid creates

an imbalance in the curriculum.⁵⁴ Monypenny⁵⁵ and Jencks⁵⁶ maintain that in developing a public school position at the federal level it is the professionals, the educational administrators, the paid staffs of the associations of classroom teachers, and not local board authorities, who have the decisive voice. The local board becomes relatively unimportant as the level of decision making shifts beyond the school district boundaries. Noffsinger surveys the opinion of Indiana school boards toward federal financial participation in education and announces that 65.9% of the board members believe federal assistance leads to federal control and thus threatens lay control of education. In spite of this belief, the majority of 83.8% favor continuing or increasing the present level of federal support to public education.⁵⁷ Alan Campbell concurs with the appraisal of numerous others that school boards generate almost no influence over resources beyond the local tax rate.⁵⁸

The consensus of educational experts and the discoveries of empirical research support the contention that federal participation in educational activity threatens the position of the board of education as the sole determiner of policy output and that the posture and principles of educational government are undergoing some striking, perhaps even drastic, changes.

Although the research thus far considered provides a rather substantial basis on which to construct the design of this proposed study, it furnishes little predictive assistance due to the weakness of its theoretical framework. The findings reviewed, while important, are but isolated curiosa separated from any known system of relationships which could provide order and direction to further investigation

of the political life style of the board of education.

Four recent studies are worthy of special mention since they represent notable attempts to study educational government by using political science theory and constructs. Scribner, in an exploratory investigation of school board decisions, demonstrates that the functional-systems framework developed by Almond⁵⁹ has applicability to educational study. Scribner analyzes and compares various functions of the board as it converts demands and supports into outputs. He concludes that the functions of the local board of education are now largely judicial since the board makes most decisions by applying a given rule or law to a problem situation.⁶⁰ This discovery permits the researcher to compare any board of education not only to other boards but also to other political systems in terms of their dominant governmental functions.

Dye explores the utility of the Easton political systems framework by relating certain economic and political factors in the environment to specific educational policy outputs. After careful comparison of the two elements, he determines that economic factors are more significant than political factors for predicting educational outcomes. The outputs he measures are state efforts in education, expenditures for public education, status of teachers, number of dropouts, and selective service mental failures.⁶¹

Drawing on the work of Masters, et al.,⁶² Iannaccone presents a theoretical scheme for studying the political life style of the state's educational relationship. This framework provides a means for measuring the nature of state political-educational relationships along the classic Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft continuum. With the use

of this model Iannaccone explains how these state relationships range from a highly disparate or a locally based position to one which is largely fragmented or state wide.⁶³

Perhaps the most relevant study involving the utilization of a political science model to discuss the politics in education is that of Meranto, who follows the Easton approach to the analysis of political behavior in order to investigate systematically the factors affecting the enactment of the federal aid to education programs of 1965. His work indicates that several environmental changes (new inputs) and changes within the system itself operated to favor the passage of new federal legislation (new policy outputs).⁶⁴

The efforts of Scribner, Dye, Iannaccone, and Meranto demonstrate that political science theory can be useful to the explanation of educational phenomena. In particular, two of these studies reveal how the Easton theory of political systems analysis can serve as a basis for systematic inquiry into the components and the characteristics of educational government and its outputs. Although Dye attempts to study the effect of political variables on educational policy at the state level and Meranto considers a similar relationship at the national level, they both employ similar constructs and conceptual devices taken from Easton's political systems theory. This proposed investigation intends to utilize the same theoretical framework in order to determine whether it can provide substantial assistance in interpreting and predicting governmental behavior at the local educational level.

FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY

In attempting to measure the effects of federal influence on the internal structure of local educational government, the researcher was confronted with a fundamental dilemma -- what observations to select as adequate descriptors of the character of the political system. Since the system had to be visualized through human perception, imperfect assessment was possible. It was also likely that cross sectional studies, such as this, might be obviated by assigning undue weight to potentially atypical responses. These limitations were recognized in obtaining the data needed by this investigation.

Because the school board rarely convenes as a governing body more often than once each month, obtaining a description of the board's posture from every board member was regarded as an impossibility in a cross sectional study. Therefore, certain assumptions had to be made about the scientific adequacy and reliability of observations from less than the complete board membership. It was reasonable to believe that the board authorities in the most favorable position to assess the political posture of the board were the superintendent of schools and the president of the board. In as much as the superintendent must understand system policy accurately if he is to execute it correctly, his perception of the board's response to federal assistance was considered reliable. Likewise, the board president was regarded as

a trustworthy observer since he is the elected spokesman for the board. The perceptions of these two authorities were accepted for purposes of research as authentic descriptions of the board's stance. The possible injection of personal bias by these authorities into the research data was regarded as improbable since they are the formal agents for expressing the department of the board. However, in as much as the position of the board relative to federal influence was to be reported by only two of its official authorities, the potential for an inaccurate appraisal to be afforded high importance was admitted as a limitation of this investigation.

In order that the impact of federal influence on the character of local educational government be measured, data were needed on the following variables:

1. The dependency of the board on federal assistance for operating educational programs.
2. The freedom of the board to assign federal support to system operations.
3. The dependency of the board on the administrative staff for employing federal assistance.
4. The adjustments made by the board to offset the loss of existent local prerogative.
5. The environmental pressures produced by the use of federal assistance.
6. The reaction of the board to societal disapproval of federal aid.
7. The relationship of federal assistance to system outputs.
8. The character of program planning and project accounting required by the federal government.
9. The effect of various demographic factors on the posture of the board.

10. The consequences of perceptual disagreements between board authorities.

The nature of the problem proposed for study required that some degree of stress on the policy boundaries of the system be present before specific observations about structural changes in the system could be made. Therefore, the first task of the study was to determine if federal activity in local educational government produced any noticeable pressure on the system authorities or restricted their ability to enact policy. Should a board continue to use federal assistance after recognizing a divergence between federal policy making and local control, it, in fact, would be accepting support which threatens its essential governmental principle. However, such a threat would not be regarded as dangerous unless the system authorities noticed an increase in demand pressure from its constituency as a consequence. This eventuality means that a board could not regain lost boundaries without a struggle and a somewhat permanent strain would be placed on its ability to allocate authoritative values. Thus, in addition to determining if federal regulations were threatening to a board's prerogative, it was necessary also to measure the stress produced by new demands tied directly to the use of federal assistance.

Should preliminary investigation reveal the existence of stress on the system boundaries and restrictions on policy outputs, the next logical concern would be a system's response. What would the authorities do to reduce this stress? Would they turn to the administrative staff for more support? Would they join forces with other local governments or share their decision-making powers with constituent influentials in order to redirect environmental pressure? Would

the board actively attempt to alter or revise the attitude of its constituency as a conflict reducing procedure? These questions demanded the development of appropriate research procedures and the gathering of reliable data before answers could be offered. The direction of the research was guided by four diacritical hypotheses deduced from the political systems theory of David Easton. These hypotheses, stated formally in Chapter I, dictated the use of three discrete yet interdependent research methods to test the power of their predictability.

The first research procedure employed was a modified interview technique. This step required the development of a special instrument, the Political Stress Scale (PSS),¹ for measuring the reactions of the board of education authorities to the effects of federal assistance in the educational process. This instrument was administered separately to the superintendent of schools and to the president of the board of education.

The second technique was a document analysis procedure. The minutes from four separate board meetings were studied, and the decisions rendered at these meetings codified in order to discover whether they were absolute, discretionary, or ministerial in character. The purpose of this technique was to determine the impact of environmental stress and federal influence on the decision-making practices of the local board. Presumably, this technique was to demonstrate that if boards employed large amounts of federal assistance in the processing of educational demands from the society they would be unable to exercise absolute control over outputs and would render more discretionary or ministerial decisions.

Distinctions were made between the three categories by considering absolute decisions as those in which the board of education exercised unrestricted authority and acted as it willed. Discretionary decisions were recognized when the actions of the board were controlled by prevailing law or rules in the situation, and the board could choose only between certain alternatives. Decisions designated as ministerial in nature were those which the law mandated. The board of education had no options from which to select a desired course of action. Ministerial decisions represented inability to control policy and indicated boundary invasion by other political forces.

Pertinent community and demographic information was gathered for consideration through the use of a third procedure, the General Information Questionnaire (GIQ).² The study considered the possibility that school district size, educational level, occupational makeup, community stability, economic position, board member or superintendent tenure, or other variables might affect significantly the orientation or perception of the board authorities toward federal influence. Therefore, some measure of their importance to the governmental process was demanded.

The need to develop acceptable research strategies and establish validity and reliability for the inquiry procedure necessitated several preliminary steps before the data gathering process could begin. Careful consideration was given to understanding the scientific utilization of interviewing techniques described by Kornhauser.³ Research methods for gathering reliable societal data advocated by Warner, Meeker, and Eels⁴ were reviewed and followed. Patterns for job classifications developed by Edwards⁵ were studied and adapted to

the study. Parten's⁶ suggestions on question formulation, wording, and sequencing furnished guidance in phrasing the statements of the Political Stress Scale. Following the preparation of the research instruments, a brief pilot study was initiated to validate their precision and scientific accuracy. A description of this study follows.

The Pilot Study

Information concerning the amount and type of federal assistance received by the participating school districts in the State of Oklahoma was furnished by the State Department of Education for the fiscal year 1968-69. The same source also provided data concerning average daily attendance (ADA) for each school system in Oklahoma. An analysis of the programs of federal assistance in general use in Oklahoma school systems revealed that they could be classified according to type into three comparative categories, as follows:

1. Those programs offering federal financial assistance with relatively no restrictions attached concerning its use, e.g., the P.L. 815 or P.L. 874 (Impacted Area Aid). This aid may be used as the board of education chooses. Although such aid represented 44% of all federal assistance granted to the educational programs of the State, only slightly more than half (57%) of the school districts received this type of aid.
2. Those programs offering federal financial assistance with moderate restrictions attached concerning its use, e.g., Title II of P.L. 89-10 and Title V-A of the National Defense Education Act. Funds from these titles may be used to provide services to all students enrolled in the public schools. Moderately restricted assistance represented 4% of the total federal support given the instructional program of the State.
3. Those programs offering federal financial assistance with stringent restrictions attached concerning its use, e.g., Title I of P.L. 89-10 and Title III of the National Defense Education Act. This aid may be employed only for educating specific students and for equipping certain subjects designated by the federal government as critical. The importance of this aid was revealed in the fact that it represented 52%

of all federal instructional assistance. Every school district in Oklahoma was allocated such support.

Consideration of the data concerning school district size disclosed that most school districts receiving federal assistance could be classified as small (ADA of 2499 or less), medium (ADA of 2500-3999), or above average (ADA of 4000-7999). Since only 7 of the 666 identifiable school districts receiving federal assistance possessed an ADA in excess of the limits described, they were not sufficient in number to be regarded as typical of school districts in the State of Oklahoma.

From the complete population of school systems in the State which were furnished some type of federal assistance in 1968-69, two systems were selected to serve as pilot samples for study. These two samples were considered to be similar in pupil population, local tax base, community composition, board makeup, and superintendent tenure. However, they differed markedly in the type of federal assistance received (Tables I and II). School I utilized 2.4 times (\$32,968.00) more non-restricted assistance than did School II, and School II accepted 2.3 times (\$30,617.60) more highly restricted assistance than did School I. Moderately restricted federal financial assistance received was approximately equal with a difference of only 9% (\$10,393.35 compared to \$9,591.05) in favor of School II. The distinct dissimilarity in type of federal assistance received by the two systems was the essential reason for their selection as pilot subjects. Validation objectives for the PSS required the development of responses which would describe a board's perception of federal assistance. For achieving these objectives, the two pilot boards had to be given the

opportunity to react to differing types of federal help. Their responses could be considered then as appropriate descriptors for measuring the reactions of other boards to these same stimuli.

TABLE I
COMPARISON OF PILOT SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF
SIZE AND FEDERAL ASSISTANCE^{1/}

Statistical Categories	School I	School II
Pupils in ADA	3747	4444
Local Valuation Per ADA	\$ 4,887.00	\$ 4,085.00
Non-Restricted Federal Assistance	56,340.00	23,372.00
Moderately Restricted Federal Assistance	9,591.05	10,393.35
Highly Restricted Federal Assistance	24,386.20	55,003.80
Total Federal Assistance	90,317.25	88,769.15

^{1/}All data cited were furnished by the Oklahoma State Department of Education for the 1968-69 school year.

TABLE II
 COMPARISON OF PILOT SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF
 COMMUNITY AND BOARD COMPOSITION^{1/}

GIQ Demographic Factors ^{2/}	School I	School II
Educ. Level of Community	High School	High School
Occup. Level of Community	Skilled Labor	Skilled Labor
Ave. Income Level of Community	\$5000-8499	\$5000-8499
Dominant Type of Community Bus.	Large Manuf.	Large Manuf.
Growth of Community	Rapid	Steady
Educ. Level of Bd. Members	High School	Above High School
Dominant Occup. of Bd. Members	Management	Management
Ave. Tenure of Bd. Members	2 Terms	4+ Terms
Ave. Tenure of School Supt.	11-15 Yrs.	16+ Yrs.

^{1/} Demographic data were provided by the superintendent of schools in each district.

^{2/} Demographic factors of the GIQ are shown in their complete form in Appendix A.

Before the development of the PSS was begun, ten areas of critical importance for a local board to consider when accepting federal financial aid were identified. These were as follows: purpose determination, willingness of the board to initiate programs, impact on the educational output, program controls, environmental pressure, dependency of the board on the administrative staff, effect on planning, evaluation requirements, restrictions on decision making, and community attitudes involved. To obtain potential responses to

each of the areas identified, twenty open-ended questions were prepared.⁷ These questions were posed to the pilot school superintendents and board presidents, who were to identify the response of their board to each of the areas specified. Certain areas were supported by more than one question in order to determine the consistency of the responses obtained. Board authorities were instructed to consider the questions from the viewpoint of actual personal observations which reflect the response of the entire board without regard for any personal biases, heresay, or preconceived beliefs.

