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6-1998

A Comparison of Reported Teacher Selection Practices of Elementary Principals in Michigan to Recommended Selection Methods

John E. Jarpe
Western Michigan University

Recommended Citation

A COMPARISON OF REPORTED TEACHER SELECTION PRACTICES OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS IN MICHIGAN TO RECOMMENDED SELECTION METHODS

by

John H. Jarpe

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
June 1998

A COMPARISON OF REPORTED TEACHER SELECTION PRACTICES OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS IN MICHIGAN TO RECOMMENDED SELECTION METHODS

John H. Jarpe, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University, 1998

Teacher selection is a complex, critical school personnel function. School leaders in Michigan's districts will be hiring more teachers as projected enrollment increases and pending teacher retirements combine to open teaching positions. This study examined the effectiveness of teacher selection practices as they compared to selection methods described in administrative textbooks, journal articles, and research studies.

Thirty-six Michigan elementary principals reported their school building and district selection procedures. Qualitative analysis focused on their transcribed responses to interview questions about the aspects of teacher selection. The principals represented public schools that combined varying grade levels of kindergarten through sixth grade.

Thirteen aspects of the selection practices reported by principals were compared to recommendations developed from the literature. All of the principals' reported selection practices need improvement in order to comply with best-recommended procedures. Principals' responses compared most favorably on the

selection responsibility criterion. Over half of the respondents reported selection practices in which school staffs participated in teacher selection. This indicates that teacher selection has become a more site-based activity for many school districts.

Selectors have emphasized traits like personality and enthusiasm in favor of more comprehensive assessments of candidates' teaching abilities. Trained selection teams must plan thorough procedures and establish criteria that assess candidates as future teachers. Appropriate selection decisions will have a positive impact on teaching and learning in the next century.

School administrators should place a higher priority on teacher selection for future needs. Staff teams at building sites should have selection responsibilities. With added site responsibilities, principals and other team members need training in proper selection methods.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my employer, the St. Joseph Public School district. Dr. Fred Richardson was a master motivator and Dr. Jack Mansfield has offered understanding and empathy. Past and present Board of Education members have supported my efforts throughout my employment in the system.

My doctoral committee continually offered me guidance and suggestions to help me produce my best work. Dr. David Cowden, Dr. Steven Rhodes, and Dr. Van Cooley spent many hours reviewing drafts of my study. Particularly, I want to thank Dr. Cooley for his excellent instruction and advice, which greatly improved my writing.

My wife, Mary Kay, and my daughters, Beth and Meghan, have been extremely patient and understanding throughout many nights and weekends. Lastly, I thank my parents, Laura and Gunnar Jarpe, for instilling a deep belief in education and learning in their youngest child. That belief and commitment have only grown stronger over the years.

John H. Jarpe

ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS

iii

Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

iv

CHAPTER

v

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

viii

LIST OF FIGURES

.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND, PROBLEMS, PURPOSES, AND
ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The Importance of Teacher Selection

One of the major challenges facing school personnel in the next decade will be the selection of classroom teachers. Greene (1997) quoted U.S. Department of Education estimates that school districts will hire approximately two million new teachers by 2006. Murnane (1996) noted that some of this increase in the teacher corps would be the result of teacher retirements. School selectors will hire other new teachers due to enrollment increases. Jones (1997) reported a record enrollment of 51.7 million students for the 1996-97 school year. This figure surpassed the previous record enrollment of 51.3 million public and private school students set in 1971, at the height of the post-World War II "baby boom" years.

Scheetz and Gratz (1995) considered the present enrollment increase in Michigan schools to be important, but less pronounced and of shorter projected duration than gains in several other regions, particularly the West and South. In fact, the authors projected a possible flattening of Michigan's birth rate increases in the next 20 years. Murnane (1996), however, argued that there would be a rising demand for new teachers due to two basic reasons: the retirements of the large numbers of teachers

1

hired in the 1950s and 1960s, and the moderately increasing enrollment numbers. Ramirez (1998) also cited the combination of pending teacher retirements and present enrollment gains as an indication that Michigan's schools would need new teachers. Bridges (1992) indicated that with a continuing turnover for the next ten years, an opportunity has existed for district personnel to improve the quality of schools by hiring the very best teachers possible. Jones and Walters (1994) supported Bridges' contention when they asserted that "educators have known for many years that the quality of instruction in a school district depends more on the individuals who are employed to staff the program than on any other single factor" (p. 76). Based on the assertions presented above, schools that get the best teachers have opportunities for improvement.

Purpose of the Study

Therefore, administrators must examine the effectiveness of teacher selection practices. The purpose of the study was to compare teacher selection practices to selection methods recommended by authors of journal articles, administrative texts, and research studies.

The Lasting Impact of Selection

The impact of selecting quality teachers cannot be understated. Huggett (1950) emphasized the importance nearly fifty years ago in an administrative textbook:

Perhaps the most important single task of the superintendent is the selection of teachers. A good teaching staff, functioning efficiently, is the backbone of any school. With the right kind of teachers the school will be a good one, even if the superintendent does little except to offer encouragement and to see that necessary books, supplies, and equipment are provided. With a poor teaching staff, the best superintendent in the world cannot maintain a good situation for the growth and development of boys and girls. (p. 75)

Although the focus of the foregoing passage was on the superintendent, and it is nearly 50 years old, today's principals carry out similar administrative/personnel functions. The same assertion was made by Black and English (1986, p. 268): "The only lasting mark any administrator makes on a school system is the quality of the staff he or she hires...people are ultimately institutions." Recently, Ubben and Hughes (1997, p. 329) wrote, "selecting quality teachers may be the single most important thing you do as an administrator."

There are a number of factors that affect the selection of teachers by administrators. These include: the priority given to selection; inadequate training of selectors; and, judgments about a candidate's teaching ability. These combine to affect the quality of candidates selected.

Increasingly, school building staff members besides the principal are becom-ing involved with teacher selection. This trend toward site-based management will likely affect the selection behaviors and responsibilities of principals and other administrators. As the literature review and study results indicated, the philosophy and trend toward staff involvement in selection decisions will be an issue to consider in the years ahead.

The Priority of Selection

Smith (1980) cited three possible reasons why selection practices were not a high district priority: (1) lowered enrollments, (2) student access to previously confidential files, and, (3) personnel administrators were more concerned with teacher union matters.

Levin (1970) expressed prior concerns about this low priority and argued that teacher salaries represented at least 75% of a school district's budget; therefore, appropriate selection should have been a higher priority item of a district's expenses. He also emphasized dollars spent on extra training, termination, or replacement far exceeded the time, effort, and money spent on improving selection procedures. According to Seyforth (1996), selectors should have accorded adequate time/budget resources to the selection process. Selectors then would have assessed the teaching performance of candidates better.

Selection should not be a high priority concern for fiscal reasons alone. Administrators must understand the impact of personnel selection on the school improvement process. Bridges (1992) believed that with nearly 400,000 teachers needed in this decade, district officials have the opportunity to upgrade the quality of their teaching staffs.

The Training Problem

Jones and Walters (1994) noted two possible reasons why administrators have not conducted thorough teacher selection procedures. One possibility, previously suggested by Jensen's research (1987), was that administrators have not known how to gather adequate candidate data. The other possibility suggested administrators have lacked knowledge about selection procedures.

Jensen (1987) stated one problem for school selectors was their lack of screening and selection training. Many of those untrained administrators have learned the hard way about how to become skilled at making good choices. Some untrained administrators may have simply been fortunate to hire quality teachers. Caldwell (1993) believed that inexperienced, untrained, and unskilled selectors have hired teacher candidates. Gatewood and Feild (1994) specified that interviewers needed training for the interview itself to have any value.

Bolton (1973) and Troisi (1995) reached similar conclusions two decades apart: school administrators have not been aware of the best selection practices. Grohe's study (1981) of Wisconsin principals demonstrated school districts provided little training in the screening and selection processes.

Darling-Hammond (1997) discussed the need for new knowledge in schools that have made the transition to site-based management. Before such transitions, central office staff supervised the screening and selection of teachers. She stated that the restructuring effort failed when building level educators lacked requisite knowledge.

Judgments About Teaching Ability

Bridges (1992) emphasized that nearly all school buildings had teachers who performed at levels of mediocrity. They have not necessarily harmed students; they simply lacked the ability or the effort to reach a level of outstanding performance. Some unfortunate principals have had outright liabilities on their faculties. Bridges (1992) added these teachers needed to be out of the profession; various safety nets kept them in classrooms, such as tenure, lack of administrative courage, and a waiting game for retirement.

Jensen (1987) stated that most school districts have hired at least one or more teachers based upon their connections to people in power in the community. Although they may have become excellent teachers, selectors hired them based on other factors besides their ability to teach. The idea that someone was politically connected should have had no relationship with the person's ability to teach.

Teacher turnover will increase the competition for quality candidates. The districts that have the best selection procedures will likely obtain the best candidates. Seyforth (1996) stated that school officials could control and improve upon the process of selection. Caldwell (1993) described the present practice of teacher selection as a trial and error process with not enough emphasis on assessing candidates' classroom abilities. As Nicholson and McInerney (1988) reiterated, a hiring mistake could multiply; the wrong person is hired and the right person teaches somewhere else.

Vann (1989) believed that making a judgment about teaching effectiveness through an observation of teaching was the most critical part of the selection process. Luthy (1982) reported that two-thirds of the Missouri districts he studied did not include candidate observations as part of the interview process. Sanacore (1992) recommended that districts use selection methods that choose and match candidate abilities with school and student needs. He also advocated the observation of candidates by selectors as a way to determine this match.

Norris and Richburg (1997, p. 46) stressed the importance of a thorough, planned selection process and the long-term effects of the hiring decision. "The difference between the performance of an outstanding teacher and that of an average teacher over a couple of decades can be immensely significant to a school district." The authors recommended a selection process that emphasized the assessment of candidates' teaching skills.

Problem Statement

Thorough plans and recommended procedures have not formed the foundation for teacher selection practices. School leaders have not considered selection as a high priority practice for their buildings and districts. Those responsible for implementing selection plans and procedures have been unaware of the best-recommended hiring practices. Because of the low priority consideration and inadequate training, school leaders have often based selection upon subjective, personal judgments rather

than clear appraisals of teaching ability.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were: (1) to compare the existing selection practices reported by public elementary school principals in Michigan to selection methods recommended by researchers and authors, (2) to identify positive trends in the selection process, (3) to identify selection areas in need of improvement, and, (4) to offer practical recommendations for selectors to improve their selection methods.

Significance of the Study

Ubben and Hughes (1997) stated that the principal should be a major part of the selection process. The authors believed that, particularly with the concept of site-based management in place, if principals are accountable, they should make many of the decisions regarding selection.

There is a trend in the administration of schools toward greater involvement in decision making by various school groups and subpopulations. This trend is associated with terms like participatory management, site-based decision making, and decentralization. This study indicated that for many school districts, there is more staff involvement in the selection of teachers than in previous years. In some cases, parents are involved in hiring teachers. This finding offers some possibilities for further research on the effects of site-based hiring decisions.

Since principals are involved with and given responsibilities for teacher selection, they must be better prepared and more knowledgeable about the process. Many principals based selection more upon intuitive choices ("gut" feelings, in the words of several respondents) rather than a careful consideration and comparison of candi-dates who meet predetermined criteria and standards.

Limitations of the Study

The surveyed principals worked in "traditional" public schools. Parochial, private, and charter school principals were not included in the sample. Principals in these kinds of schools have not normally reported to a central administrator. Respondents in the study described the interaction and responsibilities of building and district administrators. That principal-central office relationship may not exist in a charter or parochial school.

The study focused on selection practices reported by elementary principals. As the study results indicated, a number of principals work with their building staffs to select teachers. The staff members at these sites were not interviewed. This limits the information and perspective regarding selection at these site-based managed schools.

Organization of the Study

There are seven sections in the study: (1) introduction and purposes of research, (2) a review of relevant literature on the recommended methods of teacher

selection, (3) the method of gathering and analyzing information about principals'
selection practices, (4) results of survey responses and transcript analyses, (5) conclu-
sions and possible considerations for further research, (6) appendices, and, (7) biblio-
graphy.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary objective of the study was to compare existing selection behaviors of principals to selection practices recommended by various authors from the educational and/or personnel management disciplines. These reviewed methods formed the standard of comparison used for the study's analysis.

Aspects of the Selection Process

Various authors have recommended selection procedures for districts to follow (Al-Rubaiy, 1993; Castetter, 1996; Jensen, 1987; Jones & Walters, 1994; Norris & Richburg, 1997; Rebore, 1995). Bolton (1973) advocated a detailed, sequential approach:

1. Determination of vacancies and position analysis;
2. Establishing standards and criteria;
3. Recruitment;
4. Descriptions of candidates from a variety of sources;
5. Predicting job behavior for the applicant;
6. Comparing predicted behavior with district standards;
7. Making the selection;
8. Continual analysis of the selection process. (p.44)

Lang (1974) recommended a similar process with more attention paid to responsibility for selection and specific building needs taken into account. Lang (1974) considered the age, gender, and cultural-geographic background of the whole

11

staff important when making choices to balance the staff.

Ayers (1957) advised checking credentials and references at the beginning and end of candidate consideration. A critical part of Ayers's process was for the district administrator to observe the candidate teaching in a classroom situation.

Black and English (1986) defined a straightforward, how-to approach:

1. Check listed references personally;
2. Ask for unlisted references at the interview;
3. Make a site visit to the present or previous workplace if there is any doubt or hesitation;
4. Make a police check if there is any doubt;
5. Ask for attendance records (e.g., Monday, Friday absences);
6. Key question: Would you put your own child in this teacher's class? (p. 196)

Wendel, Hoke, and Joekel (1996) contacted successful school administrators and interviewed them, asking what made them outstanding leaders. Many of their subjects felt that they hired the very best people possible. The authors quoted a principal from Missouri. Don Gray explained his selection process:

- Involve teaching staffs in the hiring process.
- Check your applicants in every way possible.
- Allow candidates to substitute teach if possible to get a feel for the school.
- Make the candidates aware of the school philosophy to make sure it matches their philosophies.
- Build a school with such a reputation for excellence that the best in the district want to work there and ask to transfer.
- Work with the personnel director to make sure he or she understands what you are looking for.
- The secret to good school administration is surrounding yourself with quality people. (p. 160)

Al-Rubaiy (1993) described a five-step process. First, selectors recruited through placement offices and media. Next, the central office and principal have

screened together, using mutually agreed upon criteria. In step three, selectors collected writing from these candidates. The fourth step, interviewing, included interviews by central office teams and site-based teams. The fifth and final step involved central office conducting reference checks, thoroughly evaluating the candidates, and making a final choice.

Castetter (1996) divided the selection process into two parts: pre-selection and selection. Castetter's (1996) pre-selection activities included the recruiting of candidates, establishing policies and procedures, determining selection responsibility, identifying staffing needs, and composing job descriptions.

Castetter (1996) designed a model to follow a series of steps which were established to obtain more and clearer information about a given teacher candidate as the process continued. Following the pre-selection activities, the selection activities, according to Castetter (1996), were: (a) application/resume information, (b) preliminary interviews, (c) further interviews, (d) testing or verification of information, (e) reference checking, (f) recommendations to final selectors, and, (g) a final selection interview.