When the responses had been obtained from the two pilot schools, they were given critical review. Seventeen of the original twenty questions elicited responses which were concise and directly applicable to the ten areas under consideration. One question (Pilot PSS question 6), inquiring whether or not the board had recognized any pressure to take resources from one area and make them available to another area, seemed vague to the respondents. It was their belief that funds could not be transferred; consequently, there could be no such pressure. Two other questions (Pilot PSS questions 12 and 13), which describe the impact of federal assistance on recent curricular change, elicited almost duplicate responses and were deemed to measure similar factors. Pilot study question 14, which asks where the system acquires ideas for federal projects, drew so much discussion about project planning that a question measuring the planning demanded by federal programming appeared necessary. Since frequent concerns over the program and accounting controls attached to federal assistance were voiced by the respondents, this factor apparently was not adequately appraised by the questions which were presented. These inadequacies were reviewed

and information gathered for the formulation of more reliable and mutually exclusive measures of the board's response to federal influence on the local control of education.

Although the purpose of the pilot study was to validate the research instrument and not to gather data to support or reject the research hypotheses of the greater study, instances of differences in responses due to differences in experiences with federal assistance were noted. Even though all respondents expressed a highly favorable attitude toward federal assistance, the president of the board in School I reported a greater willingness for the federal government to decide how federal assistance should be utilized and hoped that present programs of assistance would continue without change. The president of the board for School District II stated a belief that purposes should be the sole prerogative of the local school and that federal assistance should be more general in nature.

From responses obtained and factors defined by the pilot study respondents, it was possible to formulate twenty diagnostic statements, each of which was followed by three alternatives.⁸ The alternatives were arranged in an ordered sequence so that response "a" represents a position of strong support for local control of all educational process. At the other extreme, response "c" indicates strong support for federal participation in local educational government. Response "b" represents the middle ground. As an example of the statements devised and the accompanying responses incorporated into the final Political Stress Scale (PSS), statement 5, which describes the changes the board would make in its use of federal assistance if it were free to do so, is presented:

(5) If the local school board were free to employ federal assistance as it desired, present funds would be used

___(a) With an entirely different emphasis.

___(b) With a slightly different emphasis.

___(c) About the same as at present.

Board authorities choosing "a" as an acceptable response would imply that their board was dissatisfied completely with the emphasis given to present programs of federal assistance. At the opposite extreme, choice "c" would indicate almost perfect agreement with present federal assistance plans. Likewise, it would denote little or no incongruity between federal influence and the political philosophy of the board of education.

Four principal changes between the questions posed in the Pilot Study PSS and those incorporated into the statements of the final form were made. (1) The question pertaining to local demands for transferring funds to other areas was deleted, and one describing the board's willingness to accept and operate programs of federal assistance was added. (2) Question 13, which duplicated the factor measured in 12, was changed to obtain an indication of the amount of planning required in order to implement a program of federal assistance. (3) A new statement comparing the accounting control requirements of federal programs to those of non-federal ones was included. (4) The question asking where the board obtained ideas for developing programs of federal support was dropped. Reasons for these changes have been discussed.

In order that the reliability of the responses be established, the instrument was submitted to a panel of five experts, all practicing

administrators in Oklahoma, with the instruction that they were to rate the responses to each statement along a local control to federal partnership agreement continuum. Their replies revealed a high level of agreement with the sequential order of the responses. A positive correlation of .98 was obtained, and four out of the five experts agreed absolutely ($r = 1.00$) with the arrangement of the responses on the PSS. Based on such consistent agreement, the instrument was judged to be a valid measuring device for determining the response of the board to federal participation in educational government at the local system level.

During the pilot phase, an appropriate assessment also was made of the document analysis technique for detecting differences in the outputs of board actions. The technique proved to be fruitful for the classifying of decisions rendered by the board and appeared to display some worth for ascertaining the effect of varying types of federal assistance on the outputs of the board of education. Precise classification of all decisions passed by the board at four separate board meetings was completed and a comparison made (Table III). In School I, 91% of all decisions handed down were judged as discretionary decisions; and 48% of all decisions in School II were so classified. Absolute decisions made in School II constituted 33% of the total compared to 6% in School I. This was a difference of 27%. Ministerial decisions in School I comprised 3% of the total number of decisions made compared to 19% in School II. The latter finding was deemed of some importance since School II recorded several decisions to approve federal projects and to appropriate funds for their support. The difference in type of federal assistance was believed to be a possible

explanation for this discrepancy. However, an analysis of the types of decisions rendered by these boards failed to reveal anything about the characteristics of the programs affected by these decisions. While one system approved the use of federal support for staff salaries and the other for equipment needed in a special reading program, distinctions between federally and locally supported programs were not apparent. The essential difference was the restriction attached to the use of funds provided by the federal government. A ministerial decision indicated that funds could be used only in programs which were judged to be designed according to federally determined guidelines.

TABLE III

COMPARISON OF PILOT SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF DECISIONS RENDERED
BY THE BOARD AT FOUR DISTINCT MEETINGS

School	Absolute	Discretionary	Ministerial	Total
I	8 (6%)	118 (91%)	4 (3%)	130 (100%)
II	21 (33%)	30 (48%)	12 (19%)	63 (100%)

A validation procedure was conducted to determine the accuracy of the classification technique. The administrative officers of both pilot schools were asked to group the decisions of these four meetings under the same absolute-discretionary-ministerial classification scheme. Comparisons revealed that agreement was indicated in 98.6%

of the cases considered.

That the superintendent of schools and the president of the board were able to assess correctly the posture of the board of education was established. The board presidents reported that the board looks to the superintendent for guidance in the establishment of policy positions, and each superintendent considered the president of the board to be the person he would contact first for clarification of a policy position. In each instance the president of the board had served longer than two terms (10 years) and had had ample opportunity to observe and to know the reaction of the board to federal assistance in the educational process.

Selection of the Sample

Data from the 1968-69 school year provided by the Oklahoma State Department of Education revealed that 99% of all school systems in Oklahoma can be classified into the three categories listed previously -- small (ADA of 1-2499), medium (ADA of 2500-3999), and above average (ADA of 4000-7999). Since school boards from these classes constitute approximately the entire population of the State, samples selected at random from each of these categories were considered to be representative of boards of education in Oklahoma. However, since the nature of this study was developed on the premise that boards of education which are highly dependent on federal assistance will react differently than those which are less dependent, it was necessary to stratify the sample on the basis of the independent variable, federal assistance. Twenty-four school systems with varying amounts of federal assistance were selected from the eastern half of

Oklahoma to form the sample pool. The twenty-four systems were distributed on a ratio of eight schools to each of the three classes, thus insuring both representativeness in terms of assistance received and size of system involved. Further restrictions were not imposed on the sample since each school board was regarded as a typical representative of its population class.

Preliminary investigation and a review of relative literature revealed that all boards of education are established on the principle of local control with the ability to allocate binding policy within a prescribed boundary. Therefore, the assumption was made that the sample could be reduced further to permit more comprehensive investigation and still remain representative of the greater population of school boards of comparable size. A random sample of nine schools was drawn. This sample consisted of three schools from each of the major classes described. Each school from the same classification was separated by a distance of at least fifty miles in order to control for similarities of locale. After the sample had been specified, letters (Appendix B) requesting permission to interview the superintendent of schools and the president of the board in each of the nine districts were mailed. Subsequent replies indicated a willingness on the part of all systems to participate in the study.

The common denominator among the nine systems was that all schools had had some experience with the use of federal financial assistance. However, significant disparities between the amount and type of federal assistance utilized in the educational processes of the districts were noted. Assistance ranged from a low of \$11.80 per pupil in School C to a high of \$75.78 per pupil in School H. The

total of all federal funds received by the district with the greatest amount of federal support, School H, was almost thirteen times that received by the district with the smallest federal support, School G (Table IV). Three schools -- A, H, I -- together utilized more than twice as much federal assistance as all other schools.

TABLE IV
COMPARISON OF SAMPLE SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF
SIZE AND FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Schools	Total Federal Assistance	Pupils in ADA (Rank)	Ave. Fed. Assistance Per ADA (Rank)
A	\$158,859.80	3896 (3)	\$40.77 (4)
B	72,813.85	1469 (6)	49.57 (3)
C	93,984.40	7975 (1)	11.80 (9)
D	31,470.10	1449 (7)	21.72 (7)
E	74,123.65	2207 (5)	33.59 (5)
F	33,011.41	994 (9)	33.21 (6)
G	24,134.97	1166 (8)	20.70 (8)
H	309,393.05	4083 (2)	75.78 (1)
I	235,137.30	3503 (4)	67.12 (2)

Although three schools -- A, E, H -- received non-restricted federal assistance, School H was the only one provided such assistance in sizeable amounts. On the other hand, all nine schools in the sample

had accepted and utilized highly restricted aid to some extent; but the amount utilized ranged from a high of \$226,558 in School I to a low of \$21,119 in School G (Table V). The inequities between the sample districts in amounts and types of federal assistance were chosen to support the thesis that these districts were excellent examples for testing the propositions and hypotheses of the conceptual framework.

TABLE V
COMPARISON OF SAMPLE SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF TYPES AND
AMOUNTS OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE^{1/}

Schools	Highly Restricted Assistance	Moderately Restricted Assistance	Non- Restricted Assistance	Total Federal Assistance
A	\$125,329.00	\$ 9,946.80	\$ 23,584.00	\$158,859.80
B	69,505.60	3,308.25	---	72,813.85
C	73,413.00	20,571.40	---	93,984.40
D	27,615.00	3,855.10	---	31,470.10
E	59,110.80	5,165.85	9,847.00	74,123.65
F	30,538.61	2,472.80	---	33,011.41
G	21,119.12	3,015.85	---	24,134.97
H	167,459.00	9,185.05	132,749.00	309,393.05
I	226,558.00	8,579.30	---	235,137.30

^{1/}A description of the various types of federal assistance is provided on page 34.

After a comparative study of the amounts and types of federal assistance received by each board of education in the sample was made, a decision was reached to classify boards which received federal assistance of \$40.00 or more per pupil in ADA for the 1968-69 school year as highly dependent systems; those allotted \$22.00-40.00 per pupil were considered as moderately dependent; and minimally dependent systems were regarded as those which received \$21.00 or less per pupil in ADA. Use of this classification scheme permitted the selection of Schools A, B, H, I as highly dependent systems; Schools E, F as moderately dependent; Schools C, D, G as minimally dependent on federal assistance (Table IV).

Data Gathering Procedure

A consistent pattern of data gathering was followed in each specific contact made. Since the authenticity of the research data could be distorted by the technique of the interviewer, precautions were taken to avoid testing invalidity. The first task in each instance was to interview the superintendent of schools and to record his responses to the statements of the Political Stress Scale. The twenty statements on the Scale were read orally to the respondent with no explanation offered after each statement. The interviewer was always present to prevent consultation between the superintendent and any member of his staff. Responses obtained were uncontaminated and in keeping with the research design. Before concluding the interview, the superintendent was asked to furnish certain demographic information about the system and the community served by the system. The General Information Questionnaire was used to record this information.

Following the meeting with the superintendent, the board president was contacted, and the same technique employed for recording his responses on the PSS. Appropriate measures were taken to make certain that the board president was unaware of the responses of the school superintendent. In each case the two interviews were separated in time even though the same interviewing room was used on three occasions.

The final step in the procedure was to examine the minutes of four separate board meetings from the 1968-69 school year. The classification technique developed in the pilot study was employed to codify decisions rendered at these meetings into either an absolute, discretionary, or ministerial category. An analysis of the official board minutes was complicated by inconsistencies and differences in record keeping techniques. However, discrepancies did not confound the classifying of the decisions made even though pertinent details, such as reasons for making the decisions, often were not available.

After the data had been gathered, appropriate statistical treatment was applied in order that inferences and conclusions could be deduced. In every instance, response "a" to any statement on the PSS was allotted a numerical value of 1; response "b" was given a value of 2; and response "c," a value of 3. Since the responses were arranged along a local control to federal partnership agreement continuum, a low score on the twenty statements indicated strong adherence to local control in educational government. High scores showed agreement with using the federal government as an educational partner. Responses both by school units and by type of respondent were averaged to obtain a rough measure of the extent to which the board

accepted federal assistance in the processing of educational demands. Comparisons were made of the responses of the superintendents of schools to those of the board presidents on the separate variables of the PSS through the use of item analysis, and the relationships between responses studied by use of Spearman Rank-Order Correlation.⁹ Since a relatively small sample was used, differences between responses were examined for significance by computing a Mann-Whitney U score¹⁰ for each variable and testing for variations beyond the .05 level of probability. When the response scores were large enough numerically to permit the use of a Chi-Square (χ^2) test,¹¹ this procedure was employed. Decisions rendered by the board were compared by a classification technique. The use of the Sign Test was required in certain instances for interpreting results when a more sophisticated measure was unavailable. All findings and results obtained are reported in the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Both the initial and final forms of the Political Stress Scale are shown in Appendix A.

² The General Information Questionnaire is shown in its complete form in Appendix A.

³ Arthur Kornhauser, "Constructing Questionnaires and Interview Schedules," Research Methods in Social Relations [Part Two: Selected Techniques], eds. Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutch, and Stuart W. Cook (New York, 1956), pp. 424-462.

⁴ W. Lloyd Warner, M. Meeker, and K. Eels, Social Class in America: A Manual of Procedure for the Measurement of Social Status (Chicago, 1949), pp. 140-141.

⁵ Alba E. Edwards, Comparative Occupational Statistics for the United States, 16th Census, 1940 (Washington, 1943).

⁶ Mildred Parten, Surveys, Polls, and Samples: Practical Procedures (New York, 1950), pp. 157-217.

⁷ The Pilot Study version of the Political Stress Scale is shown in its complete form in Appendix A.

⁸ The final version of the Political Stress Scale is shown in its complete form in Appendix A.

⁹ George A. Ferguson, Statistical Analysis in Psychology and Education (New York, 1959), pp. 180-181.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

¹¹ Richard P. Runyon and Audrey Haber, Fundamentals of Behavioral Statistics (Reading, Massachusetts, 1967), pp. 206-211.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCOVERIES

The focus of this study is the impact of stress producing federal influence on the internal structure of local educational government. Its initial assumption is that local boards of education govern their actions by the principle of local control. However, when the board accepts federal assistance, its ability to determine essential purposes and to allocate binding policies is restricted by the specificity of federal regulations. Government by local control is replaced with government by shared control. A cherished and fundamental prerogative is surrendered. Stress on certain boundary points disturbs the essential variables of the political system. Political systems theory supports the proposition that when environmental stress disturbs the policy boundaries of the system it will react defensively in order to maintain its position and assure its survival.

To appraise the effect of federal assistance on the structure of local educational government, this study introduces a set of dichotomous categories for classifying boards of education in respect to the degree of federal assistance they receive. Boards which receive large amounts of federal assistance (above \$40.00 per ADA) to operate their educational programs are highly dependent systems while those which receive small amounts (\$21.00 or less per ADA) are minimally dependent systems. Four diacritical hypotheses guide the empirical

analysis which this research makes. Nine boards of education considered to be representative of the population of boards in the State of Oklahoma are the test sample. This chapter reports findings derived from the study of the sample subjects and relates the applicability of these results to the research hypotheses.

Political Stress Scale

The Political Stress Scale (PSS) reports responses from the authorities of the nine boards of education in terms of ten factors. These factors and the statements relating to them appear in Table VI. Positions held by all board authorities on the ten factors may be seen in Table VII. Perceptions by the superintendent of schools and the president of the board are considered to be representative of the entire board.

By comparative analysis, four boards of education are classified as highly dependent and three as minimally dependent. Between these extremes are two school boards with moderate dependence. Political units identified as highly dependent are Schools A, B, H, I; minimally dependent are Schools C, D, G; and moderately dependent are Schools E, F.

A cursory glance at the total response pattern of each school system reveals that the general pattern is for the more highly dependent systems to show a stronger endorsement of federal participation in local educational endeavor while systems having minimal dependence display only mild endorsement of federal support. However, a contradiction to the pattern is apparent in two instances. School H, the most highly dependent system in the sample with \$75.78 per ADA, is

also the most reserved in its response to federal assistance. A

TABLE VI
TEN CONTENT FACTORS IN POLITICAL STRESS SCALE

Content Factors	PSS Related Statements ^{1/}
Purpose determination	
a. Ideal	1
b. Real	2
Willingness to initiate federal programs	3, 9
Impact on educational output	4, 12
Program control	5, 20
Environmental pressure	6, 7
Dependency on administrative staff	8, 10
Effect on planning	11, 13
Evaluation requirements	
a. Ideal	14
b. Real	15
Restrictions on decisions	16, 17
Community attitude	18, 19

^{1/} Statements are shown in their complete form in Appendix A.

similar disparity in the pattern is that of School D, which is minimally dependent. The total response of School D indicates high endorsement of federal assistance; yet the total response score does not mirror the true reaction of this system. A more precise look at

TABLE VII
POLITICAL STRESS SCALE COMPENDIUM

Statements ^{1/} Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Total of Each Respondent by School (Mean)		Total Response								
																					S	BP									
A	III	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	3	46(2.30)	37(1.85)	83			
B	II	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	41(2.05)	53(2.65)	94		
C	III	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	39(1.95)	42(2.10)	81		
D	I	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	41(2.05)	44(2.20)	85		
E	II	1	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	44(2.20)	42(2.10)	86		
F	I	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	43(2.15)	47(2.35)	90		
G	I	2	1	2	2	1	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	3	36(1.80)	44(2.20)	80			
H	III	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	3	40(2.00)	34(1.70)	74		
I	II	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	38(1.90)	45(2.25)	83		
Total of Each Respondent by Statement (Mean)		15(1.87)	11(1.22)	17(1.85)	16(2.00)	21(2.33)	20(2.22)	18(2.00)	20(2.22)	14(1.56)	14(1.56)	18(2.00)	19(2.11)	17(1.89)	23(2.56)	22(2.44)	23(2.56)	16(1.76)	18(2.00)	19(2.11)	17(1.89)	17(1.89)	21(2.33)	21(2.33)	19(2.11)	19(2.11)	17(1.89)	24(2.67)	368(2.04)	388(2.16)	756

^{1/} PSS statements are shown in their complete form in Appendix A.

"S" represents response of superintendent of schools.

"BP" represents response of board president.

the system's responses reveals a reluctance to pledge full approval of federal assistance since in only six instances did either of the respondents choose the third alternative on the PSS as an acceptable descriptor of the board's position. By this measure, School D displays the lowest full endorsement of federal assistance in the sample. The variance of Schools H and D from the normal pattern of responses will be discussed in Chapter IV.

That board of education authorities maintain a fundamental commitment to the principle of local control is substantiated by the research findings (Table VIII). Two pairs of statements on the PSS are considered indices of the board's adherence to local control. These statements relate to the factors of purpose determination and program evaluation, which are viewed as the "sine qua non" of educational government. As long as a local political system can determine educational purpose and assess the extent to which that purpose is served, it can maintain control over the system's outputs. These two factors are measured by isolating them in terms of an ideal and a real description. PSS statement 1 reveals the attitudinal set of the board regarding who should determine the purposes federal assistance is to serve (the ideal). PSS statement 2 considers the board's perception of which political agency is making this determination at present (the real). Assessment of the board's belief concerning what type of program evaluation is most desirable (the ideal) is made by PSS statement 14. Its reaction to evaluations which are dictated by the federal government (the real) is appraised by PSS statement 15.

TABLE VIII

COMPARISON OF SAMPLE SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF BOARDS' POSITION
TOWARD LOCAL AND FEDERAL DETERMINATION AND EVALUATION

Schools	Predilection of Board Toward Local Determination and Evaluation ^{1/}		Predilection of Board Toward Federal Determination and Evaluation ^{2/}	
		(Rank)		(Rank)
A	3.0	(4.5)	4.5	(15.0)
B	4.0	(11.0)	5.0	(17.5)
C	3.5	(7.0)	3.5	(7.0)
D	4.0	(11.0)	4.0	(11.0)
E	2.5	(1.5)	4.5	(15.0)
F	4.0	(11.0)	5.0	(17.5)
G	3.5	(7.0)	4.0	(11.0)
H	2.5	(1.5)	2.5	(3.0)
I	3.0	(4.5)	4.5	(15.0)
Mann-Whitney U = 67			P < .01	

^{1/} Figures represent the mean responses out of a possible 6 points to PSS statements 1 and 14 (Table VII).

^{2/} Figures represent the mean responses out of a possible 6 points to PSS statements 2 and 15 (Table VII).

A comparison of the mean score for each school system on the two ideal measures to those shown on the real is regarded as a valid indicator of the board's predilection toward federal control of purpose determination and program evaluation. As an example, the total respondent score of School A for statement 1 is 3; its score for statement 14 is also 3. Thus, a mean score of 3 is obtained on the two variables.

Similarly, a mean score of 4.5 is reported for School A on statements 2 and 15. Mean scores for all nine systems on these two variables are calculated in this manner and used as a comparative base to analyse differences between the board's predilection toward local control and federal control. The Mann-Whitney U test reveals significant differences exist at the .01 level of confidence. Although boards of education are distinctly local in their political orientation, they recognize that the federal government assumes an important place in determining the purpose and evaluating the success of programs supported by federal financial assistance.

The acceptance of federal financial assistance requires a local board to reassess its traditional governmental philosophy. By the admission of the board authorities, federal assistance restricts the ability of the board to determine educational policy, and boards which use federal assistance must sacrifice some degree of local control. As a board accepts greater amounts of federal support, it increases its dependence on the federal government. The consequences of such dependence may be discovered by examining the four research hypotheses of this study.

Hypothesis #1

Easton contends that when political systems are unable to process the demands of the society according to their essential governmental philosophy the systems will experience stress on their policy boundaries. Consistent with Easton's premise, this study hypothesizes that:

Boards of education which are highly dependent on federal assistance in the processing of educational demands will experience more boundary stress than will those which are less dependent.

Four statements on the PSS serve as reliable measures of boundary stress on the local political system. These are statements 2, 6, 7 and 13. It is reasoned that if system authorities are unable to determine the purposes federal assistance shall serve, or are pressured by their constituency to continue serving such purposes after federal assistance is withdrawn, or admit that the use of federal assistance requires much more extensive planning than normally demanded, boards of education which utilize federal assistance do so at a sacrifice to their governmental prerogative. The use of federal assistance under such conditions implies that the board is enacting governmental policy under stress. Since stress is defined as the extent to which a board is forced to depart from the principle of local control in the processing of educational demands, those boards scoring high on these factors are considered to be operating under high political stress.

Although the differences in reported stress between highly dependent and minimally dependent systems are not significant at the .05 level of confidence when measured by the Mann-Whitney U test, there is a distinctly positive relationship between the degree of dependency and stress. The results of the Sign Test demonstrate that highly dependent systems recognize the influence of the federal government in the determination of program purpose, feel pressure to continue operating programs now assisted by federal support, and support the continuation of all programs now assisted to a greater extent than do minimally dependent systems. On the fourth measure (statement 13), the negative sign indicates that the highly dependent systems are under greater pressure to devote larger segments of time to planning programs supported by federal assistance than they allocate to

comparable programs financed by local resources. Minimally dependent systems need to do little planning before accepting federal assistance, while highly dependent boards must do major planning. Therefore, what at first appears as a contradiction of the hypothesis is in reality a point of agreement. The results reported are obtained from a comparison of the responses of Schools A, B, H, I to those of C, D, G (Table IX). A study of the PSS Compendium (Table VII) shows that the mean score of the four highly dependent schools on statement 2 is 3.75; whereas, the mean score of the minimally dependent schools is 3.66. Should all respondents in each type of system select response "c" for statement 2, the mean score would be 6.00. Mean scores for each type of system are determined in the same manner for statements 6, 7 and 13.

TABLE IX
COMPARISON OF HIGHLY AND MINIMALLY DEPENDENT
SYSTEMS IN TERMS OF BOUNDARY STRESS

PSS Statements	Highly Dependent Systems ^{1/} (Rank)	Minimally Dependent Systems ^{2/} (Rank)	Sign Test
2	3.75 (4.0)	3.66 (3.0)	+
6	5.00 (7.0)	3.33 (2.0)	+
7	4.50 (5.5)	3.25 (1.0)	+
13	4.50 (5.5)	5.33 (8.0)	-*
Mann-Whitney U = 4		.10 < P < .20	

^{1/} Figures represent the mean response out of a possible 6 points for Schools A, B, H, I (Table VII).

^{2/} Figures represent the mean response out of a possible 6 points for Schools C, D, G (Table VII).

* The nature of the responses to statement 13 shows that the highly dependent system takes longer to plan for the use of federal assistance. A positive (+) sign would indicate that planning is in keeping with that normally required for other programs.

The most pronounced difference between the two classes of systems under consideration is revealed in their responses to statements about environmental pressure. Highly dependent boards indicate they would be strongly pressured to keep existing programs in operation should federal assistance be withdrawn. They likewise state that they would continue almost all programs if local or other funding permitted. Minimally dependent systems report only moderate pressure to continue federally financed programs and declare that they would need to re-evaluate these programs before continuing without federal support.

The findings reporting a clear correlation between dependency and stress on the board afford tentative support for hypothesis #1. Federal assistance places great pressure on the system to continue existing programs with or without the support of federal aid, forces boards which are highly dependent to do extensive planning before utilizing federal resources. Boards which become highly dependent on federal assistance recognize that they surrender a certain amount of local control prerogative in the enactment of policy outputs.

Hypothesis #2

A second hypothetical comparison is offered between high dependency on federal assistance and minimal dependency. It states:

Boards of education which are highly dependent on federal assistance will demonstrate a greater dependency on their administrative staff than will those which are less dependent.

Political systems under stress will rise to the defense of their boundaries. Boards of education will act to regain lost policy prerogative or to reduce the pressure on their existent governmental principle. Such an assertion implies that boards of education can reject federal assistance completely. However, when resources are limited, rejection is not feasible. Without resources the board will be unable to process environmental demands into acceptable outputs and, thus, will experience a buildup of demand pressure. A second and more credible reaction would be the board's establishing new structures or new relationships in order to defend its position. The hypothesis predicts that one of these structural changes will be an increased dependency on the administrative staff.

Two items on the PSS are considered to be valid measures of hypothesis #2. These are statements 8 and 10. Statement 8 asks whether or not the board perceives itself to be more dependent on the professional school staff in federal than in non-federal programming. Statement 10 seeks to discover who has wielded the most influence to obtain federal assistance, the board or the administrative staff. Responses to these statements reveal that board authorities believe federal assistance forces the board to become more dependent on the administrative staff (Table X). The Sign Test indicates a correlation (+) between the degree of dependency on federal assistance and the degree of dependency on the administrative staff. Nevertheless, the relationship is not firmly substantiated since boards in highly dependent systems show only slightly more dependence on their administrative staff than do those in less dependent systems. Mean scores calculated from the responses of the system respondents to statements 8 and 10 reveal the extent to which the highly and minimally dependent systems approach a possible mean score of 6.00, which is indicative of strong dependence on the administrative staff.

TABLE X
COMPARISON OF HIGHLY AND MINIMALLY DEPENDENT SYSTEMS
IN TERMS OF DEPENDENCY ON ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

PSS Statements	Highly Dependent Systems ^{1/} (Rank)	Minimally Dependent Systems ^{2/} (Rank)	Sign Test
8	4.50 (4.0)	4.00 (1.5)	+
10	4.25 (3.0)	4.00 (1.5)	+
Mann-Whitney U = 4 (Case number too few for significance)			

^{1/} Figures represent the mean response out of a possible 6 points for Schools A, B, H, I (Table VII).

^{2/} Figures represent the mean response out of a possible 6 points for Schools C, D, G (Table VII).