Rebore (1995) outlined the following steps in the selection process:

1. Write the job description;
2. Maintain a pool of candidates;
3. Establish selection criteria;
4. Receive applications;
5. Select (screen) the candidates for interviews;
6. Interview candidates;
7. Check references and credentials;
8. Select the best candidate;

9. Implement the job offer and acceptance; and,

10. Notify unsuccessful candidates. (p. 103)

Gatewood and Feild (1994) summarized the components of a successful selection process: (a) description of the job activities and outcomes; (b) identifying the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the job successfully; (c) the assessment of that knowledge, skills, and ability; and, (d) validation of the assessment.

Planning the Selection Process

Norris and Richburg (1997) advised school administrators to devise a selection plan and to implement it as early as possible in order to attract the top candidates. Bolton (1973) believed that the more organized and precise that plan was, the less chance there was for haphazard decision making.

According to Bolton (1973), the beginning of the planning process required a determination of the numbers and kinds of teachers needed. This may have been as simple and straightforward as a fifth grade teacher to replace a retiring teacher or more complicated, with various combined teaching duties. Jensen (1987) added that, beyond replacement criteria, the process should also be dictated by district goals and needs. For example, a staff that wanted to improve a specific subject area and standardized test scores may have looked for elementary teachers with greater strengths in a particular curriculum.

Castetter (1996) considered districts to be serious about improving their selection processes when they determined, as policy, the responsibilities for selection, the

organization of the process, and time/budget commitments to selection. Castallo, Fletcher, Rosetti, and Sekowski (1992) stressed that every district, regardless of size, should have a selection policy that included a philosophy, defined responsibilities, a process outline of steps, and how final selection was determined. Castetter (1996) believed that a planned approach was helpful, so that when selectors were aware of vacancies, the prepared district administrator knew who was responsible and time and money were available for teacher selection.

Duke and Canady (1991) wrote that published selection policies should address recruitment and screening. The authors considered the more detailed selection aspects were best left to the discretion of the selecting administrator. Castetter (1996) emphasized that administrators must not overlook the need for flexibility due to tight organization and rigid preparation. He stated that district leaders should build flexibility into the process to allow for choices and discretionary moves.

Noid (1996) reported that 58% of the South Dakota districts he surveyed had no written selection procedures. Johnson's (1980) Missouri study revealed that boards of smaller districts had not developed selection policies nor had they provided for funding or planning of selection policy development. Jensen (1987) wrote that most districts simply lacked selection policies. The possible reason stated by Jensen (1987) was that administrators may have considered their selection practices as effective and not in need of better development. Bridges (1992) offered that administrators typically considered selection a less pressing demand than other matters, such as

school finance, negotiations, discipline, or curriculum improvement.

Jensen (1987) advocated a written process because it served as a safeguard against mistakes in selecting teachers. Jones and Walters (1994) stated that the school board should approve written selection criteria and broad policies. Boards operated as policy-making bodies and administrators assumed responsibility for policy implementation. Jensen (1987) argued that selectors were aware of who was in charge if the process stated clear responsibilities and what occurred at certain levels of selection.

Responsibility for Selection

Troisi (1995) noted the most obvious change in selection methods from the 1980s to the 1990s was that teachers have become more involved with school selection teams. Candoli (1995) believed that participatory management theory has increased teacher involvement with selection. Jensen (1987) recommended more teacher involvement in selection. She advocated this for the number of steps and the numbers of people. Norris and Richburg (1997) specified a group of four or five people for a school selection team. They recommended two veteran teachers, the principal, a staff development person, and, possibly, a community representative as selection team members. As Jensen (1987) indicated, at the initial application screening level, one person could have either overlooked a promising candidate or missed some piece of information which would have resulted in the rejection of a promising candidate.

Castallo, Fletcher, Rosetti, and Sekowski (1992) supported teacher involvement in interviews. The authors considered teacher involvement important because responses could be probed by more knowledgeable people and staff members would be more likely to assist in the induction of the chosen candidate. Jensen (1987) argued that if one selector conducted only one interview, there was a chance that the selector could have missed vital information.

Caldwell (1993) reviewed teacher selection methods and recommended that three or more persons conduct interviews. Garman and Alkire (1993) reported the active involvement of principals as selectors in Ohio schools. The authors indicated that the most common principal tasks were screening and interviewing. Caldwell (1993) also believed that the involvement of building teachers in selection contributed to "a collegial spirit among the faculty members" (p. 48).

Drake and Roe (1994) advocated principal and staff input regarding the final selection of a teacher. These authors specified three major selectors to be involved with interviews: the principal, future co-teachers, and a central office administrator. Rebore (1995) advocated a central office/building level shared responsibility for interviewing. Marcum (1988) supported a collaboration of central office and building principal for teacher selection. Rebore (1995) endorsed the involvement of teachers in the interviews at the building level.

McKenna (1965) discussed the benefit of involving teachers in establishing criteria for selection. As McKenna stated, such involvement gave the staff input so that

they could decide what constituted excellence among their own ranks. This could have also brought teachers to a self-analysis of their own teaching performances. Romanish (1991) believed teachers should hire teachers, with no administrative involvement. Gorton and Schneider (1991) disagreed and advocated that building administrators should play a major role in staff selection. Gorton and Schneider (1991) specified the particular importance of principal involvement since central office administrators have held the building principal accountable for staff performance.

Holman (1995) recommended site-based committee involvement in teacher selection and emphasized that the more people involved in a selection decision, the greater the opportunity for a diverse staff. According to Holman (1995), principal/ staff involvement countered the tendency some principals displayed when they chose candidates like themselves. Holman (1995) further suggested that the building committee represented school needs when making the selection decision.

McIntire and Fessenden (1994) considered hiring teachers to be a school level decision, along with curriculum and school improvement. They advocated "bringing as many decisions as possible to the individuals who are most directly involved in and affected by the decisions" (p. 202). Darling-Hammond (1997) recommended the restructuring of school districts to decentralize bureaucratic departments with building faculty performing personnel functions. McIntire and Fessenden (1994) argued that the people responsible for implementing building goals and missions should be chosen by fellow staff members who share that duty. According to the authors, the teachers

and the principal were the major selectors with parents, business partners, and community representatives fulfilling input and information provider roles and the central office implementing the site decision.

Bartlett (1991) identified an advantage in using staff teams for selection because each person on the team could focus on any applicant's particular criterion or aspect. He noted that the knowledge of a given facet of education would be the possible area of expertise of one committee member; classroom management, as an example, could be another selector's strength.

Another advantage Bartlett (1991) emphasized for a site-based team was the sense of responsibility the staff developed for the selected candidate. He reported a remarkable difference in the attitude of veteran staff members toward beginning teachers. Bartlett (1991) cited the willingness to offer assistance, to mentor, and to include the new teacher as contributing factors to the sense of ownership gained from staff involvement in hiring the newcomer.

Murphy and Beck (1995) described two types of local school control. In the most common model, teachers and administrators identified which candidates to interview, made their selection, and sent the preferred person back to the central office for confirmation. The other model of school-based management called for the local building to have personnel budgeting discretion. As Murphy and Beck (1995) outlined this model, the local school committee identified the criteria for candidates as well as the number of teachers needed to meet building needs and goals.

Herman (1993) recommended that parents, along with teachers, should be involved with interviewing and making selection decisions. Herman's administrative experiences confirmed that parents asked important questions and rendered perceptive and educationally sound decisions.

Wendel, Hoke, and Joekel (1996) stated the hiring process provided building principals greater potential capability for interviewing and selecting superior people. The authors found outstanding principals who wanted hiring responsibility, but they also wanted staff involvement in interviewing and selecting.

Blase and Blase (1995) studied successful principals associated with the League of Professional Schools, revealing that principals attempted to hire teachers who would fit their own building's approach. Twelve of the fifty-two League principals included teachers in selection; the remaining principals were considering involving teachers in hiring.

Candoli (1995) summed up the reason for site-based hiring decisions:

> The rationale is quite simple and straightforward; those who are located where the students are, at the school level, know best about what is good for those students. They have the best feel for what the students can and will learn and about how to deliver the programs to their students. (p. 55)

Grady (1995) described the proper functions of a board of education. The school people who have been most removed from the building level operations are the boards of education. As he summarized, the board's function should be to write policy, not to implement it. Miron and Wimpelberg (1992) asserted that local school boards, with the input of parents, could and should establish broad goals and

objectives for schools, and thereby help evaluate building effectiveness. They stressed the broad nature of the board's role, and stated that these general purposes did not include staff selection. Seitz (1994) considered administrators and their staffs to be responsible for carrying out board policies. Seitz (1994) considered the board's function was policy setting and administrators were to implement policies. He specified personnel selection as a management function for administrators, with the exception of superintendent selection. Rebore (1995) stated that the responsibility of the school administrator was to establish processes that would consistently execute board policies.

Staffing Needs Determination

Jensen (1987) stated that the selection team must study the needs of the building and district at the beginning of the process. In her example, compatibility with present staff members may not be the greatest building need. A more pressing school demand could be greater expertise in a curricular area. Castallo et al. (1992) recommended that each time a position becomes vacant, the building's needs should be considered in order to determine the staffing patterns and the types of people to fill the position needs. Jensen (1987) explained that the goals of the district or building are hopefully based upon real, researched needs; therefore, the people who would best meet those needs could be different in ability and background from those who were already there.

Yee (1990) believed that the prepared district would obtain the best teachers when they assess their staffing needs. She distinguished "good-fit" from "weak-fit" teachers in a study of three distinct school districts. The good-fits entered teaching with a serious, well-planned commitment to education. The weak-fits merely chose teaching as a needed job after college graduation. As Yee (1990) concluded, the pro-active, prepared districts have based their needs on obtaining the good-fits. The districts that were unprepared took more chances.

Bookbinder (1992) described the sets of data principals should have considered when determining building personnel needs. In summary, these were: (a) student enrollment changes; (b) education and program changes; (c) staff resignations; (d) transfers, or leaves of absence; (e) the status of the school's mission and goals; and, (f) the way the staff size met those goals.

Jones and Walters (1994) recommended enrollment projections to fulfill staffing needs. The authors believed that the cohort survival method of enrollment analysis provided the best indicator regarding future staffing needs.

In addition to projecting enrollment fluctuations, Jones and Walters (1994) stressed the need to project the survival analysis for teachers. Jones and Walters (1994) stated that the average replacement rate for teachers has been six percent of a teaching staff a year.

Drake and Roe (1994) listed the following areas of staff need analysis: (a) overall staff educational status (degrees, majors, recent in-services); (b) experience

(length of service, different schools, community residency); (c) staff communication of needs; (d) the staff's degree of cooperation; and, (e) staff development resources. Darling-Hammond (1997) emphasized the connection between staff development needs and staffing determinations. She believed that the overall building staff development levels, in relationship to school goals, helped determine the types of candidates sought by the building team.

Job Descriptions

Castetter (1996) considered the job description or position guide as the starting point in defining the most desirable teacher characteristics. He believed that job descriptions should communicate school district goals and purposes. Norris and Richburg (1997) believed that attractive recruiting brochures, which amplified a school district's strengths, should accompany posted job descriptions.

Seyforth (1996) believed the collaboration of several individuals familiar with the position should drive the job description. Jones and Walters (1994) recommended that the current jobholder be consulted about duties and responsibilities to ensure job descriptions have been brought up-to-date, were realistic, and specific to the vacancy. The authors further stated the need to include specific building philosophies and approaches, such as team teaching or collaborative decision making.

Rebore (1995) recommended a different job description for various teaching positions, and stated it was critical to update job descriptions each time a position

became vacant. However, as he stated, all job descriptions should contain basic elements: the job title, duties of the job, responsibilities of the position, and specific qualifications for successful job performance.

Castetter (1996) divided the job description into two main areas: position specifications and person requirements. Position specifications included the job title, function, responsibilities, essential duties, relationships to co-workers, and areas of authority. The person requirements covered experience, education, skills, knowledge, and personal traits. Lang (1974) stated that the job description should include standards or expectations so that candidates initially understood what was wanted. He added that information about the district's size, the goals of the school, student population, and the community has proven to be helpful and informative to job candidates.

Harris (1992) disagreed with writing separate job descriptions for every vacant position, but the general description needed to go beyond a one-sentence job title. He recommended the job title, relevant community and building information, position responsibilities, relationships to other positions, and qualifications desired, should be included in the posted job description. Seyforth (1996) advocated a three-part job description model, which involved general, broad student outcomes the teacher should bring about, a description of the school and district, and job tasks, which would bring about the desired results.

Sybouts and Wendel (1994) believed that position descriptions must include: (a) skills and knowledge required; (b) the relationship of the position to student

outcomes; (c) major duties; (d) terms of employment; and, (e) the education level required. They also advocated district and building level mission statements in the job descriptions.

Bookbinder (1992) preferred describing positions according to building needs. Bookbinder's rationale was that the job descriptions went beyond describing jobs as they presently appear. As he wrote, "the human resources planning process analyzes each school's design to determine those specific job requirements that will be required to fulfill the planned school strategy" (p. 140). According to Bookbinder (1992), schools should build goals, mission, and strategies into the job description so candidates could meet building needs.

Selection Criteria

Castetter (1996) suggested that the next planning aspect was to identify desirable candidate skills and characteristics. Broad categories of criteria covered such areas as mental ability, physical and personal traits, cultural background, professional interests, and the ability to get along with others. Castetter (1996) emphasized this list was not meant to be exhaustive and districts may modify criteria based on needs.

Castetter (1996) cited distinctions for the assessment of criteria, suggesting that mental ability was quantifiable by test scores. Selectors appraised other attributes, like social skills, more subjectively.

Bolton (1973) cautioned that errors increased when given criteria were

overemphasized. As he explained, someone may consider enthusiasm the most important attribute in teacher candidates. Bolton (1973) argued that over-emphasizing enthusiasm could mean that a teacher may have worked and taught with great energy, but lacked the proper knowledge or background for a particular subject.

Garman and Alkire (1993) researched the criteria used by Ohio administrators. The most important criterion was the evidence of successful teaching or student teaching, followed by warmth and enthusiasm, and the ability to maintain classroom control. Nicholson and McInerney (1988) summarized the qualities to look for in a teacher: (a) basic intelligence, (b) academic achievement, (c) appearance, (d) emotional balance, (e) empathy, and, (f) communication skills.

Jensen (1987) contended that a person could still be strong in character traits and not necessarily become a good teacher. She reported that the only predictor of classroom success as a teacher has proven to be successful past (or student) teaching experience. Jones and Walters (1994) specified the successful instructional competencies which school selectors should seek. These were: (a) computer and technology skills, (b) effective teaching methods, (c) emphasis on higher thinking skills, (d) hands-on math and science approaches, (e) teaching to different learning styles, and, (f) putting research based skills into practice. Jensen (1987) cautioned that even these areas were not always verifiable; previous supervisors could have rated marginal teachers as effective instructors.

Newman-Calihan (1994) interviewed ten elementary principals and analyzed

their responses. Her study indicated that principals favored affective criteria, such as personality and, generally, individual perceptions and reactions prevailed when they made selection decisions. The principals in Newman-Calihan's study demonstrated they overlooked objective criteria in favor of intuitive reactions.

Noid's study (1996) reported principals who used the following criteria: (a) honesty, (b) enthusiasm, (c) emotional stability, (d) personality, and, (e) communication skills. He noted that selectors did not emphasize professional behavior or experience criteria.

Bolton (1973) differentiated applied criteria as eliminators and selectors. For example, attendance was either an eliminator (high absenteeism) or a selector (excellent attendance). He warned against using single variables as the only selector; yet, selectors have used a single variable to eliminate undesirable candidates.

Legal Criteria

Deems (1995) emphasized that districts must also be aware that selection criteria conform to the law. As reviewed, the basis for selection must be what the courts have referred to as bona-fide occupational employment qualifications. He explained that selectors could not ask candidates questions regarding any of the following: age, marital status, ethnic origin, religious preference, sexual orientation, or disabilities. Seyforth (1996) summarized The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which called for the essential functions concept. As he explained, selectors could not deny

someone employment because of peripheral functions. Therefore, selectors could not use a handicap condition as a weeding out criterion unless the condition affected a criterion that was essential to the job. Castallo et al. (1992) stated that, although they have a legal right to examine credential and personnel files, placement offices have advised most teaching candidates to waive these rights. The authors believed this had little or no effect on hiring practices. Rebore (1995) stated that the law prohibited basing hiring on a candidate's sex.

Recruitment

Duke and Canady (1991) advised that school district administrators should prioritize recruitment. The authors advocated a line item annual budget for recruitment expenses. Jones and Walters (1994) indicated that schools should pursue a constant, year-around recruitment effort. They believed personnel selectors should keep the pool of candidates at a high level to assure a source of qualified candidates.

Rebore (1995) summarized the best recruitment methods. He cautioned that internal promotions of regular substitutes or teacher aids to teaching positions may have been a good incentive to employees and may have saved recruiting time, but reliance on this applicant pool led to a lack of new ideas and a perpetuation of the present school culture. Jones and Walters (1994) identified successful practices which could be used to recruit teachers: (a) newspaper advertisements, (b) recruiting at universities, (c) recommendations from present staff members, (d) placement bulletin

announcements, (e) building a quality school program, and, (f) including teachers on the recruiting team.

Rebore (1995) advocated employee referrals of outside candidates as long as the referring employee was a top teacher and was satisfied with the workplace. In his opinion, the university placement offices were the best sources for teacher recruitment. Norris and Richburg (1997) advised administrators to establish contacts at placement and education departments. These contacts were to be useful in obtaining the names of top candidates.

Rebore (1995) related that practices of continuing and active recruitment were common in the private sector. In a comparison of school versus private sector recruitment, his conclusion was that schools have not been as active as private businesses in their recruiting and that the quality of teachers would have improved with more active and regular recruiting by school personnel. Bolton (1973) wrote that recruitment was a constant in many successful business organizations so that the process identified the most highly qualified candidates. Yet, Troisi's (1995) study of surveyed New York State districts indicated that these districts did not have ongoing, active recruiting.

Jensen (1987) believed that a school district positioned itself as a progressive, constantly improving organization when its administrators have a reputation for looking for the very best teachers. Teachers with reputations for excellence could be encouraged to apply for positions and interview for jobs. Jones and Walters (1994) described the traits of a district which can attract a supply of qualified candidates: (a)

competitive salary and benefits, (b) good working conditions, (c) attractive living conditions, and, (d) a reputation as a successful district.

Jensen (1987) offered simple guidelines for those in charge of recruitment:

1. Adopt policies and allocate dollars;
2. Assign a qualified recruiter;
3. Keep recruiting an ongoing process;
4. Sell the district to candidates; and,
5. Let people know you want the very best. (pp. 10-11)

Bookbinder (1992) argued for principal connection to the recruitment stage of selection. He also advocated that the principal must have solicited assurances that "candidates being recruited satisfy the expectations of the school's human resource plan and mission" (p. 141). Castallo et al. (1992) considered the involvement of all levels of administration important in the development of recruitment plans. Bookbinder (1992) stated that with ongoing, aggressive recruiting and clear communication to the recruiter (if it was not the principal), there would be an effort made to attract the candidate who helped meet the needs of the building.

Gorton and Schneider (1991) stated that principals need to make those in charge of recruiting aware of particular building needs. They also believed that principals should react to the strengths and weaknesses of recruiting information, such as brochures and descriptions. Gatewood and Feild (1994) favored assigning recruiting duties to the member of the work unit closest to the potential candidate. For schools, this would be the principal or another building staff member.

However, Gorton and Schneider (1991) indicated building level administrators

could contribute most effectively to recruiting by enhancing their schools' reputations for educational quality. Jones and Walters (1994) concurred, and stated that the most important responsibility of recruiters, regardless of school position, was their ability to represent the school in the best way.

Sybouts and Wendel (1994) recommended that principals should attend university job fairs for recruiting. They viewed these visits as opportunities to promote the school district and for principals to attract better candidates. Gatewood and Feild (1994) preferred internal referrals for recruitment sources. The authors supported external recruiting, such as job fairs, but they considered employee referrals as the most reliable, as long as the referring employees had positive work attitudes.

Verification and Screening of Criteria

Shields and Daniele (1982) listed the various ways to assess and determine the presence or absence of attributes or criteria. They summarized that: (a) certification was easily verified; (b) college transcripts, credential files, and application forms were all standard data reviewed by selectors looking for criteria; and, (c) test scores, proof of citizenship, medical exams, personality inventories, and observations of teaching were also all used, but to a much lesser extent. Shields and Daniele (1982) reported that the one method of verification that school selectors considered the most important in determining selection was the personal interview. In their general personnel text, Gatewood and Feild (1994) supported the assertion that the interview was the

essential aspect in the verification of candidate criteria.

Grohe (1981) reported that some personnel selectors used grade point averages (GPA) from transcripts as eliminator criteria, but GPA was not a common screening factor. She found that more frequently used screening variables were reliable references, evidence of successful teaching, and attractive, well-prepared resumes. Webster (1988) indicated that academic ability has been shown to have some relationship to teaching success. Webster (1988) reported that in Dallas, beginning teachers who scored high on both verbal and quantitative intelligence tests generally received the highest rating of teaching performance from supervisors.

Murnane (1996) suggested that many districts have not valued academic talent as an important verification of teaching ability. He offered several possible explanations for not emphasizing scholastic achievement: (a) some selected candidates have known the selectors prior to the process, (b) extracurricular skills and personal traits have a higher priority, and, (c) the academically stronger candidates may not have as much practical experience as others. Norris and Richburg (1997) did not believe a high GPA translated to classroom teaching success. Marcum (1988) reported that principals placed a higher preference on personal traits as criteria, while central office selectors favored more of a balance of traits and teacher preparation. For both principals and central administrators, academic background was of lesser importance.

Shields and Daniele (1982) stated that selectors sometimes proposed tests as appropriate screening tools. Tractenberg (1973) wrote teacher tests and certification

were a historical response to the biases of the patronage systems, which rewarded public jobs as political payoffs. Castetter (1996) considered testing to be a cautionary procedure due to conflicting reports regarding the reliability of test scores predicting future teaching ability. For purposes of ascertaining job knowledge, Gatewood and Feild (1994) preferred a written test or simulation in addition to interview questions. Shields and Daniele (1982) reported that critics considered tests as possibly discriminatory and not predictive of classroom success.

Wise, Darling-Hammond, and Berry (1988) surveyed administrators and theorized that a possible anti-intellectual bias led some survey respondents to admit that they actually preferred candidates with average intellectual ability to more intelligent teachers. Engelhardt (1931), who did not consider intelligence to be a factor in teaching success, described this notion. In fact, his view was that teaching success did not "require high-grade intelligence" (p. 170). Weaver's study (1983) indicated that the best academically were often not hired. Perry (1981) reported that higher grade points were not favored.

Webb, Montello, and Norton (1994) and Deems (1995) considered past work experience to be the best predictor of future work success. Norris and Richburg (1997) advocated evidence of extracurricular involvement as a valuable indicator of a potential teaching candidate. Deems (1995) argued that successful or unsuccessful experience was the best-documented evidence available for the selector to examine when making a decision about whether to recommend a candidate. Noid's (1996)

South Dakota study indicated most principals preferred hiring experienced teachers.

Drake and Roe (1994) supported the validation of experience as the best indicator of possible future teacher success. They advocated telephone call follow-ups to references or even face-to-face verification of experience. Castallo et al. (1992) recommended that selectors should contact all listed references. Drake and Roe (1994) also believed that an on-site observation or videotape would give a view of the candidate's best efforts. Boody and Montecinos (1997) considered a videotape of a candidate's lesson an important verification of teaching ability. The authors favored the principal viewing the taped lesson with the candidate, so that the candidate could explain teaching methods and decisions.

Bookbinder (1992) stated that selection teams should identify a combination of affective characteristics and successful teaching experience in teacher candidates. The affective traits were found in a teacher who was "motivated, enthusiastic, self-assured, emotionally stable, participating, unfrustrated, and with strong willpower" (p. 146).

Bolton (1973) considered personal visits to previous workplaces as an effective method of checking experiences. He recommended a telephone call when a site visit was not convenient. Bolton (1973) stated that the telephone saved time, was cost-effective, and gave the selector an opportunity to ask questions and get answers which referents may not have wanted to put in writing.

Duke and Canady (1991) preferred screening policies that allowed reference checking at the building level, with principals and teachers as screeners. Gatewood

and Feild (1994) considered most letters as unreliable because they were too general and were usually praiseworthy of the candidate. Bolton (1973) supported the reference letter as a more positive selector variable if the letter writer was well known or highly regarded.

Interviews

Shields and Daniele (1982) reported that the most frequently relied on selection practice was the personal interview. Troisi's (1995) survey of New York principals showed that these administrators considered interviews essential to the selection process.

Bolton (1973) discussed the assumption that many school people have considered themselves good judges of character. He argued that interviewers formed judgments and made recommendations based upon single interviews. As Bridges (1992) stated, if this were true, and all administrators were highly adept at picking excellent candidates, then there would be fewer incompetent teachers in classrooms. Gatewood and Feild (1994) realistically acknowledged the use of intuition by selectors, but cautioned that selectors should only use intuitive judgments when making final decisions about similarly rated applicants. Gatewood and Feild (1994) considered it a serious error to base decisions on intuitive hunches early in the selection process.

Hodgson (1987) stated that people who spend a large amount of time talking

to others sometimes have envisioned themselves as competent job interviewers. However, as Hodgson (1987) argued, interviewers were not just naturally born to the task; rather, interviewing was a skill which needed to be learned. Webb et al. (1994) wrote that many of those people conducting interviews had no training as interviewers.

Jensen (1987) reported that some school districts favored a team interview approach, with multiple questioners. She believed that this approach improved interviews. She also favored a structured process or framework for the interview. This did not necessarily mean that the packaged interview was effective. In fact, as Wise et al. (1988) stated, there was no evidence to support that standardized, commercial interview packages were worthwhile. Norris and Richburg (1997) specified the Teacher Perceiver Instrument (TPI) as a beneficial structured interview. The TPI was a set of 60 situational questions for which trained scorers rated candidate responses. Acceptable scoring ranges (usually half of the responses correct) were specified and the selectors then compared candidates' scored responses. Jensen (1987) supported the structured interview because it gave each candidate a fairer assessment and assured the person at the next level (e.g., superintendent) that interviewers directed similar questions to each candidate.

Jones and Walters (1994) recommended a structured interview with open-ended questions, which encouraged the candidates to talk. The authors also believed that structured interviews with planned questions were best for comparing candidates. Castallo et al. (1992) recommended using a form to rate candidates right after

interviews. Jones and Walters (1994) were not opposed to situational types of questions, as long as interviewers posed the same situations to all candidates. They supported situations that demanded problem-solving responses to hypothetical scenarios.

Castallo et al. (1992) addressed the danger of unstructured interviews, because effective teachers could only then be hired by accident, not by design. Bolton (1973) cautioned that it was not necessarily predictive that a candidate who had gone through a poorly conducted interview and was selected would not become a successful teacher. The points stressed by Bolton (1973), Shields and Daniele (1982), and Webster (1988), were that very unstructured, loosely organized types of interviews failed to consistently render the required data for an informed choice.

Lunenberg (1995) concluded that interviews were generally poor predictors of job performance. According to Lunenberg (1995), principals had problems in interviews because they were not always familiar with the skills needed for the job in question, they made hasty decisions early on in the interview, and, they had biases which were confirmed during the interview. Yet, as Troisi (1995) revealed, principals considered the interview to be the most important teacher selection assessment.

Curzon (1995) described general guidelines to interviewing:

1. The interviewer should be relaxed, prompt, and in control of the session;
2. The interviewer should let the candidate talk;
3. Interviewers should allow candidates time to think out answers;
4. Restate questions if necessary and probe incomplete answers; and,
5. Close the interview properly. (pp. 67-68)

Lunenberg (1995) believed principals could improve their interviews by using

structured interviews, by getting training, and by using other measures of selection besides interviews. Sybouts and Wendel (1994) argued that although the structured interview was more valid than unstructured questions, the questions and responses had to address job-related activities. As they indicated, simply asking all the candidates the same irrelevant questions did not allow for a thorough examination of their abilities to teach.

Jensen (1987) cautioned interviewers to avoid questions that candidates could answer with a simple yes or no. She also emphasized that a basic goal of the interview session should be to get the candidate to talk. Unfortunately, Niece (1983) related that the average interview for teaching jobs lasted less than one hour and that the interviewers did over eighty percent of the talking. Norris and Richburg (1997) recommended a minimum of one hour, with candidate responses taking up most of the time. Gatewood and Feild (1994) listed the mistakes which were made by untrained interviewers: (a) excessive talking, (b) inconsistent questioning, (c) use of questions which were not job-related, (d) hasty judgments, (e) nervousness on the part of the interviewer, (f) allowing one or two negative responses to affect the entire assessment, and, (g) favorably evaluating candidates who were similar to the interviewer.

Seyforth (1996) believed that questions that encouraged candidates to talk about real teaching experiences and situations were better than hypothetical questions. Sybouts and Wendel (1994) reviewed research and recommended two factors as predictors of teaching success: past teaching performance and communication skills.

The authors stated that interviewers should therefore focus more on these two aspects of the candidate's abilities rather than on academic courses or appearance.

Gatewood and Feild (1994) supported two worthwhile interview strategies, the situational interview and the behavior description interview. The situational interview was described as a retelling of a real, critical workplace incident, followed by a "what would you do" question. The behavioral description style of questioning asked the candidates to tell what they have actually done in past situations and incidents. Ash (1992) listed specific important questions to ask all candidates. These included questions about why teaching was a career choice, goals for students, discipline, instructional strategies, and effective teacher attributes.

Nicholson and McInerney (1988) described a quick method of selecting and reasoning called inference theory. This theory stated that, early on in the session, the interviewer formed opinions based upon information about a candidate's personality. As the authors explained the fallacy, the interviewer continued to make judgments to support the early impressions of the candidate, although those inferences may not have been relevant at all to the responses and information provided by the candidate.