While the data fail to show any substantial difference between the degree of administrative dependency present in highly and minimally dependent systems as a result of federal assistance, they do reveal that federal assistance increases the dependency of the board on the administrative staff perceptibly. Responses from all board presidents concerning statement 8 show that seven out of nine believe federal assistance increases the dependency of the board on the administrative staff. Further support for this proposition is discovered by noting that of the eighteen separate responses received to statement 8, thirteen indicate a greater dependency on the administrative staff in working with federally assisted programs. This is a ratio of 2.6:1. In answer to statement 10, fifteen respondents admit that the superintendent and his staff are totally responsible for obtaining federal

assistance for the school district, a ratio of 5:1 (Table VII). Federal assistance brings the administrative staff to the forefront in policy making.

Statement 9 on the PSS gives consideration to discovering the principal determinant of the board's willingness to develop programs utilizing federal assistance. Consistent with the pattern revealed earlier, boards which are highly dependent on the federal government for help report that their confidence in their administrators ranks as the primary determinant; whereas, minimally dependent boards put the freedom of the board uppermost. Greater dependency focuses more attention on the administrative staff. Less dependency enhances the importance of the board.

Hypothesis #3

The political system of local educational government may reduce boundary stress by agreeing to give up some of its former independence. Thus, it narrows its boundary. Paradoxically, the system may reduce stress and still increase its chances of persisting by altering its political dominance. Such alterations take the form of coalitions or direct consignment of certain demands to another political unit. This is true when boards are willing to establish separate arrangements for vocational or special education programs. The belief that the board will be less able to maintain its former policy boundaries as federal assistance increases leads to the following hypothesis:

Boards of education which are highly dependent on federal assistance will demonstrate a greater inclination to share policy determining prerogatives than will those which are less dependent.

Three PSS items chosen to measure the correctness of this hypothesis are statement 15 (willingness of the board to accept national assessments), statement 16 (sharing of planning and program determination), and statement 17 (desirability of overarching boards to regulate federal educational activity). Findings relative to these three statements are reported in Table XI. Again, mean scores for all respondents out of a possible 6.00 are shown as indicators of the highly dependent and minimally dependent systems' positions.

TABLE XI
COMPARISON OF HIGHLY AND MINIMALLY DEPENDENT SYSTEMS
IN TERMS OF A WILLINGNESS TO SHARE PLANNING

PSS Statements	Highly Dependent Systems ^{1/} (Rank)	Minimally Dependent Systems ^{2/} (Rank)	Sign Test
15	4.50 (6.0)	4.00 (3.5)	+
16	4.25 (5.0)	4.00 (3.5)	+
17	3.25 (1.0)	3.66 (2.0)	-
Mann-Whitney U = 3		P > .05	

^{1/} Figures represent the mean response out of a possible 6 points for Schools A, B, H, I (Table VII).

^{2/} Figures represent the mean response out of a possible 6 points for Schools C, D, G (Table VII).

The most relevant measure of the board's inclination to share policy controls with another political unit is statement 15. By

accepting outside assessments and program evaluation, the local educational system furnishes the federal government the leverage to compel the system to make certain program changes in order to improve its rating on the evaluation. As the data specify, systems which are highly dependent are more willing to accept national assessments than are the minimally dependent systems. Significantly, 38% of the respondents from the highly dependent schools state that they would accept federal assessment readily compared to only 17% from minimally dependent systems.

Responses to statement 16 indicate that the board is willing to share planning and purpose determination if it retains final decision-making power. However, in this regard the minimally dependent systems are essentially in total agreement with the more dependent ones. The average difference is inconsequential (.25). The same may be said for the responses of these two classes of boards to statement 17. Highly dependent system authorities are even more reluctant than minimally dependent ones to share their prerogative with overarching boards of control. Findings suggest that programs over which the board exercises only partial jurisdiction are not as desirable as those over which they have full control.

Item analysis reveals that board presidents are more amenable to the sharing of planning and purpose assessment than are superintendents of schools (Table VII). When the responses to statements 15, 16 and 17 are analyzed according to respondents instead of degree of financial dependency, the findings reveal that board presidents are more favorable than superintendents toward accepting national assessments as a condition for continued federal assistance, are

slightly more disposed to permit policy advisory groups to join the board in decision making, and are equally as willing as superintendents to combine with other boards in cooperative federally supported activities. This disparity between the dispositions of the board authorities is even more apparent in the responses to statement 20 (program restrictions). Six of nine board presidents interviewed do not feel that controls on federally assisted programs are out of line with controls over other programs. A comparison of responses by board presidents to school superintendents on these four items is made in Table XII by presenting combined total scores for each type of respondent.

The data considered do not support hypothesis #3 directly since the degree of federal financial assistance is not related to the inclination of the board to share its policy-determining prerogative. Results do demonstrate, however, that board presidents are willing to share their policy-determining prerogative, if required, and that they see less difference between locally imposed accounting controls and federally imposed controls at present than do the school superintendents.

TABLE XII

COMPARISON OF RESPONSES OF BOARD AUTHORITIES IN TERMS OF
RESTRICTIONS ON FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

PSS Statements	15	16	17	20	
<u>Respondents</u> ^{1/}					<u>Totals</u> ^{2/}
Board Presidents	21	19	17	24	81
Superintendents	19	18	17	17	71
Totals	40	37	34	41	152

^{1/} Figures represent total response of board presidents and superintendents in sample schools (Table VII).

^{2/} A Chi-Square test reveals that the difference is not significant.

Hypothesis #4

The fourth hypothesis of this study relates closely to the preceding hypothesis. However, the direction of hypothesis #4 is inverse to that of #3. Hypothesis #3 proposes that highly dependent boards will show a positive relationship toward sharing their policy-making prerogative. Contrariwise, hypothesis #4 suggests that highly dependent boards will act negatively toward publicizing their dependency on federal support to their constituency. The specific statement of this hypothesis is as follows:

Boards of education which are highly dependent on federal assistance will display a greater reluctance toward organizing societal acceptance of federal support than will those which are less dependent.

This hypothesis rests on the rationale that the board will resist efforts to reduce its standing in the society. The board which attempts to convince the community of the efficacy of federal assistance does so at a cost to its own local status. Logically, the greater the cost to be paid, the less willing the board will be to praise federal assistance.

Easton contends that the ability of the system authorities to resist stress will be related directly to its ability to command diffuse support from the society. In so stating, he proposes that political systems will seek to maintain sufficient standing with their publics to win support for their position.¹ Translated into the concepts of relevant research, this belief means the board will not want to disagree with the school community if it displays a dislike for federal assistance. To do so reduces the board's ability to call forth diffuse support when it is needed.

Four analytic statements in the PSS attempt to determine the impact of federal assistance on a system's willingness to organize community acceptance of such assistance. The first of these (statement 11) is a measure of the importance of federal assistance in the system's planning; the second (statement 12), an indicator of its importance on recent program changes. The third (statement 18) depicts how the authorities will react if the general society of the system dislikes federal assistance, and the fourth (statement 19) gives some description of present efforts by the board to develop a community attitude favorable to federal assistance.

Findings pertaining to hypothesis #4 are consistent even though they are not conclusive. Authorities of highly dependent systems

regard federal assistance of major importance if goals are to be reached immediately; but they demonstrate only slightly more hesitancy about organizing community support for federal assistance than do their counterparts, the minimally dependent system authorities. The most striking difference noted is that no president of a minimally dependent board shows a willingness to respond to a general public dislike for federal assistance by rejecting such assistance. In contrast, two of the four presidents of highly dependent boards say they would do nothing to change the attitude of the community should it oppose federal support (Table VII). A comparative study of responses from highly and minimally dependent authorities is shown in Table XIII. Mean scores derived from the data shown in Table VII are used to compare the systems on the four factors described. In calculating a mean, the respondent scores of highly dependent Schools A, B, H, I are combined to reveal the total score of 19 for statement 12. The computed mean is 4.75. The mean score for minimally dependent Schools C, D, G is obtained by the same process.

One finding which gives additional support to the hypothesis is that when board authorities in either class perceive themselves to be dependent on federal assistance for attaining long range objectives they show a negative tendency to organize public support for federal assistance. A belief that federal assistance has had a more significant impact on recent program changes than new local resources have (statement 12) represent 56% of the responses received. However, when asked if they would organize efforts to oppose unfavorable community attitudes toward federal aid, only 44% of the board authorities reply affirmatively. When questioned about the importance of federal

assistance in long range planning (statement 11), 33% of the respondents report federal assistance to be of utmost importance; but only 17% are presently directing the community attitude toward a highly favorable endorsement of federal assistance. Evidently, board authorities are aware of a greater dependency on federal assistance than they are willing to admit to their publics.

TABLE XIII

COMPARISON OF HIGHLY AND MINIMALLY DEPENDENT SYSTEMS
IN TERMS OF EFFORTS TO BUILD FAVORABLE PUBLIC
ATTITUDES TOWARD FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

PSS Statements	Highly Dependent Systems ^{1/} (Rank)	Minimally Dependent Systems ^{2/} (Rank)	Sign Test
11	4.75 (6.5)	4.33 (3.0)	+
12	4.75 (6.5)	5.00 (7.0)	-
18	4.25 (1.5)	4.33 (3.0)	-
19	4.25 (1.5)	4.33 (3.0)	-
Mann-Whitney U = 10		P > .05	

^{1/} Figures represent the mean response out of a possible 6 points for Schools A, B, H, I (Table VII).

^{2/} Figures represent the mean response out of a possible 6 points for Schools C, D, G (Table VII).

A similar finding shows that while board presidents differ significantly from the superintendents in their evaluation of the board's dependency on federal assistance they demonstrate only slight differences in a willingness to organize a program for counteracting a community dislike of federal assistance. No measurable difference is observed in their present attempts to secure a highly favorable response to federal assistance from the community (Table XIV). These comparisons are obtained by calculating the number of times one type of respondent presents a stronger response to statements 11, 12, 18 and 19 than does the other. For example, six board presidents give higher responses to statement 11 than do their system's superintendent. Two give equal responses and one superintendent responds with a stronger reaction.

TABLE XIV

COMPARISON OF RESPONSES OF BOARD AUTHORITIES IN TERMS OF
SYSTEM DEPENDENCY AND A WILLINGNESS TO ORGANIZE
COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

PSS Statements	11	12	18	19
<u>Respondents</u>		<u>Assessment Comparisons^{1/}</u>		
Board Presidents	6	3	3	2
Superintendents	1	1	2	2

^{1/} Scores indicate number of times one respondent gives a higher rating to statements listed than does his counterposition.

Other Relevant Findings

This research considers comparisons between the positions of highly dependent boards and minimally dependent boards on three other variables. These are (1) the reluctance of the board to accept federal assistance, (2) the impact of federal assistance on local educational programs, and (3) congruency between actual use and desired use of federal funds. Although these factors have no direct relation to the four hypotheses tested, they are important in determining the total effect of federal assistance on the local educational system.

In general, the more highly dependent boards display a greater willingness to take all federal assistance available; whereas, the minimally dependent boards will accept federal assistance if previous experiences have been pleasant. A correlation of .39 between dependency and willingness to accept federal assistance is found through use of the Spearman Rank-Order Correlation. The data pertaining to the comparison may be found by studying responses to PSS statement 3 in Table VII.

Federal assistance is not causing an imbalance in the educational outputs of the system according to the respondents interviewed. While there is a difference between the responses of highly dependent and minimally dependent board authorities in regard to the impact of federal assistance, this difference supports the contention that federal assistance is helping to bring more balance into the local educational program. Minimally dependent boards believe federal assistance improves the total educational program by permitting the board to furnish more aid to general educational endeavors. The

fact that minimally dependent systems do not apply large appropriations to any particular instructional area may explain why they see no significant improvement in any definite educational direction. Highly dependent systems see federal assistance as bringing neglected programs up to a balanced status with other programs. The responses to PSS statement 4 show that only one highly dependent system believes federal assistance over-emphasizes certain programs. No minimally dependent boards view federal assistance in this manner.

PSS statement 5 probes the reaction of the board to actual use of federal assistance in comparison to desired use. With the exception of one board, all respondents indicate they would use federal assistance with only a slightly different emphasis if they were free to employ it as they might desire. By relating these findings to those concerning the impact of federal assistance on the educational program (PSS statement 4), it is evident that board authorities believe federal assistance is producing favorable results in the educational programming of both highly and minimally dependent systems.

Although this study is directed toward an analysis of differences between highly and minimally dependent political units in order to discover the impact of stress on their internal structure, it is instructional to consider responses from moderately dependent systems, Schools E and F (federal aid of \$21.00-40.00 per pupil in ADA). School E is an average sized system (Class II), while School F is the smallest school in the sample (Class I). Still, the total response pattern of School F is the second highest, indicating a strong endorsement of federal assistance. School E has the third highest total response

score.

The data shown in Table VII indicate moderately dependent systems are under greater political stress from federal influence than either of the other two types of systems considered. Boards recognize strong societal pressure to continue programs presently supported by federal assistance and report a willingness to do so, if possible, should federal assistance be withdrawn. These boards rely more heavily on their administrative staff for obtaining, developing, and operating programs of federal assistance than do either highly dependent or minimally dependent boards. On the variable of political sharing, they show less hesitancy toward accepting federal assessments or joining with other boards in establishing overarching boards for cooperative endeavors. Likewise, they are more willing to organize a favorable community attitude toward federal assistance, even though they presently appear to be doing less than either highly dependent or minimally dependent systems in this regard. Moderately dependent systems regard federal assistance of no more importance than minimally dependent ones; yet such assistance is having as profound an impact on educational programming in these systems as in the highly dependent. That the moderately dependent system is a unique type with characteristics unlike other systems is substantiated by the findings (Table XV). The data presented are mean scores of the responses from superintendents and board presidents in Schools E and F. The same statements are used to establish the position of the moderately dependent system relative to the four research hypotheses which were used earlier in determining the stance of the highly dependent and the minimally dependent systems toward federal assistance.