Jensen (1987) cautioned selectors on matching, which occurred when interviewers sought candidate personality traits that matched their own personalities or attitudes. As Jensen (1987) wrote, while it was important for people in a school to get along, there was a danger that effective teachers could be overlooked simply because they did not seem to fit with the interviewer's personality. An enthusiastic,

energetic principal may have looked negatively on a reserved but highly competent teacher without really knowing the candidate's teaching ability.

Assessment of Teaching Ability

Jones and Walters (1994) listed traits which school administrators should seek in teachers. Teachers who showed enthusiasm, had high student expectations, strong discipline skills, and had the ability to work with at-risk students were highly desirable. Odden (1995) reviewed the competencies expected of beginning teachers. Teacher proficiencies included knowledge of subject matter, teaching method skills, classroom management, and student assessment. Jones and Walters (1994) believed that a difficult task facing selectors was how to assess these characteristics in a candidate. Darling-Hammond's (1997) interviews with young teachers indicated that personality and enthusiasm alone were not enough to ensure successful teaching. Her respondents from the Teach for America (TFA) program had high academic credentials and enthusiasm for teaching, but they lacked teacher preparation courses.

One method of determining teaching ability recommended many times was the direct observation of the candidate teaching in a classroom (Bridges, 1992; Castetter, 1996; Elsbree and Reutter, 1954; Engelhardt, 1931; Norris and Richburg, 1997; Shields and Daniele, 1982; Tractenberg, 1973). Castetter (1996) stated that the decision to use observation as a selection step meant that the district made a commitment to scheduling time for it.

Roueche (1989) reviewed the observation setting, in which selectors assigned teachers objective-based lessons to set up and teach. Selectors gave other candidates the same objective, the team made comparisons, and recommendations resulted. As Roueche (1989) stated, this procedure afforded candidates the opportunity to prove their worth as teachers.

Wise et al. (1988) named several reasons for observations not being used as a selection tool: (a) administrators were not aware of such an option; (b) if districts were satisfied that their selection procedures were getting them quality teachers, they were not willing to go to the costs of time and money which lesson observations would incur; and, (c) districts did not generally make this cost commitment. Norris and Richburg (1997) developed a selection format that included the top candidates teaching two observed lessons to students. The authors admitted that the process was time-consuming, especially when staff members on the observing team would need substitutes for their classes.

Bridges (1992) reported that despite the benefits of selectors seeing the candidates teach, there was not much evidence that this method was widely used. He wrote that 0.7 % of California's districts required videotapes of teaching performance, and only 8.6 % required teaching demonstrations.

Johnson (1980) emphasized that observing teacher candidates in action through structured, planned lesson deliveries was one of the best teacher selection methods available. Johnson's study (1980) analyzed selection and recruitment

practices in Missouri. The survey results indicated that respondents considered observation too difficult and too expensive.

Bridges (1992) believed that teacher selection focused on hiring successful teachers. He used the term "maximally similar context", which recommended the candidate be observed teaching in a classroom situation closely aligned to the classroom conditions of the vacant teaching position. Bridges (1992) strongly supported the integration of observations into the selection process.

Vann (1989) also advocated observing lessons taught by all screened candidates. In Vann's model, those who taught a lesson successfully were involved in a more in-depth interview; those who taught poorly received a short, cursory interview. He viewed this method as a time saver as well as an excellent method of identifying candidates who could teach.

According to Caldwell (1993), the interview should not be the sole determinant in selecting teachers. He recommended that candidates should teach a short lesson to a group of students and the selection team should observe the lesson. Smith (1980) recommended videotapes of lessons by those unable to teach in person.

Bull (1994) surveyed rural administrators in Oklahoma, Utah, and New Mexico. She stated that administrators considered the assessment of teacher candidate portfolios a positive addition to the selection process. Wolf (1991) considered the portfolio worthwhile when it related to past teaching performance. He believed that portfolio lesson plans and descriptions, student work samples, and student work

evaluations gave a clearer picture of the candidate's teaching ability.

Boody and Montecinos (1997) reported that Iowa principals did not consider portfolios a major selection indicator. The authors advocated the greater use of portfolio examination by selection teams. They recommended that portfolios should be required of candidates and should contain lesson plans, lesson videotapes, student work samples, and student assessments. However, Gatewood and Feild (1994) cautioned that increasing the amount of required material before interviews diminished the numbers of applicants, including highly qualified candidates.

Non-Teaching Factors

As previously stated by several authors, teaching ability should be the main concern of the selection process. However, as Bridges (1992) related, some selectors placed teachers in their positions for reasons other than teaching ability or even experience.

Snyder (1943) wrote about the practice of nepotism and whether or not local residents should be preferred candidates. Both situations have contributed to staff inbreeding (Snyder, 1943). Castallo et al. (1992) strongly recommended that written policies should address nepotism.

Candidate residency is not a new issue for selectors. A 1948 bulletin issued by the Michigan State Schools Superintendent, Lee Thurston, cautioned local administrators not to hire too many home teachers: "Other things being equal, the school board

should employ only a limited number of home teachers. Hometown teachers tend to lead to cultural inbreeding" (quoted in Elsbree and Reutter, 1954, p. 65). As Elsbree and Reutter (1954) stated, the hometown teacher could indeed have been the finest candidate available. However, selectors should not have considered that home status as a criterion for selection.

Castallo et al. (1992) emphasized that clear policies on the school board's role in selection must be written. They believed that this clear policy would hinder the practices of board members lobbying for or against local teaching candidates. Further, Castallo et al. (1992) did not support the consideration of local candidates simply for courtesy purposes.

Final Hiring Decision

Rebore (1995) wrote that when selection teams have completed all interviews, comparisons, reference checks, and verifications, the superintendent of the district should make the selection decision. Rebore (1995) recommended that the super-intendent conduct an interview with the top candidate before extending the job offer. Rebore (1995) contended that the board of education should then formalize the super-intendent's recommendation. Castallo et al. (1992) stated that the selection team should send the names of the top three finalists to the superintendent for considera-tion. The superintendent then should have made the offer and notified the board regarding the newly appointed teacher.

Norris and Richburg (1997) recommended the selection team serve as the final decision-makers for the position. They believed the team should then present the selected teacher to the board. First (1992) stressed the importance of school boards recognizing the reality and benefit of decentralized control. She advocated staff selection at the building level, with the board adopting an oversight perspective, to assure that selectors followed proper procedures.

<div align="center">Selection as a Change Agent</div>

Research literature, journal articles, and popular media pieces have all recently focused on the need for changes in the ways we educate our children. School leaders have expanded the opportunity for making changes when new staff members are hired. A major impediment to change in any organization is the need to overcome status-quo practices.

Administrators should follow the aspects in the following summary of literature recommendations. These selection methods will help schools to obtain the right personnel to bring about desired changes. Simply changing the staff will not be enough to produce meaningful organizational change. However, the people who teach will be the real ones responsible for carrying out lasting changes. As Yee (1990) stated, the future quality of schools depends upon who will teach.

As teachers retire and selectors replace them, the same turnover will occur in administrative ranks. Black and English (1986) believed that the best legacies those

administrators could leave behind as they retire were quality teaching staffs. To say

that they did their very best to get excellent teachers for their students is a statement

that, hopefully, all administrators could make.

Table 1

Summary of Literature Recommendations

Selection Aspect	Authors
Planning: Written, precise plans	Bolton (1973); Jensen (1987); Duke and Canady (1991); Castallo et al. (1992); Jones and Walters (1994); Castetter, (1996)
Selection Responsibility: Use of building team for input and/or choice	Jensen; Romanish (1991); Bartlett (1991); Caldwell (1993); Drake and Roe (1994); Darling-Hammond (1997); Norris and Richburg (1997)
Staffing Needs Determination: Proactive planning, focus on school needs as well as replacements	Jensen; Drake and Roe; Castallo et al.; Bookbinder (1992); Darling-Hammond
Job Descriptions: Written according to buildings, with staff involvement/input	Bookbinder; Jones and Walters; Seyforth (1996); Sybouts and Wendel (1996)
Selection Training: Selectors should receive proper training	Lunenberg (1995); Jensen; Bolton; Castetter; Hodgson (1987); Webb et al. (1994)
Selection Criteria: Teaching experience, personal traits; criteria were set by more than one selector	Garman and Alkire (1993); Jensen; Bolton; Nicholson and McInerney (1988); Castetter

Table 1--Continued

Selection Aspect	Authors
Recruiting: Planned, ongoing, and active. Use of placement offices and/or job fairs at universities	Jones and Walters; Rebore; Bolton; Jensen; Bookbinder; Gorton and Schneider (1991); Gatewood and Feild (1994)
Screening: Team-based criteria; successful experience, school-candidate match, general skills; use of multiple screeners	Webb et al. (1994); Deems (1995); Drake and Roe; Bookbinder; Duke and Canady
Interview Format: Structured, use of team, multiple interviews	Jensen; Rebore; Jones and Walters; Norris and Richburg; Castallo et al.; Gatewood and Feild.
Key Interview Questions: Open-ended, experiential or hypothetical; questions address traits, skills, and experiences	Seyforth; Jones and Walters; Sybouts and Wendel; Gatewood and Feild; Castallo et al.; Curzon (1995)
Interview Assessment: Focus is on teaching ability, skills, traits	Sybouts and Wendel; Jensen; Gatewood and Feild; Bridges (1992)
Teaching Assessment: Candidates are observed teaching a lesson	Elsbree and Reutter (1954); Tractenberg (1973); Bridges; Vann (1989); Castetter; Norris and Richburg; Wise et al. (1988); Caldwell (1993)
Final Hiring Decision: Input or decision at building site; board confirms, does not hire	Norris and Richburg; First (1992); Seitz; Romanish, (1991); Grady (1995); Miron and Wimpelberg

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The study compared selection practices to recommended methods. The methodology section of the study set up a means for making an analysis of the reported practices as they compared to the identified preferred procedures from Chapter II, the literature review.

Analysis determined how reported selection aspects compared favorably to literature review recommendations and identified selection areas in need of improvement.

Selection Aspects Studied

The aspects of teacher selection described in Chapter II, the Literature Review, formed the framework for the data gathering and analysis. These aspects were: (a) selection plans and responsibilities, (b) determination of staffing needs, (c) preparation of job descriptions, (d) assignment and training of selectors, (e) identification of selection criteria, (f) recruitment of candidates, (g) applicant screening, (h) candidate interviews, (i) assessment of candidates, and (j) final candidate selection.

48

Population Sample

The group of interest for the study was elementary public school principals in Michigan. Principals were chosen as a group so that people with a common hiring purpose could report their selection behaviors from a common perspective. Elementary principals were selected apart from their secondary colleagues because of different personnel needs and qualifications from one level to another. Secondary principals most often have specific subject area needs in position vacancies; elementary schools require generalists with a broad curricular background. Public school principals cannot use religious background or training as a criterion. Parochial school principals do not ordinarily work with central office administrators when selecting, as do public school building leaders. The sample was restricted to Michigan schools to assure that all responding principals worked with the same certification requirements.

Method of Data Gathering

Krathwohl (1993) cited the following reasons for appropriately choosing qualitative analysis: (a) research is lacking and must emphasize discovery rather than validation or confirmation, and (b) the focus of study is on a process and its internal dynamics rather than a product. Tesch (1990) described the main task of qualitative analysis as the discovery of connections. Patton (1990) preferred qualitative analysis for process evaluation studies:

Process data permit judgments to be made about the extent to which the

program or organization is operating the way it is supposed to be operating, revealing areas in which relationships can be improved as well as highlighting strengths of the program that should be preserved. (p. 95)

Tesch (1990) referred to qualitative research for evaluation purposes as appropriate for dealing with relationships between needs and solutions and the improvement of programs. Teacher selection programs are based upon needs (new teachers) and offer solutions (successful teachers hired). The comparison of practices to recommendations indicated the ways to improve selection programs. Patton (1990) recommended the use of published literature to add focus to scholarly qualitative research. He also recommended using the literature to design the framework for analysis.

Data Collection

Principals reported information about their school buildings and districts. Qualitative analysis afforded several options for data gathering, such as site visits, document examination, and interviews. Legal and ethical constraints prohibited visiting schools and actually witnessing selection practices. Therefore, interviewing principals represented the best method available for learning how principals and their districts selected teachers. The researcher conducted telephone interviews.

McClintock, Brannon, and Maynard-Murphy (1983) reviewed the benefits of multiple-site interviews: (a) to enhance reliability, (b) to facilitate replication, and, (c) to permit analysis of data and generalizations to larger populations. The same authors stated the general aims of qualitative surveys: (a) to capture the frame of reference and

definition of a given informant or participant and thus to avoid instrumentation arti-facts of standardized measurement procedures, (b) to permit detailed examination of organizational processes, and, (c) to elucidate those factors peculiar to the case that may allow greater understanding of causality.

Patton (1990) considered the standardized open-ended interview appropriate for reducing bias, providing variations in amounts of information, and for obtaining comparable data from various respondents. His definition of standardized involved taking each respondent through the same questions, in the same sequence and with limited probing of responses.

Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that the essence of qualitative analysis focused on the analysis of words rather than numbers or formulae. This study on selection was accomplished by using qualitative analysis to evaluate selection process aspects as reported by principals. A typical Likert Scale questionnaire, a True-False instrument, or other coded survey method may have restricted survey respondents. Principals may also have responded to such a survey the way they thought they should select teachers rather than describing their personal experiences regarding teacher selection.

As the literature review indicated, teacher selection is an organizational process with many aspects. Single word responses like "always", "sometimes", and "never" could not provide the detailed examination cited in point two above by McClintock et al. (1983).

Sample Size

A method of multiple-case analysis called the case cluster method also involved the use of information from various sites. McClintock et al. (1983) described the method in detail and stated the sampling requirements. The requirements are $n >$ p, where p = the number of variables in the study. With the 13 survey questions on selection aspects as variables (see Survey Questions, Appendix A) and three demographic distinctions (years of experience, school size, grade level configuration), the minimum sample required would have been 17 respondents. Huberman and Miles (1994) referred to a cross-case qualitative study, which examined data obtained from 25 interviews.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) did not recommend a sample size, but supported the use of multiple sources. Their approach used respondents with differing characteristics to identify process similarities and differences. For this study on selection, the random selection of respondents yielded male and female principals from urban, rural, and suburban districts. The respondents had a vast range of years of experience and worked with different student populations and enrollments. Educational studies examined by Miles and Huberman (1994) employed cross-site analysis and used up to 22 as a sample size.

McClintock et al. (1983) recommended stratified sampling for multiple case analyses. The Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principal's Association 1996 directory listed 820 principals who identified themselves as either K-6, K-5, K-4, K-3,

or K-2 principals. With these strata used to divide the principals, the following break-down occurred: K-5 principals = 50%; K-6 principals = 33%; K-4, = 9%; K-3, = 5%; K-2 = 3%.

Krathwohl (1993) strongly advocated random sampling in cross-site analysis. A suitable method he recommended for choosing respondents was stratified random sampling. Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended stratification as an important requirement for clustering cases for rating purposes. A workable number of respondents corresponded to grade level percentages of principals. With $n > p$ as a requirement, the following numbers of principals were chosen randomly with replacement, from their grade level classifications: K-5 = 18; K-6 = 12; K-4 = 3; K-3 = 2; K-2 = 1. Therefore, the total n = 36. Thirty-six met the $n > p$ requirement; yet, a lower number would have left some grade center school principals underrepresented when drawing the sample respondents.

Methods of Contact

The Michigan section of The 1996 National Elementary School Principal's Association (NAESP) Directory provided a list of prospective respondents. Using a statistical table of random numbers (Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs, 1988), the final three digits in the random number table were chosen, and the corresponding numbered principal was chosen as a potential respondent. Letters of transmittal requesting a telephone interview were then mailed, along with return post cards (see Appendix B).

Permission to contact subjects was granted from the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board in May of 1996 (see Appendix C).

A critical item in the letter of request was the question asking if the respondent in fact had selection duties. Some principals, notably those from larger districts, have had fewer selection responsibilities because their districts employed personnel administrators or departments who handled most or all of the selection duties. People from their grade level stratum replaced these principals and those who chose not to reply to the interview request. Random replacement continued until the n = 36 respondent list was completed. One hundred sixty principals received requests, with 36 responding, for a response rate of 22.5%.

Interview Questions

Krathwohl (1993) recommended that researchers use interview questions because of the utility for probing and searching. As he stated, the respondent was thus not confused with questions and non-responsive or unclear answers needed clarification and follow-ups.

Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended a structured interview format for comparability purposes. They stated that interviewers should not ask respondents a differing set of questions; so, a comparison of responses was more meaningful. The recommended aspects of selection from the literature review formed the framework which Miles and Huberman (1994) advocated setting up before question writing.

The single question, "How do you select teachers?" could have been asked. Yet, for purposes of analysis, the responses may have been vague and very difficult to detect similarities and differences. Therefore, the recommended stages and processes helped to establish a more precise set of questions. The questions paralleled the sequential selection aspects described in the literature review. The text of the survey instrument, along with follow up probes to gain more information, is included in Appendix A.

Janesick (1994) recommended pre-interviews as a pilot study to test the questions. Placement officers at Western Michigan University, Central Michigan University, and Hope College received the interview questions. These officials reviewed the questions and considered them suitable for hiring principals. The questions were also administered to three administrators in the same school district. Follow-up questions were added and the order of presentation adjusted after administering the three pilot interviews.

Krathwohl (1993) advised clustering the questions in a logical flow so that the respondent could adjust to a mental flow of answering. The interview questions allowed for this easily, since the selection variables tended to follow a chronological sequence from the early stages of planning on through to actual hiring.

Analysis of Data

Patton (1990) recommended that interview transcripts should be typed

verbatim before analysis. The data gathered from respondents were tape-recorded answers to interview questions. Transcripts of these answers could then be analyzed.

The initial task of analysis was to search for trends, common characteristics, and indicators to illustrate the general state of knowledge and practice about teacher selection among this group of Michigan elementary principals about specific selection aspects. Miles and Huberman (1994) advised setting a coding chart of possible terms of response or indicators. The researcher wrote coded descriptors and phrases in the margins of the transcripts (see Appendix D, transcript). The codes corresponded to "chunks" of sentences or phrases. The use of short code descriptors allowed for data sorting and clearer analysis. The codes were used to derive more tables for grouping and differentiating school districts and principals.

Data Reduction and Display

Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated that, after coding, researchers should group responses from cases into similar categories. After coding the transcripts, a summary table (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of respondents' answers was formulated. This summary showed characteristics of principals and their districts regarding responses to questions about selection process aspects and stages (see Appendix E, Summary Table).

Miles and Huberman (1994) described the next data sorting method as a Site-ordered Descriptive organization of data (see Appendix F). These displays were

lengthy because they used principals' responses to describe the quality of the various processes. Respondents were either directly quoted, or answers were summarized. As Miles and Huberman (1994) described, the key to formulating this data was to group the principals and districts with shared characteristics and then identify positive and negative examples which were indicative of the status of the process as exhibited by the like respondents. The positive/negative judgment related to evaluations of the response as compared to literature review recommendations.

An important validation point for this study was the use of a percentage comparison to illustrate the qualitative analysis. McClintock et al. (1983), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Krathwohl (1993) advocated the use of some quantitative data in analysis. Patton (1990) stated that qualitative analysis must make judgments about clear patterns, supported data, weak patterns, and variations in patterns of responses.

The final data analysis for each selection aspect was the comparison and description of each selection aspect as described in the interview responses. The literature review defined appropriate practices.

<div align="center">Data Analysis Summary</div>

The following six steps are a summary of the data analysis: (1) taped interview; (2) typed transcript; (3) coded descriptors on transcripts; (4) summary of responses and groupings of codings; (5) descriptive report for each process aspect, quoting positive and negative indicators; and, (6) comparison of the selection aspects to the recommended methods of the Literature Review.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Organization of Data

The primary study objective was to compare reported selection practices to methods prescribed by authors and researchers. This formed the basis of the data reported in Chapter IV. Selection process aspects determined the order of questioning of the principals. For each collective set of responses, various principals' descriptions compared favorably to the recommended procedures described in Chapter II. For all responses except for question one (number of hires), those favorable comparisons were reported as percentages. Percentages also denoted numbers of responses that bore little or no resemblance to advocated procedures. Narratives described these compared groups, as well as common responses with mixed favorable and poor indicators.

The data-reporting format consisted of aggregations of common question responses. Selected quotes or paraphrased answers comprised the narrative illustrations of similarly grouped responses. Coded descriptors quoted responding principals. For example, principal 2-A worked at a K-2 building; 3-A was from a K-3 school, 4-A, a K-4, 5-A, a K-5, and 6-A's was a K-6 building.

58

New Teachers Hired

In order for selection to be a priority, principals need to be actively involved in hiring. Question one asked the principals how many new teachers they had hired in their buildings in the past three years. Many principals paused and thought before responding. Several counted aloud. Figure 1 illustrated the numbers of new teachers hired at each school. Eight principals were involved in interviewing and selection at the time they were contacted, so the numbers in Figure 1 were possibly lower than the actual numbers of hired teachers. More than half of the respondents reported four or fewer teacher selections for their buildings during the prior three years. Six reporting principals participated in teacher selection as a part of an administrative team although
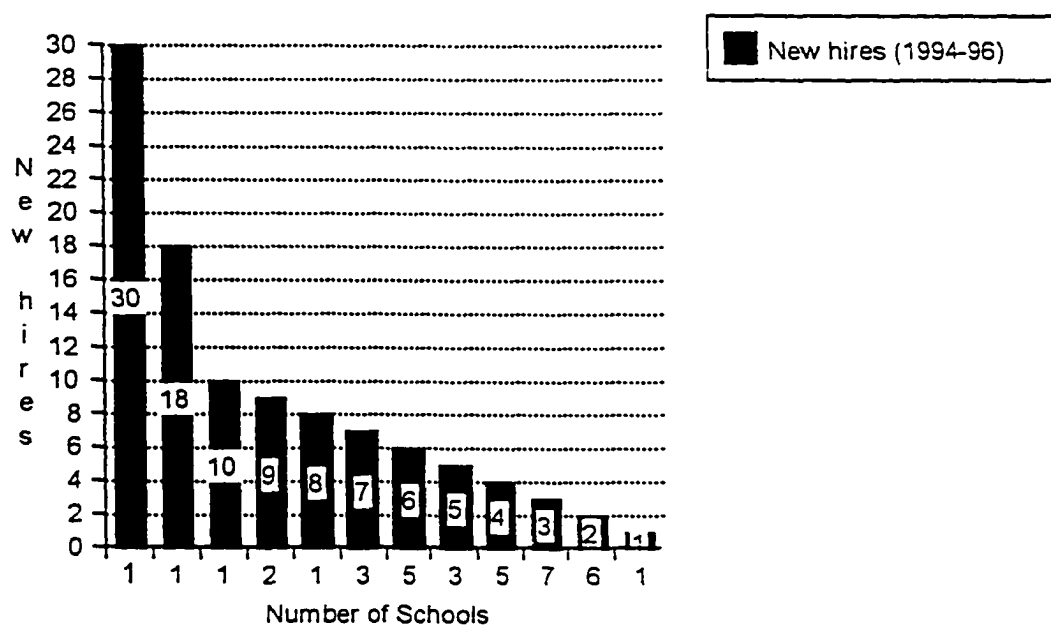
Figure 1. New Teachers Hired.

their own schools did not have vacancies. This question also corroborated the response given on the consent form (see Appendix B) that the respondent indeed had recent selection responsibilities from 1994-96.

Involvement in Teacher Selection

The second question verified the extent of principals' involvement in the recent teacher selections. Nearly all of the 36 principals (94%) reported extensive involvement in the process. The two principals (6%) who were less involved were from the two largest school districts. These two districts restricted principal selection activity to interviewing.

As Principal 5-B related, "I met with the committee from the personnel department and we interviewed the teachers." Principal 5-H responded, "I interviewed them; I sat in. Three of us were the interview committee." The other 34 principals mentioned activities such as screening, recruiting, verification of references, and overall selection responsibilities. There were no principals included in the study who did not have selection involvement over the past three school years.

Selection Plan Status

The literature review recommended written selection plans for school districts. The third interview question asked, "Does your district have a written selection plan or policy?" Follow-up questions addressed the extent to which selectors followed plans

and how specific the plans were. Principals who had no written procedures or policies also described their selection plans. Selectors from the twelve best-prepared districts (33%) followed written selection plans. Principal 6-G stated, "We have a formalized hiring policy." These principals indicated that administrators set plans to a degree of detail such that selectors knew their roles and how to proceed in the process. In a somewhat negative response, Principal 6-J related that, "The superintendent is a paper-pencil kind of guy; he wrote it all up."

The remaining respondents reported no written plans or procedures. However, 19 respondents stated their unwritten plans were followed by the selectors of the districts. As Principal 5-J indicated, "We all do it the same way; (it's) an unwritten policy." Several of these principals simply seemed to accept these plans because "it's (the plan) directed ("dictated") ("choreographed") by the central office." The principals who described this situation were Principals 4-C, 5-L, and 6-A, respectively. Principal 4-B replied, "We've discussed it (the plan). (We) haven't written it up formally. We need to do that." Principal 6-H spoke of a "strict plan that we adhere to."

Four responses indicated that principals followed their own site plans from year to year. There was no common district plan known or followed in these instances. Principal 6-C responded that he did not follow the plan: "There is a plan, but it's rather 'loosey-goosey'." Principal 3-B did not consider written plans important: "It's (the plan) probably in that big book (Board Policy Book), somewhere, but I have no reason to look." In referring to district colleagues, Principal 5-K stated, "In general, they may

(follow a plan). I don't know about all the time."

Only one principal, 5-Q, reported that she followed no plan. This principal represented 3% of the sample. The respondent did not indicate any tendency to follow a similar plan from year to year within the building or district.

Selection Responsibility

Several literature citations supported selection plans that thoroughly covered selection aspects and involved site personnel. The third question asked principals to describe their selection plans and identify the selectors involved. The respondents who described their plans in detail also indicated a responsibility for procedures and assured that the selectors followed plans on a regular basis.

Twenty-one principals (58%) used building teams and described various selection aspects that included those teams. Principal 2-A described a plan that included the posting of the position, building committee screening, selection, and multiple interviews. Principals 3-A and 5-D spoke about their building committees setting up questions before interviewing. Principal 5-D also included job descriptions and criteria setting as a part of the plan description. Principal 3-A referred to a negative indicator, school board micro-management.

Principal 5-H described the use of a broad-based team: "There's the building principal, somebody from the School Improvement Team, a staff member, somebody from the community, somebody from central office." Principal 3-B related the

advantage of team selection: "I believe it gives that person (the chosen candidate) a better opportunity to begin when you have some people that you've already established camaraderie with." Principal 4-B referred to "a committee that we put together based upon the position. For example, we just hired a music teacher. So, my committee included the principal from the other building and two classroom teachers and two music teachers. So, we try to make our committee representative of the people they'd be working with."

A group of principals had inconsistent plans and responsibilities. Principal 5-G said that the building team did not always do the selecting. Principal 6-D stated that the superintendent might or may not have participated in interviews. Principal 5-M did not include himself in the interviews: "I'm a little bit different (from the other district principals). I usually don't participate in the team interview. I figure, once I screen them down, I can live with that choice."

The other 15 principals used administrative teams with less building input or involvement. There was also not as much depth or detail to their plan descriptions. These principals most often emphasized interviewing and screening aspects of selection. The team focus was usually an administrative group of selectors. Eleven of these 15 respondents did not refer to building staff input. Principal 6-F reported parent and teacher involvement, but they were on separate committees. Although some principals did not report a building focus, there was a plan described in general terms. Principal 6-E spoke of an administrative team screening applicants and setting

up interview questions. Principal 6-H stated that all five district elementary principals worked together on the selection.

Six principals (17%) referred only to interviews when describing plans. Only administrators had selection responsibility; there was no mention of building site input. Principal 4-C related a scenario which does not appear to be dictated by a plan or procedure: "If we're getting toward the end of the summer, we're panicky and people are involved in different things, it will be at least two (administrators) doing the selecting." These six respondents omitted criteria, screening, and candidate assessment.

Determination of Staffing Needs

Literature citations emphasized the planned determination of staffs based upon building needs. The respondents described how their staffing needs were determined. Three respondents (8%) determined needs according to building priorities and included staff input and collaboration. As Principal 5-O stated, "I try to figure out a couple (staffing) scenarios; I take it to staff. It's a staff decision, so no questions." Principal 6-C responded, "As a site-based district, it's an equal share with the staff. We have a very organized team base." Principal 5-D: "The School Improvement Team has input as to what our staffing needs are." This principal also reported a downside to the process. Her staff helped set the needs; then, "there's the bidding and bumping. All the district teachers are invited to a 'cattle call' where the vacancies are bid on."

Six principals worked together with the central office to determine staffing needs. There appeared to be evidence of genuine collaboration in these principals' responses. They described "sitting down as a team" (3-A); "We work together," (6-F); and, "...we look at how we place people," (6-H). Principal 6-L also reported that parents have driven district staffing decisions without actually being on site-based committees: "We've really had a lot of parents asking for and demanding lower class sizes. They'll come to board meetings, PTO, stuff like that. The administration and board listen to them and that's really had some impact on us keeping class sizes down."

Twenty-four principals provided input to the central office about their building staff needs. Central office administrators then made the determination about whether to increase or decrease staff. One principal in this group, 5-R, seemed hopeful of securing greater staffing controls: "As our superintendent has more years in the district, he's giving us more latitude in this."

Several principals expressed dissatisfaction with the time and effort needed to get the central office to add teachers. As Principal 5-C related, "They (central office administrators) won't give us the staff, even though we're pretty sure; sometimes it's even after school's started." Principal 5-J had not seen any changes over a long career: "We try to figure out what we need in April; I've been around 24 years, and it's never worked out until August." Principal 5-Q worked in a district which showed board micro-management tendencies: "I make recommendations to the superintendent;

from there to the board curriculum committee; to the board finance committee; that is the most difficult one; finally, for board approval." Principal 6-L expressed the dissatisfaction of waiting to determine needs: "We interviewed and hired on the Friday before school started. We hired her Friday and on Monday she was in the classroom." Principal 6-E spoke about contract compliance: "It's a little clumsy because of our posting and bidding; if this gal decides, she can bid to another building."