TABLE XV
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES OF EACH TYPE OF SYSTEM
IN TERMS OF THE FOUR RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Type of System	Highly Dependent System	Moderately Dependent System	Minimally Dependent System
<u>Hypotheses</u>			
Boundary Stress ^{1/}	4.44	4.88	3.89
Dependency on Administration ^{2/}	4.38	4.50	4.00
Willingness to Share Planning ^{3/}	4.00	5.00	3.89
Willingness to Organ. Support ^{4/}	4.25	5.00	4.33

^{1/} Figures represent the mean responses out of a possible 6 points to PSS statements 2, 6, 7, 13 (Table VII).

^{2/} Figures represent the mean responses out of a possible 6 points to PSS statements 8 and 10 (Table VII).

^{3/} Figures represent the mean responses out of a possible 6 points to PSS statements 15, 16, 17 (Table VII).

^{4/} Figures represent the mean responses out of a possible 6 points to PSS statements 11, 12, 18, 19 (Table VII).

In addition to the political factors reviewed, this research uses the General Information Questionnaire (GIQ) to obtain base line data on specific demographic factors. Analysis of all GIQ findings (Table XVI) fails to disclose any significant intervening variables which might affect the results of the PSS. However, one relationship deserves special mention. A distinct correlation between long

TABLE XVI

COMPARISON OF SAMPLE SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF COMMUNITY AND BOARD COMPOSITION

GIQ Demographic Factors ^{1/}	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F	School G	School H	School I
Educ. Level of Community	High School	High School	Above High Sch.	High School	High School	High School	High School	High School	High School
Occup. Level of Community	Skilled Labor	Skilled Labor	Prof.	Skilled Labor	Skilled Labor	Skilled Labor	Farmer or Proprietor	Skilled Labor	Skilled Labor
Ave. Income Level of Community	\$3000 to \$4999	\$3000 to \$4999	\$5000 to \$8499	\$5000 to \$8499	\$5000 to \$8499	\$5000 to \$8499	\$3000 to \$4999	\$5000 to \$8499	\$3000 to \$4999
Dominant Type of Community Bus.	Retail Stores	Retail Stores	Clerical or Acct.	Retail Stores	Large Manuf.	Retail Stores	Farms or Shops	Large Manuf.	Warehouse or Processing
Growth of Community	Steady	Steady	Stable	Stable	Steady	Decline	Stable	Steady	Stable
Educ. Level of Bd. Members	Above High Sch.	Above High Sch.	College Degree	Above High Sch.	College Degree	College Degree	College Degree	College Degree	Above High Sch.
Dominant Occup. of Bd. Members	Manage. or Proprietor	Manage. or Proprietor	Prof. or Executive	Skilled Labor	Prof. or Executive	Prof. or Executive	Farmer or Proprietor	Prof. or Executive	Prof. or Executive
Ave. Tenure of Bd. Members	1 Term	1 Term	1 Term	2 Terms	1 Term	2 Terms	3 Terms	4 Terms	1 Term
Ave. Tenure of School Supt.	1-5 Yrs.	11-15 Yrs.	6-10 Yrs.	11-15 Yrs.	1-5 Yrs.	1-5 Yrs.	16+ Yrs.	16+ Yrs.	1-5 Yrs.

^{1/}GIQ demographic factors are shown in their complete form in Appendix A.

board-superintendent tenure and a high degree of conservatism can be seen. School H, whose board authorities have the longest tenure of any school studied, is the most conservative; and School G, whose board authorities have held their positions only a slightly shorter time, are next in line in regard to conservatism. The third ranking system in terms of board-superintendent tenure is D. While the total response pattern of the school is somewhat above the norm, this is due to the tendency of the authorities to choose the middle position response to most statements. As reported earlier, School D is the most conservative in terms of a full endorsement of the federal partnership in educational endeavor.

The third research technique employed in this investigation, that of document analysis, exposes no observable relationship between federal assistance and the types of decisions the board of education makes. Table XVII reveals that most decisions made are discretionary in character, but the number of ministerial decisions do not increase as boards become more highly dependent on federal assistance. Although a correlational analysis of the degree of dependency to that of ministerial decisions indicates a coefficient of .27 on the Spearman Rank-Order Correlation test, this low correlation reveals little about the relationship stated. An in-depth comparison of these two critical variables reveals flagrant inconsistencies in the proportion of ministerial decisions rendered by highly dependent systems, ranging from a low of 9% to a high of 24%. The greatest number of ministerial decisions is recorded by School G, a minimally dependent system.

TABLE XVII
 COMPARISON OF SAMPLE SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF DECISIONS
 RENDERED BY THE BOARD AT FOUR DISTINCT MEETINGS

School	Absolute	Discretionary	Ministerial	Total
A	17 (35%)	27 (56%)	4 (9%)	48 (100%)
B	11 (29%)	23 (61%)	4 (10%)	38 (100%)
C	21 (27%)	52 (68%)	4 (5%)	77 (100%)
D	8 (24%)	23 (70%)	2 (6%)	33 (100%)
E	12 (18%)	46 (69%)	9 (13%)	67 (100%)
F	20 (42%)	23 (48%)	5 (10%)	48 (100%)
G	6 (18%)	15 (44%)	13 (38%)	34 (100%)
H	6 (24%)	13 (52%)	6 (24%)	25 (100%)
I	15 (43%)	16 (46%)	4 (11%)	35 (100%)
Total	116 (29%)	238 (59%)	51 (12%)	405 (100%)

Summary of Chapter

The results of this study provide support for three of the four diacritical hypotheses advanced for investigation. Boards of education believe in the principle of local control and establish a policy boundary consistent with this principle. As federal assistance increases, the board experiences pressure to continue programs assisted and discovers federal policy replacing local policy in such areas. Displacement of locally determined by federally determined policy produces stress on the policy boundaries of the political system.

Local boards find it impossible to govern their outputs by the principle of local control in areas where federal assistance is involved. Boards which are highly dependent show a greater amount of boundary stress than do boards which are minimally dependent as hypothesis #1 contends. Although moderately dependent boards report greater boundary stress than highly dependent ones, they appear to fall into a special class. By their very strong endorsement of federal assistance, they indicate a willingness to surrender even more policy prerogative than do those who receive greater amounts of federal assistance.

Recognition of boundary stress causes the board to develop structural machinery to increase the probability of its persistence. The most obvious of these structural adjustments is an increase in the dependency of the system on the administrative staff. Hypothesis #2, which makes this prediction, is supported by all recorded data.

It is believed also that boundary stress will cause system authorities to want to share decision-making power and, thus, redirect stress to other coping mechanisms. The findings do not substantiate hypotheses #3, since there is no definite indication of a relationship between the degree of the board's dependency on federal assistance and its willingness to share with either advisory committees or superordinate boards its planning and purpose determining prerogatives.

Finally, the board authorities show a reluctance to organize community support for federal assistance if they perceive the system to be highly dependent on such aid. By so doing, they lower the board's standing in the esteem of society. Even though differences are noticed in the evaluations of the superintendents and the board

presidents regarding the importance and impact of federal assistance in educational planning and programming, they reveal an equal hesitancy about announcing the board's need for federal assistance to the public. While these findings do not offer complete substantiation of hypothesis #4, they do support the contention that school boards are reluctant to publicize high dependency on federal assistance.

Demographic studies indicate a tentative relationship between tenure and board conservatism with superintendents and boards of long tenure showing more reluctance to endorse federal assistance enthusiastically. In general, however, the reaction of the board can be predicted more reliably from a study of stress on the system boundaries than from any other reported variable.

The meaning of these results and the conclusions they justify are the subjects of Chapter IV.

FOOTNOTES

¹David Easton, A Systems Analysis of Political Life (New York, 1965), pp. 311-340.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The fundamental objective of this investigation is to demonstrate that the constructs and propositions of political science theory have applicability to and can provide explanation for the political dimensions of educational government. More specifically, its aim is to discover the extent to which the political systems theory of David Easton is useful for the development of hypotheses relating the behavior of the local governing unit of education, the school board, to that of other governmental systems. In order to test the appropriateness of Easton's theory, the examination of a relevant problem is required. The problem under consideration is as follows: Does federal financial assistance in local educational endeavor result in structural changes in the character of local educational government? The problem statement directs the primary focus of consideration to an analysis of the internal or within-system changes produced by federal assistance. While it may be presupposed that stress on the policy boundaries of the board affects its outputs, this area of investigation goes beyond the scope of the study. Although some general inquiry is made into whether or not federal assistance causes curricular imbalance or is more important than new local resources as a change producing agent, these relationships are of secondary import. The responsive and reactive system is the central component of this examination.

Certain major premises underlie the analysis of the problem described. There is first the belief that policy constraints attached to the use of federal assistance conflict with the basic governmental principle of the board of education and that these constraints produce stress on the policy prerogative of the board. Stress is considered as the extent to which the board is forced to depart from the principle of local control in the processing of educational demands. Since the board of education, like any other governmental system, desires to persist, it must alter its existing structural arrangements in order to reduce the stress on its boundary and to reestablish its essential governmental philosophy. These structural changes may take the form of increased dependency on the administrative staff, shared decision-making procedures, or cooperative superordinate arrangements with other boards. The proposal of new structures suggests that the board needs to develop different institutional supports toward which it can direct the distressing effects of incongruent governmental influences threatening its ability to enact binding imperatives to its society. Since, however, the implementation of new governmental structures indicates to the public a loss of previous position, the board is not likely to publicize the importance of federal assistance in its educational process. This is especially true if the board is strongly committed to the principle of local control. Each of these premises is tested with a diagnostic hypothesis and investigated by the technique of empirical research.

The most important research procedure employed was the interview technique. Responses elicited from board authorities measured the impact of federal support on ten vital areas of educational life. The

instrumentation of this technique took the form of twenty sequentially scaled items entitled the Political Stress Scale (PSS). The wording of each statement in the PSS was the result of a pilot study during which questions pertinent to the ten vital areas were presented to the authorities of two separate boards of education. Their responses to these questions were recorded and arranged along a local control to a federal partnership agreement continuum. A panel of five experts in educational administration agreed that the responses had been appropriately designed and so arranged as to reveal the orientation of any board from a position of strong adherence to local control in educational government to one of strong endorsement for a federal partnership plan. The reaction of the board to federal influence on its political operations was determined both in the pilot study and in subsequent research from the perceptions of the superintendent of schools and the president of the board. Since these two respondents are the principal interpreters of board policy, their reactions were considered to be reliable indicators of the policy stance of the entire board. The effect of federal influence on the decision-making process of the board was studied by analyzing the type of decisions made by boards with differing amounts of federal support. The minutes of the nine sample school boards were examined and the actions taken were classified. The importance of various demographic variables to the makeup of local educational government was considered through the use of a General Information Questionnaire (GIQ). The results obtained from the application of these techniques are reported in Chapter III. The remaining task of this research is to evaluate these results and to determine if they provide any significant insight into the problem

under study.

That the school board authorities are committed to the principle of local control in education is clear. The results reveal a significant difference between the responses of the board to areas of purpose determination and program evaluation when the board is permitted to express its ideal or philosophical position than when it announces its real or operational position. Local control governs the policy outputs from the system to the society it serves.

When the local system accepts federal assistance, the policy boundary comes under stress. No longer can the board authorities allocate outputs by the prerogative of local determination. They must share policy enactments. That the board is aware of the displacement of local control by federal direction when it accepts the assistance of the federal government in the processing of educational demands may be discovered by examining the differences between responses to PSS statements 1 and 2. A comparison of the mean scores of the nine school boards for each of these two measures reveals a significant difference at the .05 level of confidence. Further examination using a combination of factors shows that as federal assistance increases the local system feels strongly pressured to continue operating programs underwritten by federal support. Thus, not only is the board forced to narrow its policy boundary when it accepts federal assistance, but also it is prevented by its constituency from regaining lost boundary positions. The findings reported previously reveal that as a board becomes highly dependent on federal assistance it experiences greater boundary stress than one which is minimally dependent. Therefore, boards which accept large sums of highly restricted federal aid do so

at a considerable price to their governmental principle and prerogative.

Moderately dependent systems report even greater boundary stress due to federal assistance than do highly dependent systems. A comprehensive analysis of the responses indicates that as a group moderately dependent systems are the most favorably disposed toward federal support. The pattern of the responses shows that the authorities in such systems are not reluctant to sacrifice policy boundaries to the federal government. These boards state they are willing to take all assistance available regardless of their past experiences (PSS statement 3 in Table VII). If national assessments are required, they exhibit a greater readiness to comply than other types of systems. No hesitancy is demonstrated to organizing public support for federal assistance. They want all the assistance for which they can qualify. In the absence of strong boundary defenses, local policy can be replaced easily by federal policy. Since this study considers stress to be the extent to which the board is forced to surrender local control when accepting federal assistance, the moderately dependent system itself is responsible for a major portion of the stress on its policy boundaries. It displays a tendency to want to sacrifice more local control than is required. Such behavior introduces the possibility that even though moderately dependent systems receive only limited amounts of federal assistance they are desirous of becoming more dependent if possible. Therefore, they display the characteristics of a highly dependent system.

The unexpected discovery of a high degree of boundary stress in the moderately dependent system indicates that this type of system is

a special case for study. Not only do the system authorities express strong endorsements of federal assistance but also so do their constituents. The agreement of the community with this federal partnership explains why the authorities have done little to build a highly favorable societal attitude toward federal support and why they would have little hesitancy about organizing community support for such help. The authorities do not believe resistance exists and, therefore, see no need to develop community acceptance. From a study of moderately dependent systems, the conclusion is drawn that a high level of system and societal agreement with federal assistance may have an even more drastic effect on the policy boundaries than a high level of dependency. In such a situation little or no effort is exerted to defend the system's boundary positions.

Boundary stress forces the system to initiate new structures in order to persist. This investigation demonstrates that as federal assistance increases the board becomes more dependent on the administrative staff. Such a structural change provides the board a way to utilize the resources of an outside political system and yet continue to operate from its basic governmental principle of local control. The administrative staff rather than the federal government moves into the policy gap. In the perception of the board, local control still prevails. Responses support the conclusion that the board becomes more dependent on the administrative staff as federal assistance increases.