Three principals (8%) did not indicate any building input. Their responses did not reveal a process for needs determination. Principal 6-A's response showed detachment: "My role is to use the staff I'm allocated to my building to the best of my ability." Principal 6-G stated a similar assignment: "(If enrollment goes up), we have to move children. (Central office) tells us to make do; make it work." This principal simply had no room for large numbers of new students. Principal 6-K concurred: "We haven't had to deal with it. If it gets much bigger, we would have to deal with it, but we don't have room, anyway."

Job Descriptions

According to the literature review, job descriptions should have specified teaching positions at particular school buildings and selectors should have written them with input and consultation from the staff. Four respondents (11%) indicated such practices. Principal 3-A talked to the faculty at the start of the selection process: "I'll say, 'What are the items you find necessary to be successful?' Before we even

interview, we lay out the position." Principal 4-B's staff focused on job descriptions as a school goal: "Job descriptions were for part of our North Central Accreditation. They differ from grade to grade, depending on developmental levels." Principal 6-J referred to preparing job descriptions as "a team effort. Administrators write, with input from the staff."

Seven principals spoke about job descriptions that were building specific. However, they did not mention staff input. Either these principals wrote the job descriptions themselves or someone from the central office wrote them. Principal 6-A spoke of the importance of building needs driving the job descriptions: "If you do some type of departmentalization or team teaching, you put that out (in the job description) when you're advertising." Principal 5-P did not indicate specificity beyond naming the school: "You have to list it, but they're very generic. Opening a third grade position at 5-P Elementary. Must have a teaching certificate. Typically, they're posted by building." Principal 5-M said, "We just give it a full time equivalency. We don't give it a grade level."

Twenty-four principals referred to job descriptions by district, not building. Single principals, central office administrators, or administrative teams wrote them. Administrators did not consider building need or staff input for the job descriptions. The more positive comments from these principals reflected the input they had in writing job descriptions. As Principal 5-H responded, "There's a general description for classroom teacher and I can add to that if there's anything special." Many of these

respondents did not consider job descriptions an important part of teacher selection. Principal 5-E: "Usually, though, it's just 'third grade teacher', that kind of deal." Principal 6-D: "We have to have job descriptions for legal purposes." Principal 5-D: "A second grade teacher is a second grade teacher." Principal 5-B did not know the location of job descriptions: "You know something? I know we have job descriptions written out. But, where they are, I can't really tell you."

Only one principal (3%) stated that the district had no job descriptions. As Principal 6-C related, "Quite frankly, (the most recent) hiring was a hit or miss affair and we didn't have job descriptions."

<div align="center">Selection Training</div>

Several authors recommended training for selectors. Fifteen principals (42%) responded that they had received training in teacher selection. This selection training took the form of graduate course work, seminars, or workshops. One principal, 4-A, stated that the district made a commitment to training its principals "The former personnel director did a lot (of training); do's and don'ts; the million dollar decision; what you can't ask; what you should (ask)." Principal 3-A gained the benefits of non-education selection training: "It (the Padgett-Thompson seminar) was done mainly for industry, but it was very helpful to me." Principal 6-G's district used a packaged program: "All administrators have been trained in the Teacher Perceiver."

Twelve principals reported no specific selection training. However, their

districts were committed to regularly discussing teacher selection. Principal 2-A considered this prioritization valuable: "Our administrative team has worked on that area. The past two years, especially." Principal 5-I had in-house training as an early priority: "When I was new, my superintendent made selection a critical part of my training." Several principals mentioned discussions, as did Principal 5-G: "We have discussed rating scales, recommendations, credentials, GPA." Principal 5-M: "We think it's pretty critical, so we discuss it." Principal 6-K: "We discuss our selection process and that's how we formulate our process."

Three principals reported limited discussion about selection. Principal 6-A responded that he and central office personnel only discussed the legalities of selection. Principal 5-N said, "There's communication (about selection). Not a lot, but I think he (the superintendent) has confidence we're looking in the same direction."

Six principals (17%) reported that they had not received selection training, nor was there discussion about selection among district administrators. As Principal 3-B summarized, "I just do my own thing." Principal 5-P reported little discussion: "The central office here believes in that participatory management and that the building level has the know-it-all to hire people that will fit with their program."

Selection Training Needs

Respondents specified their areas of selection training interest. Thirteen principals, 36% of the sample, responded that they could use training in specific areas of

selection or the whole process of selection. Several principals would readily accept training, like Principal 6-C: "Yes, absolutely, I would like to have that (training)." Others felt that a refresher course was in order. Principal 5-B: "I think teaching methods are changing and I think we need an update on that." Principal 5-K spoke of the scarcity of training programs: "I've never run across it (training) at a university or seen a brochure advertising selection training. So, if there's something out there that's good, I'm sure it will benefit me."

Those 23 principals (64%) who reported no need for further selection training answered that they were comfortable with their present selection practices. Many of these principals believed that experience was an important determinant in the need for training. As Principal 5-D responded, "We have a lot of new principals in this district who need some help. I'm an old hand at this. I've been doing this a hundred years. I'm their mother." Principal 5-M felt that errors could be minimized with selection training: "I think the committee does (need training). I've been on some committees where they get screwed up with the wrong one. There are times, I think, they made bad choices."

Five principals reported they would like training in interviewing. Two principals wanted to know the best screening methods. Two indicated general training, with no specific needs mentioned. The other training areas, stated by one principal each, were: best observation methods; how to choose the best teacher; special education selection; legal aspects; the integrity of the selection process; and, the correlation of

candidate characteristics to successful teaching.

General Selection Criteria

The literature review recommended criteria set by more than one person. In addition, criteria should address teaching ability, school needs, outstanding candidate characteristics, and skills. The principals were asked to describe their criteria for teacher selection, how those criteria were set, and who was responsible for choosing criteria. Twelve respondents (33%) reported that they based criteria upon building needs, goals, or a combination of affective characteristics and teaching ability indicators. The criteria were either set at the building level by staff representatives, or by administrators.

Principal 5-J expressed the level of site-based involvement: "The committee (principal and three teachers) sits down and talks about what we are really looking for in a teacher." Principal 5-D elaborated on the criteria his building had set: "Work with disadvantaged students, computers, reading skills; those types of things were written into the job description. (The criteria) were set by a committee of teachers, parents, and administrators. It went through our School Improvement Committee."

Principal 5-P expressed traits, skills, and knowledge as criteria: "He (the candidate) should be a team member, he should understand Chicago Math; our science; personality. Then, when we interview, we try to match up." The criteria-setting activities were sometimes removed from the building level and were set by a team of school

administrators. Principal 4-C described her top criteria: "Their ideas on how children learn; I always look for number one, their attitude toward children." This same principal was vague on the setting of criteria: "I think those were kind of set amongst ourselves (the district administrators)." Principal 6-K combined traits with experience: "Primarily we look at their experience; their personality; whether they're a compassionate person."

In 19 responses, only one person, the principal or a central office administrator, set the criteria. Their standards demonstrated some balance of teaching ability and traits. Principal 3-B expressed the need for examining teaching ability and affective characteristics: "I look for background and training. But, if I don't sense a love for children, they (the candidates) don't need to be here." Principal 5-M reiterated this need for a well-rounded candidate: "It's important that they've got the whole package. She (a dismissed teacher) had 30 years. I thought she was pretty powerful, but she was just too damn mean." There were no references to collaboration or input regarding the criteria setting. Principal 6-F stated: "It was his (the superintendent's ideas about criteria). So, that's the way we did it." Principal 5-K admitted to dominating the criteria setting aspect by leaving out staff input: "Talk about people (the staff) who need training."

In five responses (14%), the only criteria mentioned were affective traits. Principal 5-A illustrated this priority: "We're looking more for, can you get along with adults and young people as opposed to how academically sound are you?" Principal

5-Q mentioned only one criterion: "Compatibility. Not that you want a bunch of clones." Principal 5-H wanted "someone that would get along with everyone else. Personality is what I'm getting at." Principal 5-I mentioned enthusiasm and comfort as criteria.

Recruitment

Recruitment should be a planned, ongoing process. Selectors should be active recruiters who use college and university services. Interview question nine asked principals to describe their recruiting practices. Follow-up questions asked each respondent about recruiting responsibility and the time of year for recruiting. Seven principals (19%) described personal recruitment as a continuing, ongoing event or as a regularly scheduled practice each winter or spring. Principals and/or central office administrators from these districts attended college and university job fairs.

These seven respondents reported recruitment through personal contact with candidates. Principal 5-P referred to an assistant superintendent who recruited nationally in order to find minority candidates. Principal 5-H described recruiting as an "ongoing thing." Only one of these principals considered recruiting unnecessary. Although his district recruited regularly, Principal 5-L saw "no real need to recruit."

Ten principals reported district personnel who recruited through college or university placement bulletins. Responsible selectors sent job postings each spring or winter and recruiting was a regular aspect of the selection process. Principal 6-A

admitted, "(recruiting was done) in January or February. To be honest, I haven't looked to see when they're in (the bulletins)." Principal 5-K described a regular but impersonal process: "Recruiting is done through the fax machine at the central office." Improved recruiting encouraged Principal 5-I: "Our current superintendent does a wide posting; more so than in the past; we pushed to do it before the end of the year so we're not losing candidates." Principal 6-F described recruiting in "May or June to get the best choice."

Eleven principals did not describe recruiting as a regular event; these respondents recruited only out of the necessity for filling a particular position. Principal 5-N restricted the geographic location of her recruiting: "I want people closer to this area." These principals all used placement offices when necessary. Principal 6-L was "pleased with the caliber of candidates coming out of Michigan's colleges."

Eight respondents (22%) indicated little or no recruiting. Principal 6-I restricted regular education teaching candidates to substitute teachers only; recruiters only sought specialists. Principal 3-A restricted recruiting efforts to only local, rural candidates. Three of these respondents reported no recruiting. Principal 5-J summed it up: "We never had to recruit." Principal 5-R: "Basically, we don't recruit anymore."

Screening of Applicants

Screening criteria should include successful teaching experience, likelihood for the candidate to meet school needs, and evidence of general skills. More than one

screener should also consider applications. Question 10 asked respondents to describe the screening of applications. Specific follow-ups addressed the responsibility for screening and the criteria used to eliminate or screen in applicants. Seventeen respondents (44%) indicated comprehensive screening criteria. These principals also described multiple screeners for applicants. They based their screening criteria on building needs, a job description match, or application indicators of successful teaching experience.

Principal 2-A spoke of a screening team, which included teachers and building parents. He also stated that "criteria are very specific to the position." Several of these respondents mentioned the matching of candidates to job description requirements. Principal 5-D related that, "We (two or more principals) sit there with the position descriptions and look for people who would best fit." Some of these principals were more specific and used criteria to exclude candidates. Principal 6-E: "If there's no graduate work, that's somebody we're not going to look at." Both Principal 6-F and 6-I considered local candidates. Principal 6-I: "If you lived in 6-I or went to 6-I High School, that would automatically get you an interview."

Ten principals based screening criteria on building needs and/or successful teaching experience. These principals mentioned only one screener. In eight of these cases, the screener was the principal; in two districts, an administrator at central office did the screening. Principal 3-B mentioned building needs: "I look for training in the things I am looking for in my building." Principal 4-A emphasized successful

experience: "I look at student teaching summaries for the outstanding (candidates)." Principal 5-G admitted a biased (and illegal) criterion: "I'm looking for males. It's awful hard to find guys who have the credentials the gals have." The two districts that had central office screeners did not report principal involvement in screening or setting criteria. Principal 6-H stated that the "personnel director (is) very aware of our needs in each building."

Several principals also used single variable eliminators. Principal 3-A did not consider candidates with a GPA below 3.0. Principal 6-K restricted candidates to those with rural connections: "We're a rural district. The applicants who come from rural districts can adjust better; their vicinity sets the priority." Principal 6-L looked at breaks in work histories: "I don't look at people who have interrupted their careers. Having kids or whatever, then going back into teaching."

Three respondents (8%) indicated that the central office had screening responsibility. These principals were removed from the screening process and did not relate any screening criteria used. Principal 5-B said, "They (central office) do have a committee screen people; then, they plug them into where the needs are. The building principal goes in to have a part in the interview." Principal 5-C knew "they're (central office) looking for certification. They look at endorsements on the certificate. Beyond that, I'm not sure."

Interview Format

Question 11 of the instrument asked respondents to describe interviews. The responses were generally lengthy and detailed. Since interviewing is a major aspect of selection, these responses were divided into three areas: general interview format, key interview questions asked, and how principals assess candidates' interview behaviors and answers.

According to the literature review, the components of an effective interview format were the use of teams for interviewing, multiple interview sessions, and evidence of in-depth interviewing. The standard used to measure in-depth interviewing was the reported length in minutes of the interview session or sessions.

Ten responses (28%) indicated more than one session. Both building and central office personnel were involved in interviewing. The interviews were reported as at least 45 minutes long. Principal 2-A stated that the building site committee conducted one of the interview stages. Principal 5-P had a similar committee composed of teachers, the principal, and building parents. In Principal 6-G's district, the building site team interviewed the internal transfer teachers from other buildings, as well as external applicants.

Eleven principals also reported multiple interviews with teams conducting the interviews. This group reported shorter interview sessions, ranging from 30-45 minutes. In four of these cases, there were no indications of building team involvement. Principal 3-A indicated that the committee often made quick judgments about

candidates; consequently, they completed some interviews in 20 minutes. Principal 6-E and his administrative partners conducted full interviews for candidates, but there was no building staff input or involvement.

Three respondents related the use of team interviews and multiple interview sessions. However, the interviews were only 30 minutes or less. This short time for interviewing may not have allowed for a complete candidate assessment.

Twelve respondents (33%) made selection decisions based upon only a single interview session. Principal 5-E reported the involvement of all elementary principals. Two principals reported school board membership on their interview teams. Principal 5-Q was the only principal of the 36 who did not use a structured interview format. Principal 6-C indicated sensitivity to candidate convenience: "We're a northern Michigan district. I hate to have to bring them back (for further interviews)."

<p style="text-align:center">Key Interview Questions</p>

Interview questions must focus on complete criteria. Questioning should address teaching skills and candidate characteristics. Principals spoke about important interview questions. Fourteen responses (39%) had essential questions that examined candidates' teaching skills as well as their affective traits. Principal 2-A related that his questions covered real past experiences, as did Principal 4-A: "What would your last employer say if we were to call him up?" Principal 5-K asked candidates to "describe a lesson and how you delivered it." Principal 6-H asked "questions based on the

different areas of our evaluation form. We ask curriculum questions, we ask leader-ship questions, we ask organizational questions; what do you view as your proudest moment working with kids?" The literature review indicated that hypothetical situa-tions could be used to generate candidate responses. Five of the 14 principals reported posing hypothetical questions as key interview questions.

Nine other principals' key questions were not as comprehensive as the group of 14. Questions addressed teaching ability and experiences, as well as traits. Princi-pal 5-R focused on past experiences: "How will your experiences fit this job?" Princi-pal 5-N asked a question that would indicate thinking skills and candidate traits: "What educator stands out in your life?" Three principals considered the questions on candi-date traits and personal background to be more important than the examination of teaching strengths. Two principals also favored hypothetical questions more than accounts of actual experiences. One principal, 6-G, checked to see if candidates were familiar with educational terms. However, the candidates had an opportunity to pre-pare. The list of terms was handed out before the interview, "so we're not hitting them cold."