While the data show consistent proof of the conclusion just stated, differences between the extent of the board's dependence on the administrative staff in a highly dependent system and one of

minimal dependence are not statistically significant. Board authorities provide a ready explanation for these small differences by reporting that boards today rely heavily on their administrative staff in all areas of local educational government. Consequently, the degree of federal assistance cannot alter radically the already significant positions held by the superintendent and his staff. However, the noticeable increase in the dependency of the board on the administrative staff produced by federal assistance is worthy of special concern. It indicates the board is sacrificing more of its ever diminishing power in order to survive. When this finding is juxtaposed against that which the document analysis reveals, the board appears to be declining in political importance, and its future subject to question. As reported, 59% of all current decisions rendered by the boards comprising the sample population are classified as discretionary decisions. If the board is forced to accept further restrictions on its decision-making powers, it inevitably will cease to function as a legislating body.

The lay board exercises little or no influence on federal legislation. Only two out of a total of eighteen respondents believe board members exert any effort to obtain federal assistance (PSS statement 10). The first explanation for this failure may be that boards are incapable of operating in an area of influence beyond their local boundary. A second answer, and a more feasible one, is that boards must sacrifice more prestige and prerogative when they actively encourage another political unit to assist them in their endeavors. This is substantiated by the findings pertaining to moderately dependent systems discussed previously. Obviously, when their administrative

staff can obtain federal assistance for them, the impact on their policy position is not as directly felt. Federal assistance becomes the program of the administration and not of the board.

One major hypothesis fails to obtain support from the findings. It is logical to suspect that boards which are strongly committed to federal assistance will display a willingness to share certain planning and program determining prerogatives. This assumption contends that as boards endorse federal support a shift will occur in their fundamental attitude set away from an individualistic philosophy of government toward a cooperative one. While the research findings show no intrinsic relationship between the degree of dependency on federal assistance and the willingness of the board to share control with others, some support for the hypothesis exists. Responses from Schools B and F, the two systems which express the most enthusiastic endorsement of federal assistance, indicate that they are more willing to accept national assessments (PSS statement 15) and to share planning and program determination with advisory groups (PSS statement 16) than are any of the other systems. Reservations are discernible, however, when the question of desirability arises. These same school boards join other boards in reporting that banding together under superordinate boards in order to operate programs supported by federal assistance is not as desirable as administering programs over which they have complete control except in special circumstances. In this respect, boards reveal an obvious incongruity between what they desire and what they will accept in order to have federal assistance. Their belief in local control is tempered by their need for additional financial assistance, a condition causing them to accept policy

directives from superordinate boards. However, even though boards pledge their support to cooperatively governed programs, they demonstrate a tendency to disassociate themselves from the actual operation of such programs. To them area programs are of mere incidental concern.

While it is questionable whether or not a greater degree of federal assistance produces a stronger liking for federal aid than smaller amounts of assistance, it is clear that boards regard federal assistance favorably. Responses to PSS statement 3 indicate only two respondents believe the board is reluctant to take federal assistance. A favorable response toward federal assistance is related to the degree of board dependency; yet minimally dependent boards not only are willing to accept aid but also show they will not eliminate all federally assisted programs if federal financing is withdrawn (PSS statement 7).

Local board authorities report that the principal determinant of their willingness to accept federal support is the confidence which they have in their administrative staff (PSS statement 9). Especially is this true in highly dependent systems. This finding correlates closely with the discovery that federal assistance increases the dependency of the board on the administrative staff. Boards which have confidence in their administrators are willing to place additional governmental prerogative under administrative control. Since findings discussed in the preceding paragraph show that boards are not reluctant generally to accept federal assistance, the inference is that they have confidence in their administrative staff. Successful programs of federal assistance enhance the standing of the administrative staff

with the board and, thereby, furnish the staff an opportunity to obtain additional board support for more federal assistance.

The most pronounced dictum in Easton's political systems theory is that governments seek to persist. This argument lies at the base of the fourth hypothesis investigated. If the primary objective of the political system is to persist, situations which reduce its power and prestige logically will be avoided. It is felt that as the board becomes more dependent on federal assistance it will display a greater reluctance to publicize its declining position to the society it governs.

While the findings from this research do not support the direction of the hypothesis, they do lend substantiation to the logic underlying it. Board authorities who report a distinct belief in the value and the necessity of federal assistance to the local system not only are less willing to publicize this belief if the community shows a dislike for federal assistance, but they also are doing little to develop a highly favorable attitude in their communities toward programs of federal aid. Federal assistance obviously is of greater importance than it is acclaimed. Boards hesitate to demonstrate their dependency since they must reveal that local support of education is insufficient for meeting the demands made on the system. A revelation of this type weakens the board's ability to command the support of the society.

Further support for the conclusion that boards hesitate to publicize local inadequacies is discovered by comparing the responses of the board presidents to those of the superintendents for three PSS statements (Table VII). Board presidents indicate a 6:1 higher

evaluation of the board's dependency on federal assistance (statement 11). However, when describing their willingness to organize a program to counteract a dislike for federal assistance, board presidents exceed superintendents by only 3:2 (statement 18); and on present attempts to develop a highly favorable attitude toward federal assistance (statement 19), the board presidents and superintendents show no marked differences. Supported by these results, the conclusion may be drawn that board authorities prefer to withhold information on federal assistance from their constituents and disguise its impact on educational improvement.

That board presidents differ so significantly from superintendents in their perception of the importance of federal assistance in long range planning is important. They appear to be more convinced of the absolute necessity of federal assistance if important long range plans are to be realized. Board presidents are also less conservative than superintendents when considered as a group. It is entirely possible that board presidents are over reacting to federal assistance since it is not producing the negative consequences many feared. This is significantly true when the amount of federal aid is minimal. However, as federal assistance increases, board presidents appear to become more conservative than superintendents do.

Two other important conclusions deserve comment. Board authorities indicate that if they were free to employ federal assistance as they desired they would make only slight changes in its present emphasis. No board desires to give it an entirely different emphasis. Such a response is antithetical to the general aid concept of federal financing, which contends that if boards can use federal assistance

as they desire major changes will be seen. While general aid to education may have strong support on the grounds that it would be politically less threatening to the local system, its potential for bringing about significant program change is minimal in the view of the respondents in this study.

A related discovery shows these same school authorities do not consider federal assistance to be producing an imbalance in educational programming. This finding is contrary to McKnight's. He reports that Ohio administrators believe specific purpose federal assistance creates an imbalance in the curriculum.¹ Oklahoma administrators and board presidents believe federal assistance has resulted in a better balanced offering to the society. Therefore, if present federal financial assistance continues, the curriculum can be expected to show more equitability and stability than would be the case without federal help.

The second conclusion to be drawn is that federal assistance produces no greater stress on the smaller or Class I board than it does on the larger or Class II board. The amount of assistance and not the size of the political unit determines the stress. This finding too is contradictory to other related studies, which report smaller political units to be more conservative in their responses to environmental forces.²

The most conservative board in the study is School H. Not only is this one of the largest schools in the sample from the standpoint of student population, but it is also the most dependent on federal support of all the schools considered. Federal assistance to each student in ADA amounts to \$75.78. Although School H is regarded as a highly dependent system, its responses frequently go counter to the

general findings of similar systems. For example, this is the only system which sees no conflict between desired and actual purpose determination under federal assistance. Further, it reports that federal assistance has not had as much of an impact on recent program developments as have new local resources and that because of federal assistance the total educational offering has improved. This school board displays much more dependence on its administrative staff for the development of federally funded programs than for other programs. School H authorities show a willingness to reject federal assistance if national assessments are attached and to agree with the community should it dislike federal assistance.

The inconsistencies in the responses of School H raise serious doubts about their validity. However, two possible explanations are available for an apparently drastic departure from the norm. First, the system receives large amounts of non-restricted federal assistance and has for several years. It is assumed that responses are substantially skewed because of such aid since non-restricted aid fails to produce the political impact of restricted support. Since no other school in the sample is granted large sums of non-restricted federal assistance, comparative examination of this assumption is impossible. It is observable, however, that this board places much of its restricted aid into salaries for additional personnel. Thereby, the board makes it difficult for its public to distinguish programs receiving restricted federal support from those which are financed by non-restricted aid or by local or state funding. A second explanation is that since this board may presently operate within a narrow policy boundary further adjustments are not probable. System H shows

a greater reliance on its administrative staff in general than does any other system studied. Therefore, the board may have shifted a substantial amount of its governmental prerogative to the administration, thus permitting the board to maintain strong resilience to environmental influences. When federal assistance begins to make any threatening impact on the policy outputs of the system, the structural arrangement comes to the system's defense. Outputs using federal assistance either are considered as administrative enactments or are interspersed with other outputs to reduce their visibility.

In contrast to the conservatism of School H, one of the most liberal reactions to federal assistance is that of School F, the smallest school in terms of student population. Despite its physical smallness, it is moderately dependent on federal assistance and is willing to take federal assistance with little or no reservation. It also perceives strong pressure from the community to continue programs now federally supported. Indications are that this board will accept national assessments readily if such are required in order to receive assistance and will work actively to dissuade those who dislike federal assistance should such resistance be detected in the community. The responses of School F support earlier disclosures which reveal moderately dependent systems to be the most vulnerable to an invasion of local policy boundaries because of the boards' eagerness to obtain additional support.

The most drastic point of disagreement between superintendents and board presidents is revealed in the responses obtained to PSS statement 20. Superintendents perceive accounting controls over federally financed programs to be much more excessive than those over

non-federal programs (mean of 1.89). In contrast, board presidents report little difference in such controls (mean of 2.67).³ Since the superintendents are in the better position to make an accurate assessment of accounting regulations, their responses must be regarded as the more reliable. This means board presidents not only do little to obtain federal assistance, but they also know little about the technical operation of federally assisted programs. In view of such a finding, it may be logical to conclude that after superintendents obtain federal assistance for local educational programming they attempt to present these programs to the board in a perfunctory manner which prevents the board from observing major differences between federally assisted and unassisted programs. Superintendents thus may act as an important stress reducing mechanism for the board when they conceal the actual reporting and accounting regulations attached to federal assistance from the board.

The numerous discoveries and significant findings provided by this study lend support to the conclusion that Easton's political systems theory is a fruitful framework with which to conceptualize the political behavior of local educational government. The concept of an adaptive political system, responding to the demands of its environment and restructuring its internal character in order to continue allocating authoritative values to its public, is appropriate for describing the structural changes which occur in the operational make-up of the board of education when it is threatened by stress on its essential governmental principle of local control. The perception of these changes as modifications in a political system furnishes order and relevance to this analysis and affords the educational researcher

opportunity to compare the life style of the board of education to that of other governmental systems. While the unique character of educational government requires the redefining of such Easton constructs as boundary, stress, and authorities for a more precise discussion of the organizational variables of the board, the general applicability of political systems theory to the development of hypotheses for the explanation of relationships in the politics of education is confirmed by this study.

The conclusions drawn from this research are summarized as follows:

1. Local boards still regard the principle of local control as basic to the processing of demands into policy outputs and in governing the boundaries of the educational system.
2. Federal assistance restricts the operation of local control and places stress on the ability of the board to allocate policy to the society it governs.
3. The impact of stress on the fundamental policy boundaries of the board of education increases the dependency of the board on its administrative staff.
4. Local board officials exercise little or no influence over federal legislation or the development of programs supported by federal assistance.
5. In general, boards demonstrate a willingness to share planning and program determination processes only if they retain final decision-making power.
6. Cooperative endeavors in education with other political systems or in superordinate systems are not as desirable as endeavors over which the local board has complete jurisdiction.
7. Boards display a tendency to disassociate themselves from a program over which they do not have full control.
8. Present programs of federal assistance create societal pressures on the board to support the continuation of these programs.
9. In terms of recent changes or additions to the curricular offering, federal assistance is having a more significant effect than new local resources.

10. School systems will accept national assessments reluctantly if required to do so as a condition for continuing their participation in federally assisted programs.
11. Boards display a reluctance to publicize their dependence on federal assistance to their publics.
12. Systems which are moderately dependent on federal support for processing educational demands are more favorably disposed toward federal assistance than either minimally or highly dependent systems.
13. General aid to education may produce little or no change in the educational offering from that of specific purpose aid.
14. Smaller systems are no more conservative in their basic attitude toward federal assistance than are larger systems.
15. Board presidents consider federal regulations and accounting controls to be more consistent with controls over non-federal programs than do superintendents of schools.

These conclusions underscore the thesis that federal assistance is making a decided impact on the political positions and beliefs of local educational authorities. As structural changes occur in the policies and practices of the political systems governing education today, some unique patterns may emerge in the educational government of the future. The implications of these changes will be considered in Chapter V.

FOOTNOTES

¹J. A. McKnight, "Perceptions of Ohio Educational Administrators Regarding the Use of Federal Funds for Education" (unpub. Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1965).

²John Hartvigh Manz, "Personal Characteristics of School Board Members and Their Reactions to Issues Confronting the Board" (unpub. Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1967).

³A mean of 3.00 would indicate exact similarity between the controls on federal and non-federal programs.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is apparent at once that the conclusions of this study are limited by the smallness of the sample. Still, there has been no reason to doubt the representativeness of the nine school systems used. The comprehensiveness of the inquiry, the precision of the methodology, and the rigorousness of the analysis lead to the same conclusion. The boards considered are typical of the larger population in each class of school systems in the State of Oklahoma and of other states which govern their schools under the same local structure. A larger sample would permit the use of more sophisticated statistical techniques, which are not available to this research, and would strengthen and further validate the inferences and comparisons which are reported.

This study demonstrates that there is clearly a relationship between educational behavior and political behavior when the focus, the government of a specific societal system, of both disciplines is the same. Propositions which apply to other political systems are applicable to the political system of local educational life, the board of education. In particular, this study reveals that the political systems theory developed by David Easton is fruitful for the explanation of the political process in the field of education and for the development of further testable hypotheses.