Seven responses indicated key questions which only focused on teaching ability or curriculum knowledge. This group did not ask key questions regarding candidate qualities or affective traits. Two principals (5-A and 6-F) considered candidate writing assignments essential tasks and as important as any questions. Principal 6-F reported a unique system, which separated interview teams from each other. The team of

teachers did not hear responses to questions asked by the other two groups (administrators and parents).

Six respondents (17%) indicated very few, if any key questions. Principal 5-F only mentioned one important question: "What would your classroom look like?"

Interview Assessments

Literature authors stated that, during and after the interview, selectors should evaluate the candidate's interview performance. This assessment should include the candidate's communication skills, teaching ability, and personal traits. The question, "What are you really looking for in the interview?" was asked of principals. A group of 14 responses (39%) included descriptions that combined three main types of candidate assessments: teaching ability, general skills, and affective traits. As Principal 3-A stated, "I basically look at well-roundedness, then I home in on the specifics of the class." Principal 5-M said, "What I'm really looking for is the total person." Principal 5-O summarized three main areas of candidate strength: "Someone knowledgeable about the teaching process, a person with a passion for kids, and strong communications skills."

Four respondents considered teaching ability and at least one other area (either general skills or affective traits) to be the most important interview assessment outcomes. Principal 5-N mentioned "looking for people who can think on their feet" and aware of good teaching methods. Principal 4-C mentioned traits and teaching

knowledge: "I'm looking for a real energetic, motivated, sparkling, enthusiastic person (who can) tell me how children learn." Principal 5-R emphasized the child's viewpoint: "Is this the person, if I were an eight-year old, that I would want to greet me every morning?"

Seven principals mentioned only teaching methods and skills. Principal 5-A said the group would "listen to how they respond to how they'd approach the curriculum." Principal 5-E was looking for "successful techniques you've used with kids." Principal 6-D mentioned "instructional experiences, philosophy, what kind of direction they're going."

Seven mentioned a combination of traits and general skills, but omitted consideration of teaching knowledge. Principal 5-G summed up this combination: "Are they going to be a team player? Do they have that warm personality?" Principal 5-P was looking for thought and personality. This same principal did not emphasize teaching strengths: "I think we all (the building staff) feel we can change them in the teaching area. If we can find out that they really like kids, we can work with what we want taught."

Five responses (14%) measured only single indicators (general skills or affective traits) as important evidence in the interview sessions. Two of these (5-F and 5-Q) only considered affective traits important enough to mention. Principal 5-F: "Primarily, I'm looking for somebody who is enthusiastic." Principal 5-Q: "I'm looking for the way they get comfortable." Principal 5-H only considered communication

skills as an essential indicator: "When someone asks a question, answer that question. Let's get this over with; answer the questions." Two principals did not mention essential areas they were looking for in the interview.

<p align="center">Assessments of Teaching Ability</p>

Many authors referred to the use of observed teaching lessons as a way to assess teaching ability. The next interview question was "How do you decide whether or not the candidate can teach?" There were five references (14% of the sample) to planned observations. These principals believed in observations and readily responded to this interview question. As Principal 4-B replied, "It's (the question of teaching ability) real clear-cut when they do (the lesson)." Principal 6-H believed in observations: "We really have had very, very, great success with this process (of observation)." Principals 5-L and 4-A reported that their observation lessons were taught by the candidates to the selection team, who acted as students. The other three principals actually used classrooms of students for the demonstration. Principals 2-A and 5-L stated that selectors did not implement this phase if there was no time for it.

Eight principals did observe and evaluate the candidates for the positions. However, the observation was completed when the candidates were substitute teachers in the building or district. Thus, observation was a *de facto* event rather than a planned aspect of the selection process. Principal 5-C illustrated the point this way: "Probably the only way I know what I'm getting into is if the person has been a sub; I

go through this whole process. SRI, teachers in on the interviews, and you still never know until they actually get in there." Principal 6-K repeated this rationale: "The only way that you can really find out if a person can teach is if you have one that's been substituting for you and you've seen them in action." Principal 5-M placed a higher emphasis on the substitute evaluation than the interview response: "I had one guy last year, we finally hired him after the third interview. He just didn't interview right. He'd done a lot of subbing, so we knew he could teach." Principal 6-L understood the value of planned observations: "I'd love to do what they do in _____ (a neighboring district). They actually have them teach a lesson to kids."

Fourteen principals assessed teaching ability in one of three ways: five used reference checks to verify teaching skills; three gathered information from resumes and interviews and reached a team consensus about candidate ability; and, six based teaching ability on responses to interview questions. Principal 6-D used a probing style of reference checking: "We try to ascertain from the past what they (referents) have observed in action." Principal 3-A was aware of observations, but used reference checks: "I have ultimately used calling references and colleagues; I have a colleague in our district who has them teach a lesson. I have not done that." Regrets were expressed by 5-A: "Now, in doing that (reference checking) we're on target most of the time, but we're not on target all of the time." Principal 5-I replied, "That is a risk you end up taking (relying on references). You don't know (that the candidate can teach) for sure." Principal 6-D reiterated, "Until they get in the room, you're not

really sure." Of the team consensus group, Principal 5-K admitted, "Sometimes it comes down to whoever feels the strongest. Generally, that's me." Principal 6-C also analyzed interview responses: "It (teaching ability) becomes very evident, based on the questions and the responses." This principal also regretted his northern Michigan location as a deterrent to observations: "One of the things we would like to do would be to have them teach to a group of children. Just getting the kids here and having the teacher come would be difficult. We've talked about it, but we don't have that kind of plan yet."

Nine respondents (25%) based their assessment of teaching ability on intuitive reactions. Three made no such determination until after the candidate was hired. Words used to describe the assessment were "a feeling"; "my gut"; "a gut response"; "a gut-level feeling"; "common sense"; and, "gut reaction". Principal 5-P: "It's really hard, because we don't do like our neighbor district does and have them get up and teach a lesson. It still, in all honesty, boils down to a gut-level feeling that this person can do the job." Principal 6-A expressed hopes for a right decision: "(I decide they can teach) after I've actually seen them do it. I hope and pray a lot. I swallow hard, say 'I'm sure you're going to be successful here.' I haven't had a lemon, so I've been lucky." Principal 6-F recalled regret at a wrong assessment: "Oh, brother. One just pulled the wool right over our eyes. I mean, you don't know. Until they get in the classroom, they can say whatever; even have great references. It's show and tell time."

Final Hiring Decision

Several literature citations, particularly the most recent ones, indicated preferences for site-based hiring decisions or strong site input to the final selector. The final interview question was "Who makes the final decision?" Nine principals (25%) reported that a site-based committee made their final hiring decision. Some of these respondents stated the superintendent and/or board of education gave formal hiring approval. However, these respondents emphasized the formality of this step and they reported that the decision was the committee's to make. As Principal 3-B replied, "I take to him (the superintendent) the person who is our recommendation and he is very comfortable with that." Principal 5-M stated that "the final decision has been made by the committee. They've never been overruled." Principal 6-C stated the board made the formal decision, but "the board never has pimped us."

Ten respondents indicated a final hiring decision was made in collaboration with other administrators. In some of these cases, a group of principals made the decision; in others, the principal and central office administrators made joint hiring decisions. Principal 5-F underscored the team nature of the decision: "The superintendent is adamant about this; the people selected; it should be a consensus." Principal 2-A worked closely with his superintendent: "Ultimately, the final (ones) are discussed between the building principal and the superintendent. And, then, a joint decision is made." Opposite procedures regarding failed consensus were expressed by two principals. Principal 6-F: "If it comes down to two people, he'll (the superintendent) say,

'It's your call.'" Principal 6-N: "We usually come up with a consensus; myself and the superintendent. He would make the decision if there's a conflict."

Fourteen respondents presented selection processes in which one person made the final hiring decision. In each of these 14 responses, it was clear that other district personnel (building staff, principals, other administrators) gave input to the person (usually the superintendent) who made the final decision. In many cases, The superintendent generally supported the recommendation given by the principal or team. As Principal 5-A reported, "If he (the superintendent) feels we haven't missed something; if he feels this is a viable candidate, then he will come back to us and say it's a go." Principal 5-K offered a similar view: "He (the superintendent) generally goes with what we want." Principal 5-P was unsure about the superintendent's stage: "The top two go to the superintendent; we don't know what happens then." Principal 6-J offered an opinion about the superintendent: "(The superintendent) really wants to hire the person. To be honest with you, if he had his way, he might just leave us (principals) out of it."

In three cases (8%), the board of education made the final hiring decision. Several principals in other groups mentioned board approval, but such approval was a formality. However, these three all indicated that the boards clearly made the hiring decision. Principal 3-A explained his experience: "It has happened (the board overruled a hiring recommendation). For the administrator, it does become an awfully hairy situation. The event was one of politics." Principal 5-I added, "The board

usually doesn't overthrow it, but it has happened." Principal 5-N was careful about making early promises: "I am very cautious about letting them know, that until it has passed board approval, realize you are not hired."

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Organization of Discussion

The objectives of the study were: (a) to compare reported practices to recommended methods, (b) to identify positive trends reported by principals, (c) to identify selection aspects that need improvement, and (d) to offer recommendations for selection improvement. The discussion covered each selection aspect according to these objectives. Chapter IV reported in detail the comparison of the principals' responses to those procedures which authors considered exemplary. Chapter V identifies positive indications and needs for improvement for each selection aspect reported by the elementary principals. Chapter V also offers recommendations to improve each teacher selection aspect and suggests other possible studies to address teacher selection topics.

Selection Aspect Comparisons

Castetter (1996) referred to pre-selection and selection activities. Pre-selection aspects are planning processes based on discussions and should often result in written documents. Planning and selection responsibility aspects produce policies

88

and specify trained selectors. Staffing needs determinations result in written job descriptions. Selectors agree upon job criteria that help to focus recruitment, screening, and interviewing. Active selection activities occur when selectors learn the names of prospective teachers. Recruitment, screening, interviewing, teaching assessment, and hiring are all active processes that involve comparisons of candidates to set criteria.

Table 2 displays a comparison of pre-selection and active selection aspect recommendations to favorable and poor practices reported by principals in the study. The favorable percentages indicated the respondents who closely matched the literature review recommendations. Poor percentages represented principal groups that had little or no resemblance to the best known methods.

Each selection aspect was considered in terms of positive indicators and needs for improvement. As Table 2 indicates, no aspect had high percentages of favorable comparison. Only one aspect, selection responsibility, was over 50%.

A general conclusion was that all selection aspects need improvement in order to compare favorably with authors' preferred methods. Within each aspect, encouraging trends and possible improvement areas emerged from principals' statements. For all aspects, there were recommendations for change. In most cases, building principals could not initiate these changes; district administrators need to become aware of the priority of improving teacher selection.

Table 2

Comparison of Practices to Recommendations

Recommended Aspect	Percentage comparisons	
	Favorable	Poor
Planning: Written, precise plans.	33%	3%
Selection Responsibility: Use of building team for input and/or choice.	58%	17%
Staffing Needs Determination: Proactive planning, focus on needs.	8%	8%
Job Descriptions: Written according to buildings, with staff involvement/input.	11%	3%
Selection Training: All selectors have received training.	42%	17%
Selection Criteria: Teaching experience, personal traits, general skills. Set by more than one person.	33%	14%
Recruiting: Planned, ongoing, active. Placement offices and/or job fairs.	19%	22%
Screening: Use of criteria based on successful experience, school-candidate match, general skills; multiple screeners.	44%	8%
Interview Format: Structured, team, multiple sessions.	28%	33%
Key Interview Questions: Open-ended, address traits, skills, experiences.	39%	17%
Interview Assessment: Focus is on teaching ability, skills, and traits.	39%	14%
Teaching Assessment: Candidates are observed teaching a lesson.	14%	25%
Final Hiring Decision: Input or decision from building teams; board confirms, does not hire.	25%	8%

Pre-Selection Planning Aspects: Comparisons, Positive Trends,
Needs, and Recommended Improvements

The literature review recommended a written selection plan or policy. Only respondents, or 33% of the sample, described a written plan for selecting teachers. This diminished the strength of the selection responsibility results, since written responsibility would define accountability. Written, followed, and understood plans compared favorably to recommended practices. However, some of the written and/or known plans tended to lack detail and principals described them in general terms. A well written, thorough plan should drive the whole selection process.

Only one principal (3%) of the 36 had no plan to follow. Selectors should write specific understood selection procedures; the planning aspect would then show direction and possible improvement. This is particularly true for many of the princi-pals who could describe a detailed unwritten plan. Superintendents should recom-mend written policy changes and procedural guides that describe the hiring process.

Selection teams at the building level should have more control of the hiring process. Of the 36 interview respondents, 58% indicated that their selection responsi-bilities involved site-based teams for at least some of the selection duties. This was the only aspect of the 13 in which over 50% of the respondents compared favorably to recommended practices. Since much of the recent literature has advocated the shifting of centralized tasks to the school buildings, this is an encouraging development. In most cases, the building teams were involved with interviewing. In several instances,

staff members helped with determining needs, writing job descriptions, setting hiring criteria, and making the final hiring decision.

Seventeen percent of the respondents described no site-based connection to selection duties, other than principal involvement. This offset other positive indicators for staff selection responsibility. A clear improvement in pre-selection planning would be the involvement of teachers from the hiring school in planning and implementing the selection process. This would mean a shift in control from the central office to the building site.

Staffing needs should go beyond mere personnel replacement. A building needs focus should be the consideration for staffing. Only 8% of the respondents compared favorably for staffing needs determination. The vast majority determined needs on a district-wide basis, and the decision was removed from the elementary staff. Principals gave some input to staffing decisions in two-thirds of the responses. When selection responsibilities were not site-based, there were fewer possibilities for creating staffing patterns based upon building needs and goals.

Three respondents (8%) reported poor methods of determining staffing needs. These three principals had no building input; the central office made all staffing decisions. In all other cases, central office administrators considered principal input. Central office personnel should expand this input to buildings and staffs, within fiscal parameters. This would place more of the pre-selection planning at the building level.

The literature review stressed the importance of site-related job descriptions as

a foundation for selection criteria. Job descriptions were specific to the site in only 11% of the responses. Two-thirds of the respondents reported that one or two administrators usually wrote general job descriptions. With generic, open-ended job descriptions, the possibility existed for non-job related factors to affect selection decisions.

All but one district had job descriptions. However, many were simple statements of job openings without consideration of building needs and criteria. School district administrators should allow building staffs to write job descriptions based upon building needs and goals, along with broader criteria defined by the building and district.

Selectors must be trained in order to hire the best teachers. Forty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they had received training. Three-fourths reported either training or regular in-house discussions about selection methods. This may lead to the inference that these respondents placed a degree of priority on being prepared for the selection process. The majority of the interviewed principals (64%) also saw no need for further selection training. As these respondents stated, they were generally comfortable with their present selection methods and saw no need for further training. Six principals (17%) reported no training and little, if any, discussion about teacher selection methods.