The primary problem area considered is the effect of permitting another political unit to share in the processing of societal demands into binding and authoritative outputs. However, numerous problem areas remain to be explored from the same conceptual framework. Typical of these are the following: How does the board of education structure itself when it refuses to accept the demands of the society? How long can a system remain closed without suffering complete collapse? What effect on the system does a change of board authorities have? To what degree can a board of education alter its policy boundaries and still allocate binding outputs to the society? For example, what is the impact on the posture of the board as federal assistance approaches or even exceeds local resources? How does the political unit organize its structure to handle conflicting demands? Does governmental sharing and negotiated decision making force the board to develop a more effective structure for organizing societal support?

Recent developments in the environment of educational government imply that the political system will be tested severely in the immediate future. Certain legislative enactments, such as those requiring professional negotiations, conceivably may force boards to form cooperative political coalitions in order to prevent the loss of large segments of policy boundary. The increase in student resistance and group militancy is placing stress on the boundaries of the board and its capacities for allocating authoritative outputs. Will it be necessary for the board of education to develop intermediate structures -- student boards, citizen juries, or new legal recourses -- in order to reduce the almost intolerable pressure on its ability to

enact binding directives to its society? These and other related problem areas are fertile grounds for future political research to analyze.

The ostensible focus of this investigation is the impact made by federal assistance on the internal structure of local educational government. The fact that the local political system must turn to a federal system for financial help introduces a confounding element into the political operations of education. Especially is this true when restricted or categorical assistance is involved. When the board accepts such assistance, it surrenders a certain amount of policy prerogative and, consequently, processes demands under stress.

To redirect or reduce this stress the board initiates new structures. New structure gives the system greater persistence and tends to restore it to a new state of equilibrium congruent with its essential principle of government. The most pronounced structural change noted is that of transferring certain power to the administrative staff and, thereby, increasing the dependency of the board on its administrators. Such a change has certain pertinent implications for the future.

With the possibility of federal assistance increasing, the board of education stands in a tenuous position facing the possible loss of additional status in the future. At the same time, as the data indicate, administrative officers may rise in importance. This possibility portends a significant reordering in lines of authority with more and more decisions stopping at the administrative level. Boards will be compelled to surrender more absolute decision-making powers. Such a change will place the administrator in a more powerful but more exposed position. The discontent of the society will be directed

toward the superintendent and his staff instead of toward the board of education. The consequences of this may be greater superintendent turnover or the development of a larger and more bureaucratic administrative staff to buffer the top administrator from contradictory forces. Under such circumstances his skills in conflict resolution will be tested thoroughly.

In response, the board predictably will make some logical readjustments. One alternative is the board's appealing for more general aid to education. Since general aid is non-restrictive in nature, its use will reduce substantially the amount of stress on the policy boundary. Its effect on educational government will be felt instantly in that the local board authorities can allocate funds as they choose. Since general aid is indistinguishable from other appropriations which the board of education makes, the board will no longer need to share its policy-making prerogative in the processing of demands. It is predicted that an increasing demand for general aid to education will be heard soon across the nation.

A second alternative available to the local boards of education is the formation of area coalitions or superordinate boards. This possibility, should it develop, means that boards will govern the general directions of education but **leave specific regulations to the administrators**. The findings of this study reveal the boards of education will join such superordinate arrangements if forced. Fourteen out of the eighteen respondents contacted state that overarching boards of control are equally as desirable as separate boards in special circumstances. It is important, however, to notice the respondents' tendency to limit their participation in the new

heirarchical arrangement to specific circumstances. Only two respondents regard the area board as more desirable than complete local jurisdiction unless certain conditions prevail. Consequently, local boards will resist any movement toward granting broad general powers to the area board. Certain federal programs which stress cooperative activity have been slow getting into operation. Of all ESEA Title III programs in Oklahoma, 68% are district rather than area programs. However, the fact that district boards have recognized the advantage of the superordinate structure in a limited sphere implies they may extend its scope should existing governmental arrangements prove incapable of coping with environmental stress.

There is a third alternative, one which the circumstances of the day may compel the board to consider. The board of education may be forced to become more active in influencing federal legislation and in developing programs to be assisted by federal financing. By establishing a stronger political lobby of its own, the board can reduce some of its dependency on the administrative staff and reassert its dominance. This latter alternative may be the most appropriate avenue to take since the others represent radical departures from local tradition. Unlike the administrative staff, lay board members are not able usually to commit many hours to developing and sponsoring substantial legislative programs. However, boards are able to employ, through group organization, professionals who will keep them advised of and invest their influence in programs of national importance to education. Because of present inactivity in this regard, board members have created a power vacuum into which others have moved. Should they assert leadership sufficient to fill the void, the status

of educational politics could change radically.

That support for and acceptance of federal assistance in local educational process is growing is of itself an important finding. Such support implies that some of the basic fears of federal control of education are disappearing. However, an attitudinal shift **away from** distrust of federal aid toward one of endorsement raises some pertinent questions: Are school systems ready for the federal government to assume a major share of educational financing? Is the fundamental purpose of education now considered no longer local but national in scope? Does categorical or specific purpose aid contain more flexibility than was first believed? The acceptability of federal assistance to local boards shows it is serving important local purposes; consequently, boards are looking with more favor on an educational partnership which includes both the state and federal governments as major share holders.

Federal assistance provides the federal government a potentially powerful mechanism for forcing local political systems to serve highly specific purposes. As this study reports, local boards will be strongly pressured by their constituents to continue operating programs now federally assisted should such support be withdrawn. It is conceivable that federal assistance can be applied to a defined area of educational endeavor long enough for it to become expected by the school's public. Later this assistance can be removed and placed in the support of another area until it too attains the status of other highly regarded and popularly demanded programs. By selectively directing the use of federal resources, the federal government can force standardization of curricular offerings or a nationally planned program of studies.

Already the withdrawal of federal funding is being used to force compliance with civil rights laws. Studies of desegregation in eleven southern states show that at the beginning of the 1964-65 school year only 604 of the 2951 school districts in these states had made a start toward desegregation. One year later, due to the inexorable pressure of the federal government, 2742 of these districts had plans accepted and were implementing them.¹ The potential exists for strong political interests to use conformity producing techniques similar to those being used by the federal government in civil rights actions in numerous other areas. It is reasonable to believe that sweeping organizational changes in education -- such as school district consolidation, establishing a maximum size for an instructional unit, or the equalizing of local financial effort for education -- may be effected at the national level where they have failed at the state level. Federal assistance, discriminately employed, has undetermined possibilities.

As this study demonstrates, the theories of political science are fruitful for the systematic study of educational politics. Therefore, the educational administrator, as well as the educational researcher, can profit by a knowledge of political science. In an era when local problems have national antecedents, when the side effects of ideological and sociological changes are producing mass politicization, when the medium of communication is focusing attention on situations which cannot be controlled by local effort alone, there is a need for educational administrators to acquaint themselves with the political currents of the day and to learn how to assess and interpret these currents. To meet this need the formal preparation of the administrator must include studies in the politics of education.

College and university graduate programs in the field of educational administration must be broadened in order that future practitioners in the field will be able to cope with dynamic elements beyond the realms of the budget, the selecting and employing of staff, the maintenance of academic standards, or the housing of an educational program. As administrators gain a better understanding of how demands are aggregated and articulated, how contingent social and political developments affect support for education, how the political process changes with each new input, and how the outputs of the educational system are evaluated by the public, they will be in a position to furnish intelligent direction to educational endeavor.²

Future research in the field of education calls for interdisciplinary cooperation. The clarification of values and goals, the development of models of behavior, the construction of theoretical notions about community dynamics, and the interpretation of interacting processes imply the need for a new kind of research venture. The educationist must join with the social and the political scientist in order to make valid and reliable predictions. This research offers assistance to such endeavors. However, additional comparative studies are needed to develop more understanding of the parameters of governmental systems in education. Much still needs to be learned about the variables which affect the outputs of the system, and the manner in which the authorities regulate and adapt the system structure to cope with societal demands.

Several suggestions could be offered to guide further research in the politics of education. Among these are the following:

1. The conceptual framework used in this study needs further refinement in order to increase its applicability to the politics of education and enhance its predictive capabilities. Political systems, unlike mechanical systems, have authorities who make internal inputs into the system. More needs to be known about the behavior of these authorities and about how interaction between authorities affects the system's posture. An understanding of the position and the prestige of specific authorities at the vital stages of the political process is required before more reliable predictions can be made about the system's responses.
2. Replication of the study should include a larger sample of systems. Of special concern is the moderately dependent school system. Since the sample used in this study included only two moderately dependent boards of education, more investigation is needed before generalizations can be offered about such systems. It also seems appropriate to ascertain the reason for this study's failure to discover differences between highly dependent and minimally dependent boards in certain situations. A more comprehensive analysis of why boards which receive sizeable sums of federal assistance are reluctant to enter superordinate governmental arrangements for the development of cooperative educational programs needs to be made.
3. Further study needs to consider the behavior of exceptional systems. The results of this research show that School H displays a behavioral pattern which is inconsistent with the norm. Inquiry needs to be made into what conditions or factors must be present to produce certain results. Since School H is symbolic of a closed political system, it deserves additional investigation in order to identify the structures it uses to maintain its boundaries.
4. The consequences of structural change deserve attention. Since alterations in the organization and composition of the system usually produce certain concomitant reactions, they should be analyzed and their potential assessed. For example, the effect which an increase in the dependency of the board on the administrative staff has on the types of system outputs is a researchable area.
5. Investigators should study the communication process of the system. How does a demand attract the attention of the authorities? What aggregation functions have to be performed? How does the board of education articulate its response to the society? Answers to these questions can be discovered only through systematic and empirical examination.
6. The investigation of actual programs which receive federal assistance needs to be considered. It is believed that further research will show how the visibility given to a program creates pressure to continue its operation.

7. A more precise assessment of the actual outputs of a system since the initial utilization of federal assistance is now possible. Are there inherent differences between the composition and objectives of programs supported by federal assistance and those which receive local support? Perhaps such an investigation will reveal if boards of education neglect to provide for certain educational needs for other than financial reasons. Certainly an indication of how a board would change system outputs may be discovered by such inquiry.

These recommendations imply that the study of political variables in education has just begun. Efforts on several fronts must be initiated before the frontiers of knowledge can be pushed back far enough to permit an adequate theory of political behavior in educational affairs to develop. Easton's political systems model offers a beginning. There is much "terra incognita" left.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Southern Education Reporting Service, Statistical Summary of School Desegregation in Southern and Border States (Nashville, Tenn., 1965).

² Bailey reports that inadequate knowledge of politics is a factor preventing educators from providing effective leadership in obtaining state support for public education. Stephen K. Bailey, et al., Schoolmen and Politics (Syracuse, 1962), p. 52.

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLES OF INSTRUMENTS

PILOT STUDY POLITICAL STRESS SCALE

Respondent: Board President () or Superintendent () of Sample _____

Instructions:

Please respond briefly to each of the questions listed as you believe your school board would respond. The suggested responses are merely to guide you in your thinking. If they represent your correct reaction to the question presented, you may select one or a combination of these as your response. However, please feel free to state a different response or to qualify your response as you deem most appropriate.

(1) Who should determine the purposes federal assistance should serve in the school district?

- ____ (a) Local school board
____ (b) Shared
____ (c) Other political agencies

(2) Who now determines the purposes federal assistance serves in the school district?

- ____ (a) Local school board
____ (b) Shared but depends on the type of program
____ (c) Other political agencies

(3) How much caution does the local school board display about accepting federal assistance?

- ____ (a) Great caution
____ (b) Depends on the type of program
____ (c) Almost no caution

(4) If federal assistance were liberalized, would the local school board employ it in a different manner than at present?

- ____ (a) Entirely different
____ (b) Slightly different
____ (c) Same

(5) Has federal assistance created any imbalance in the educational program of the school district?

___ (a) Places certain programs above other programs

___ (b) Brings neglected programs up to balanced state with other programs

___ (c) Fails to bring neglected programs up to balanced state with other programs

(6) Is there any pressure from the community or the school staff to take resources from one area and make it available to other areas?

___ (a) No observable pressure

___ (b) Some pressure but general request for more funds

___ (c) Pressure since waste or overspending is perceived in certain programs

(7) Would some criticism be encountered from the community or the school staff if federal assistance were withdrawn?

___ (a) Yes, programs supported by federal assistance are highly valued

___ (b) Yes, but programs supported by federal assistance are viewed as enrichment programs

___ (c) No, programs supported by federal assistance are not highly valued

(8) What would happen to programs now receiving federal assistance if such support were eliminated?

___ (a) Continued with local funding

___ (b) Reduced but continued to some extent

___ (c) Eliminated completely

- (9) How dependent is the local board on the professional school staff for developing and operating programs which are federally assisted?
- ___ (a) Much more dependent than for other programs
- ___ (b) No more dependent than for other programs
- ___ (c) Not considered a concern of the board
- (10) Has anyone from the local school district exerted influence, including political pressures, to obtain federal assistance?
- ___ (a) Superintendent and/or his staff primarily
- ___ (b) Board members and the professional staff
- ___ (c) No local influence of any consequence
- (11) Does the uncertainty connected with the continuation of federal assistance have any effect on the local board?
- ___ (a) Obvious uneasiness
- ___ (b) Mild uneasiness because other monies would need to be obtained for support of these important programs
- ___ (c) No concern because programs now supported easily could be dropped or continued with other local monies
- (12) What impact has federal assistance had on recent curricular or instructional change in the local school system?
- ___ (a) Principal influence for change
- ___ (b) Helpful but no more so than local assistance
- ___ (c) Little or no effect on recent changes
- (13) Would these curricular changes have developed without some federal assistance?
- ___ (a) Yes, the local board would have supported such changes
- ___ (b) Yes, but it would require a much longer time because local funds are not sufficient for their support
- ___ (c) No, these programs are not that important to this system

- (14) Where does the school system acquire ideas for developing federally supported programs?
- (a) Local school level
 - (b) Other school districts or outside educational agencies
 - (c) Project guidelines or programs generally funded by such assistance over the nation
- (15) How does the school system principally determine the effectiveness of the local educational program?
- (a) Achievement scores from nationally known testing instruments
 - (b) Some locally determined objective measure
 - (c) Approval and satisfaction evidenced by local community
- (16) Would the board oppose efforts to assess the effectiveness of educational endeavor by nationally determined measures?
- (a) Yes, no measure would be acceptable
 - (b) Yes, except in federally supported programs
 - (c) No, if some valid measure can be developed which would correctly reflect local educational effectiveness
- (17) What attitude should the local board take toward federally assisted programs which require the sharing of program planning and decision making with community advisory groups?
- (a) Board should reject such programs
 - (b) Community advisory groups should have a voice if the board has final determination
 - (c) Community advisory groups should share the planning and decision-making responsibilities

- (18) How does the local board consider such federally supported educational programs as Head Start, ESEA Title III, or Area Vocational Schools?
- ___ (a) An integral part of the local board's responsibility
- ___ (b) Supplementary educational functions to which the board lends active moral support and encouragement
- ___ (c) Extraneous educational functions of little concern to the board
- (19) What counteraction should the local board take if the general community displays a dislike for federal assistance?
- ___ (a) Give federally supported programs greater visibility
- ___ (b) Agree with community but accept federal support as a necessary evil
- ___ (c) Attempt to cover up the benefits of federal support
- (20) In what direction does the local board attempt to manipulate community attitude toward federal assistance?
- ___ (a) Against federal aid by emphasizing what the school system is doing without federal support
- ___ (b) Toward a neutral position by stressing the needs of the system for support from any source
- ___ (c) In favor of federal aid by emphasizing its important contributions

Respondent Attitudinal Appraisal

- (1) Has the experience of utilizing federal assistance in the local school district altered your attitude toward it?
- ___ (a) More favorable toward it now
- ___ (b) Attitude about the same
- ___ (c) Less favorable toward it now

(2) If you could redesign the federal assistance program, what would you change about it?

- (a) More general assistance on some equal allocation formula
- (b) More categorical assistance, such as ESEA Title I or NDEA Title III
- (c) More cooperative or area programs
- (d) Complete elimination or a substitute plan of financing

POLITICAL STRESS SCALE

Respondent: President of the Board () Scale _____
 Superintendent of Schools () Total Scale Value _____

Instructions:

The local board of education is the political unit designated by the state to direct the educational life of each school district. However, since in most instances the board cannot support the educational program of the district exclusively from local resources, it must receive assistance from external political units such as the state and the federal governments. This study seeks to determine whether the relationships which develop from the utilization of federal resources conflict with or are perceived as threatening to the authority and control of the board of education in the operation and development of local educational policy.

You can assist this study by considering carefully the twenty statements listed on this Political Stress Scale. Please check (✓) the response following each descriptive statement which best denotes your perception of how the board would react to the circumstances stated. Your experience as a superintendent or school board president places you in a position to observe the stance of the board, and the responses you provide will be considered an indicator of the general reaction of the entire board. Only one response should be checked for each statement.

- (1) The purposes federal assistance should serve in the local school should be determined by
- ___ (a) The local school board and its administrators exclusively.
- ___ (b) Shared planning at both the federal and the local school governmental levels.
- ___ (c) The federal political unit supplying the assistance.
- (2) The purposes federal assistance now serves in the school district are determined by
- ___ (a) The local school board and its administrators exclusively.
- ___ (b) Shared planning at both the federal and the local school governmental levels.
- ___ (c) The federal political unit supplying the assistance;

- (3) In accepting federal assistance for local educational purposes, the local school board displays
- (a) A definite reservation toward such acceptance.
 - (b) No reservation if previous experiences have been pleasant.
 - (c) A willingness to take all assistance available.
- (4) The impact of federal assistance on the educational programs of the school district has been noticeable since
- (a) Certain programs have been over-emphasized.
 - (b) Neglected programs have been brought up to a balanced status with other programs.
 - (c) All educational programs have improved about equally.
- (5) If the local school board were free to employ federal assistance as it desired, present funds would be used
- (a) With an entirely different emphasis.
 - (b) With a slightly different emphasis.
 - (c) About the same as at present.
- (6) If present federal assistance were withdrawn, the local school board would be
- (a) Only slightly pressured to continue operating the programs now assisted.
 - (b) Moderately pressured to continue operating the programs now assisted.
 - (c) Strongly pressured to continue operating the programs now assisted.
- (7) If present federal assistance were withdrawn, the local school board would
- (a) Eliminate all federally assisted programs.
 - (b) Continue some programs after an evaluation period.
 - (c) Continue all present programs with local assistance if possible.

- (8) In developing and operating programs of federal assistance, the local school board is
- (a) No more dependent on the school's administrative staff than for other programs.
 - (b) Slightly more dependent on the school's administrative staff than for other programs.
 - (c) Much more dependent on the school's administrative staff than for other programs.
- (9) The principal determinant of the local school board's willingness to develop and operate programs under federal assistance is
- (a) The confidence of the board in its professional staff and administrators.
 - (b) The freedom which the board has to apply and utilize the assistance.
 - (c) Whether or not the board qualifies for such assistance.
- (10) Local efforts and influence to obtain federal assistance have been exerted by
- (a) Neither the school board nor the superintendent and his staff.
 - (b) The superintendent and his staff primarily.
 - (c) Both the school board and the superintendent and his staff.
- (11) Since federal assistance is uncertain, the local school board considers its importance in long range educational planning of
- (a) No consequence in planning.
 - (b) Some value in reaching objectives immediately.
 - (c) Utmost importance if objectives are to be reached.
- (12) In the area of recent program changes or additions to the local curricular offering, federal assistance has had
- (a) Little or no effect.
 - (b) A moderate effect but not as much as new local resources.
 - (c) A more significant effect than new local resources.

- (13) Program changes or additions to the local curricular offering which are supported by federal assistance require
- (a) Substantially more local planning than is normal with other programs.
 - (b) Slightly more local planning than is normal with other programs.
 - (c) Little additional local planning than is normal with other programs.
- (14) The local school system determines the effectiveness of its educational program principally by relying on
- (a) Its belief and the community's that the local curriculum is serving the various needs of its school population.
 - (b) One or a combination of objective measures of student achievement which are considered of local importance.
 - (c) Ratings by nationally developed tests, scales, or evaluation agencies.
- (15) If the federal government should require all school districts using federal assistance to evaluate their programs with a plan of nationally devised assessments, the local school board would
- (a) Reject federal assistance with such a requirement attached.
 - (b) Accept federal assistance reluctantly with such a requirement attached.
 - (c) Accept federal assistance readily with such a requirement attached.
- (16) Federal assistance programs which require the local school board to share the planning and determination of such programs with community advisory groups should be
- (a) Rejected in general.
 - (b) Accepted if the school board retains final decision-making power.
 - (c) Accepted whether or not the school board has final decision-making power.

- (17) Federally supported educational programs which require the establishment of overarching boards of control, such as Area Vocational Schools and cooperative ESEA Title III programs, are viewed by local boards of education as
- (a) Less desirable than federal assistance programs over which they have complete jurisdiction.
 - (b) Equally desirable under special circumstances.
 - (c) More desirable under special circumstances.
- (18) If the local school board detects a dislike for federal assistance within the general school community, it should
- (a) Agree with the community by rejecting federal assistance.
 - (b) Agree with the community but continue to use federal assistance as if it were a necessary evil to education.
 - (c) Disagree with the community and organize an active public relations program to convince the community of the benefits of federal assistance.
- (19) The local board has attempted to direct the community attitude toward federal assistance to a
- (a) Neutral position described by a willingness to use such assistance only if other financial resources are not adequate to meet minimum educational needs.
 - (b) Favorable position described by a willingness to use such assistance to expand available financial resources for obtaining improved educational benefits.
 - (c) Highly favorable position described by a willingness to use such assistance in every way possible to maximize and complete a comprehensive educational offering.
- (20) The clerical and accounting controls connected with federally assisted programs are viewed by the local board as
- (a) Entirely out of line with controls on non-federal programs.
 - (b) Slightly excessive when compared with controls on non-federal programs.
 - (c) In line with normal controls over any program in the school system.

GENERAL INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Sample _____

Please check (✓) the single response for each of the characteristics listed below which most typically describes that characteristic.

(1) Local School District Size

- ___ (a) 1-2499
___ (b) 2500-3999
___ (c) 4000-9999
___ (d) Above 10,000

(2) Dominant Educational Level of Community

- ___ (a) Less than High School
___ (b) High School Diploma
___ (c) Above High School
___ (d) College Degree

(3) Dominant Occupational Level of Community

- ___ (a) Unskilled Labor or Non-Technical
___ (b) Skilled Labor or General Office
___ (c) Management, Farmer, or Proprietor
___ (d) Professional or Top Executive

(4) Average Income Level of Community

- ___ (a) \$3000-4999
___ (b) \$5000-8499
___ (c) \$8500-10,499
___ (d) Above \$10,500

- (5) Dominant Type of Business in Community
- (a) Small Shops, Farms, or Retail Stores
- (b) Large Warehouses or Large Processing Industry
- (c) Large Manufacturing or Large Production Industry
- (d) Clerical, Financial or Accounting Agencies
- (6) Growth of Community during Past 5 Years
- (a) Population Decline
- (b) Relatively Stable Population
- (c) Steady but Moderate Population Increase
- (d) Rapid Population Increase (Above 5% Level)
- (7) Dominant Education Level of Board Members
- (a) Less than High School
- (b) High School Diploma
- (c) Above High School
- (d) College Degree
- (8) Dominant Occupational Level of Board Members
- (a) Unskilled Labor or Non-Technical
- (b) Skilled Labor or General Office
- (c) Management, Farmer, or Proprietor
- (d) Professional or Top Executive
- (9) Average Tenure of Present Board Members
- (a) 1 Term
- (b) 2 Terms
- (c) 3 Terms
- (d) 4 or More Terms

(10) Average Tenure of Present Superintendent of Schools

- (a) 1-5 Years
- (b) 6-10 Years
- (c) 11-15 Years
- (d) 16 or More Years

APPENDIX B: SAMPLES OF CORRESPONDENCE

LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS OF SAMPLE SCHOOLS

Dear Superintendent:

I am involved in a research project at Oklahoma State University which is examining the political effects of federal assistance in local educational affairs. The research proposes to determine whether or not the use of federal financial assistance results in structural changes in the character of local educational government.

You can assist me with this research project by permitting me to interview you and the president of your board of education. Each interview will require about thirty minutes and will be scheduled at your convenience. You may be assured that neither your name nor that of your school will be identified in the research report.

If you can help with this project, please complete the enclosed self-addressed response card promptly. I will contact you later to suggest some convenient dates for visiting with you.

Very truly yours,

Wendell A. Sharpton

Response Card

Check (✓) appropriate response(s).

1. Yes, we can assist you with this research project if a satisfactory time can be arranged.
2. No, we cannot participate.
3. I am sure the President of the Board of Education also will assist you.
4. I believe the President of the Board will assist but suggest that you contact him directly. His address is

Name

Tel #

Street or Box No.

City and State

Signature of Supt.

School System

LETTER TO PANEL OF EXPERTS IN ADMINISTRATION

Dear _____:

Attached to this letter is an instrument entitled the Political Stress Scale, which I am using in a research project to measure the political impact of federal assistance and influence on the fundamental orientation of local boards of education. More specifically, it is designed to reveal whether or not federal involvement in local educational affairs is causing any difference in the board's traditional commitment to the principle of local control.

This instrument has been checked for validity in a recent pilot study. The responses to each statement are typical reactions of board authorities to the circumstances described by the statement. I have attempted to arrange the three responses to each statement along a local control to federal partnership continuum. In each instance, response "a" indicates a strong orientation to the principle of local control in educational government. Response "c" shows that the board agrees with the present involvement of the federal government in local educational affairs and accepts federal assistance readily. Response "b" represents the middle ground between a strong orientation toward local control and one toward federal partnership.

Since you are one who has studied the area of local-federal relations in education and observed the behavior of school boards, I would like for you to evaluate the order of the responses listed. Your help will permit me to ascertain the reliability of this instrument in terms of the purpose intended. If you agree with me that response "a" is most indicative of a local control orientation, you will rate that response 1. If you do not agree, rate the response which does describe this orientation as 1. The moderate response in your opinion is to be rated as 2 and the response which describes a strong endorsement of federal assistance as 3. The response which reveals the most resistance to federal support is the best indicator of a strong belief in local control.

When you have completed the evaluation, please return the instrument to me in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Thank you for your assistance with this endeavor.

Very truly yours,

Wendell A. Sharpton

VITA

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Wendell Aquilla Sharpton

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE IMPACT OF STRESS FROM FEDERAL INFLUENCE ON THE STRUCTURE
OF LOCAL EDUCATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Background: Born in Wedowee, Alabama, February 1, 1932;
Parents -- Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Sharpton; Wife -- Connie Jean
Sharpton; Children -- Leslie Renee (4 years of age) and
Stacey Michelle (1 year of age).

Educational Background: Graduated from Dewey High School, Dewey,
Oklahoma, in May, 1948; graduated Bethany Peniel College;
Bethany, Oklahoma, May, 1952, with Bachelor of Arts degree;
attended University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1956 through
1962; graduated University of Arkansas, Fayetteville,
Arkansas, January, 1967, with Master of Education degree;
completed graduate requirements for Doctor of Education
degree at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma,
May, 1970.

Professional Background: Director of Speech and Debate, Blackwell
High School, Blackwell, Oklahoma, 1952-1955; Speech Teacher
and Counselor, Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1955-
1958; Director of Speech and Debate, Charles Page High
School, Sand Springs, Oklahoma, 1958-1963; Director of
Instruction for Sand Springs Public Schools, Sand Springs,
Oklahoma, 1963-1970.

Professional Honors: Coached three Oklahoma state championship
debate teams; coached numerous speech students who have won
state and national forensic honors; selected as Sand Springs
"Teacher of Year" in 1964; candidate for state president of
Oklahoma Education Association in 1965; president Northeast
District Education Association in 1964; member Board of
Directors of O.E.A., 1966-1969.