For all of the selection aspects, there are needs for improvement. A clear means to provide for improvement in all these areas would be to train selectors in the

proper methods advocated by many authors and researchers. Yet, a desire for training appeared to be absent among many principals. The comfort level with status quo methods also indicated a lower priority consideration for selection training. As central office administrators plan professional development, they should attend to the selection training needs of all selection teams.

Selection criteria should include successful teaching ability, strong skills, and desirable personal traits. Only one-third (33%) of the respondents demonstrated broad selection criteria set by selection teams. Since the active selection aspects (recruiting, screening, and interviewing) originate from well-established criteria, it is noteworthy that two-thirds of the respondents reported incomplete criteria, often set by one individual.

Respondents compared poorly (14%) when affective traits constituted the only criteria. This subjective consideration indicated a potentially risky tendency to make judgments that were unrelated to teaching ability assessments. School administrators must allow selection teams to establish criteria with a solid foundation of teaching expertise, general skills, and strong personality traits.

Active Selection Aspects: Comparisons, Positive Trends, Needs, and Recommended Improvements

After the pre-selection aspects, the selection team must proceed to the task of identifying and choosing desirable candidates. The team establishes a pool of candidates. Recruitment begins the active selection process.

Recruitment should be a planned, ongoing, active process. Less than one fifth (19%) of the respondents reported ongoing or regular candidate recruiting. The other principals reported recruiting only when necessary, or, in several cases, not at all. This suggested that recruiting was not yet a top priority in some Michigan districts. Indeed, only one respondent mentioned difficulty in filling a position. This was for a special education opening in an Upper Peninsula building.

Over one-fifth (22%) of the respondents reported infrequent or nonexistent recruitment practices. With approaching retirements, central office administrators must change this hands-off approach so those top candidates are available and known to districts. Active, regular recruiting should become a funded priority for school districts. Administrators and college placement officials should work together to provide the best available candidates for selection teams.

Screening applications should be a team process that considers applicants' experiences, their likelihood to match criteria, and evidence of general skills and accomplishments. Sixteen principals reported favorable responses (44%) for candidate screening procedures. This screening was based upon sound criteria and was performed by more than one person. Three other districts used multiple screeners, but there was not the extensive use of selection criteria applied to the applications. The principals who reported that they screened applicants themselves seemed more likely to reflect bias or improper criteria. Preference for males and discarding applicants who returned to teaching were examples of this bias. Principal 5-L was succinct in

admitting that screening criteria "are a principal's value system." Three respondents (8%) had no connection to application screening.

Screening is an aspect that indicates potential for improvement. Principals demonstrated more objectivity for screening than was described for face-to-face encounters. Clear job descriptions and established criteria would improve screening procedures. In addition, the use of selection teams would reduce tendencies toward personal biases. As with other aspects, the reassignment of screening duties from central offices to building selection teams would improve the process.

Many of the principals spoke at length about interviews when they described their selection plans. Several respondents seemed to consider interviewing the sum and substance of selection. Literature review authors favored structuring more than one team interview. Ten respondents (28%) used multiple interview sessions and a building team interview approach at some stage of the process.

Selection teams should interview candidates in different settings with planned, criteria-based questions. This aspect had twelve respondents (33%) who based the decision to hire a teacher on the outcome of a single interview session. Written selection procedures should include the number of interviews and the involved school personnel.

Essential questions should address selection criteria. An aspect that reflected some positive practices was the use of key interview questions. Of the 36 respondents, 39% mentioned key questions which addressed three major criteria areas:

general skills (e.g., communication, speaking, writing, teamwork); personality traits (honesty, enthusiasm, love of children); and, successful teaching ability/experience. Another seven respondents addressed teaching ability and curriculum knowledge. These 21 principals were trying to get beyond a quick, conversational interview and were really attempting to find out what kind of teacher they were considering. Nine respondents focused on teaching ability and candidate traits. This is a change from the days of casual interviewing. Principal 5-C recalled his early interviews as a young teacher: " I don't like it to be loose like interviews when I was first starting out. We talked about my golf game, things like that."

Six principals could not recall or articulate key questions. This leads to speculation regarding the depth of principal participation or the extent to which these were structured interviews. Selection teams should establish criteria to help determine the most important interview questions. When important questions are prepared, the identified selection team member will then be ready to pose the question to the candidate.

The literature review recommended assessing multiple candidate facets after the interview session or sessions. More than one-third (39%) of the respondents considered teaching ability, general skills, and desirable traits as evidence of successful interview performance. Selection teams should plan clear criteria in order to make objective judgments about interview responses.

Principals generally demonstrated a tendency to judge candidate interview

performances on more than personality traits. However, 14% stated they were looking for basic affective characteristics in the interview sessions. Selectors can correct this reliance on intuitive judgment with proper training and team involvement.

Literature review authors strongly endorsed the observation of candidates teaching a lesson as a verification of teaching ability. Only five respondents (14%) reported the use of this method. Several other principals were familiar with observations and expressed a desire to implement this assessment method. This awareness indicates a possible improvement in teaching ability assessment.

Deciding whether a person can teach is a critical consideration in hiring a candidate. However, nine respondents (25%) relied on intuition to determine teaching effectiveness. The "gut feeling" standard was used to decide the future education of numerous students. Central office administrators should learn about the value of candidate observation and commit the necessary time and dollars to implement this stage of selection.

Several literature citations recommended allowing building selection teams to make the final decision. Other authors believed this team should make the recommendation to the superintendent. Respondents reported the use of building teams for final hiring decisions in 25% of the districts. Administrators gave input to superintendents in the majority of cases. There were also indications of building staff input to the principal, who passed recommendations on to the central office.

Three of the responses (8%) indicated that school boards made hiring

decisions that went beyond formalized board approvals. Since literature review authors did not recommend hiring as a board function, this was a process needing improvement. In 14 responses (39%), only one person made the final decision to hire. However, a positive aspect was indicated when the hiring person (usually, the superintendent) had input from other administrators. With increased staff selection involvement, there is a possibility that more selection teams will make final hiring decisions. The central offices of school districts would need to assign these duties to school building staffs. Realistically, this much change in control does not appear likely.

Summary of Recommendations

The study results show some potential for improvement of the selection process. Indications of positive trends co-exist with related weaker aspects; the data indicate a need to improve all selection aspects. However, most of the responding principals expressed satisfaction with their present selection procedures. Their willingness to initiate change does not appear imminent.

Some district selection plans were in place; selectors understood and implemented these plans. The responsibility for carrying out these plans was a comparatively strong indicator. However, administrators did not usually write those plans and details. The plans did not indicate thorough selection processes. School districts should have written procedures that state steps and responsibilities for selection. If the process includes site-based aspects, these activities and responsibilities should be

described as well.

Staffing needs determination and job descriptions were two closely related weaker aspects. Both of these aspects lacked specificity and both were removed from job site responsibility. Giving principals and staff members the power to determine staffing configurations and the subsequent responsibility to write job descriptions for new positions would improve the quality of candidates. Selection teams could obtain people who are a closer match to position and building needs.

Most responding principals stated that they were trained as selectors or regularly discussed teacher selection methods. However, the weaker aspects reported in the study suggested that the training skills taught or the selection procedures discussed were possibly inadequate or not translated into selection practices. The study's recommendation is for principals and other team selectors to receive practical selection training, which will strengthen selection practices. The study does not suggest a probability for principals to initiate selection training, since many principals appear to be comfortable with present methods. Selection training is not widely offered at seminars, workshops, or conferences. Central office administrators could endorse and advocate for more selection training.

Recruiting did not appear to be a high priority yet in Michigan's elementary schools. There has been a ready availability of teaching candidates for elementary positions in Michigan (Scheetz & Gratz, 1995). As retirements increase and selection becomes more prevalent, recruiting should take on a higher priority. Those schools

that have established regular recruiting practices will benefit when there is a need to hire. The emphasis for regular, funded recruitment should come from the central offices.

General selection criteria were not set so that selectors considered the multiple assets of candidates. A more specific job description would help with criteria setting. In addition, more input from administrators and staff members could help to create more multi-dimensional criteria. Many of the respondents emphasized personal traits over other criteria. This could indicate a relationship to the overuse of intuition ("just liking someone") as an assessment technique. A trained selection team would help apply complete criteria to all candidates.

The study indicated some sound screening of candidates. On paper, there appeared to be some objective considerations of teaching experience and/or a commitment to meeting building needs. This type of objective analysis logically may have become more open to bias when selectors met candidates. The improvement for screening should start with the written plan, which should list general applicant screening criteria and allow for site-based screening. Also, a more detailed job description would help set specific screening standards.

One third of the study's sample based hiring decisions on a single interview session. Selectors may have made hasty judgments. An encouraging aspect, which will likely continue, was the use of team interviews in a structured setting. The reliance on interviews was evident; this will not likely change. However, selection teams

should use an interview process that allows for greater reflection and comparison, and brings back qualified candidates for further examination.

Principals demonstrated some proper interviewing methods. The key questions asked of candidates generally reflected attempts to assess the teachers' personalities as well as knowledge and practice. Selection teams should structure interviews and prepare set questions so that several facets of candidates are examined, thereby assuring that teams are selecting well-rounded teachers.

A related selection aspect was the assessment of candidates' interview performances. Again, the focus of assessment should follow the criteria set and should be based upon general skills, teaching ability, and candidate traits. As with other aspects, selection training and the use of selection teams will improve interview assessment.

Selectors did not properly assess teaching ability. This deficit area leads to speculation: can a person with undemonstrated or unknown ability become an effective teacher over time? Do strong knowledge and positive affective indicators translate to classroom effectiveness? An effective way to minimize these uncertainties is to have the candidate teach a lesson as a part of the selection process. District administrators should become aware of this method of verification.

There were mixed indications regarding the final decision to hire a candidate. The recommendation is for the site-based selection team to determine the teacher for the building. Staff members have responsibility for aiding in the new teacher's success. The responsibility for hiring would benefit selection team members and the

faculty, who will have an empowered sense of control of the future of the building.

The study indicated some positive trends in each selection aspect that should be continued and emulated. Other behaviors violate recommended methods and must cease. All selection areas need improvement. The following list is not intended to be a blueprint for successful selection practices. It is a summary of practical selection behaviors, based upon the literature review and compared responses.

1. Selectors should become more knowledgeable about recommended selection practices. Training opportunities should be available to all staff members involved with selection. Central office administrators should make selection training a priority.

2. Central office personnel should adopt plans and procedures that state the steps of teacher selection and the people involved at each step.

3. Administrators should allow principals and their staffs the opportunity to develop staffing plans for their schools.

4. Building staffs should be responsible for goal-based job descriptions.

5. Schools should develop selection criteria based upon job descriptions, teaching abilities, general skills, and affective traits.

6. Central offices should prioritize recruiting so that criteria are used and selectors recruit regularly.

7. The selection team should screen candidates, using job descriptions and criteria.

8. The selection team should conduct multiple, structured interviews, using key questions that address criteria.

9. Candidate interview performance should be evaluated according to defined criteria.

10. Teaching ability should be assessed by the selection team, which observes the candidate teaching a lesson.

11. Central office administrators should give building select responsibility to hire teachers.

Relationship of the Study to Selection Problems

Chapter I referred to three problem areas that prevented selectors from making the best possible choices for teaching positions. Selection has not been a priority for school districts; administrators have not provided training for selectors; and, selection has not focused on candidates' teaching abilities. This study indicated that each of these problems continues to affect the selection process.

Most of the principals were comfortable with their present selection practices. There were few indications of dissatisfaction with teacher quality or with particular selection aspects. The willingness of the principals to respond to questions and their involvement with selection indicated their knowledge of respective district practices. However, few constructive criticisms or self-evaluations emerged from their descriptions. Most elementary principals did not appear to be prepared to initiate or suggest

changes in selection procedures. Most districts also lacked written plans. This also indicated a need to consider teacher selection a more critical school function.

The principals' reported selection methods did not compare favorably with authors' and researchers' recommendations. This suggested a lack of awareness and application regarding proper selection procedures. Although nearly half of the elementary principals reported receiving training, all of the analyzed selection aspects indicated needs for improvement. School district selectors need training. Proper training would address all selection aspects. This would enable selectors to implement appropriate methods.

Selectors did not properly assess the teaching abilities of potential teachers. Descriptions of selection plans, criteria, interviews, and candidate assessments did not emphasize teaching ability as a primary concern. Principals tended to emphasize candidate traits and they used intuitive assessment methods and criteria.

The study indicated that over half of the principals participated in selection procedures that included teams of school staff members. Site-based management appears to be a positive trend in the teacher selection process. This selection aspect compared most favorably to recommended procedures.

Considerations for Future Research

Site-based management and the possibility of teacher involvement in selection may be future school management trends. Single or multiple case studies of site-based

teams, their selection involvement, their actions, reactions, and their procedures would provide information on the status of selection in those kinds of buildings. Such a study could also be designed to compare the procedures of site-based schools to more traditional selection methods in other schools.

As teacher retirements increase, selection will be a more frequent activity for school administrators and possibly for staff members. Will the refinement and improvement of teacher selection procedures become a greater school priority as hirings increase? The principals in this study generally expressed satisfaction with present selection practices. A survey and analysis of reported future priorities and plans would be helpful. A similar objective of such an instrument would address administrative viewpoints regarding selection as a school change agent.

Most of the respondents in this study did not express desires to get more selection training. However, there was a lack of application of selection knowledge to actual selection practices. This could be due to several possible reasons. Some principals could disregard concepts that were taught during selection training. Some could have admitted to training received, yet could still be unaware of proper methods. Some could place a higher trust on intuitive judgments rather than reasoned decisions. Research studies could address reasons for this knowledge-practice gap.

Another possible research project could be the administration of a test on selection knowledge to school selectors (administrators, staff, parents, etc.). This could indicate a need for selection training for any or all of the sub-groups of

selectors.

Several of the responding principals expressed a desire for selection training but were unaware of any available training sessions. An investigation of graduate schools of educational administration, educational speakers' bureaus, and conference planning groups could offer information on the availability and quality of teacher selection training. Such training will be a key to the improvement of teacher selection procedures. The quality of education in the 21st century will depend greatly on the selection procedures that will place the future teachers in the nation's classrooms.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

108

Survey Questions

"Hello, this is John Jarpe. May I speak to _____ _____? Hi. Remember, I contacted you about my doctoral survey? Is this still a good time to call? (If not, set up time; if so, proceed). I'm going to ask you some questions about how you and your district select teachers. When you answer the questions, think about the way hiring has been done in your district over the past three years. If it's all right with you, I'm going to tape record our conversation. I can assure you that no names will be used in this report and the name of your building and district will not be used, either. Don't worry if you inadvertently mention a name while we're talking--I'll be sure to delete any references to specific names or places. Is it okay with you if I turn on the tape recorder now and get started?

1. How many new teachers have been hired in your school in the past three years?

2. What was the extent of your involvement in those selections?

3. Does your district have a written selection plan or policy?

(If so) Do you follow that plan? How specific is it?

(If not) Do all of your district's principals follow the same plan, even if it's not written down? (If so) What is the plan?

(If no articulated plan) How do you decide how to hire teachers?

4. How and when are your buildings' staffing needs determined?

Follow ups, if needed: What is your role? What is central office's?

5. How were job descriptions for the open positions handled? Who

did what? Follow up: Were these descriptions by building or by district?

6. Have you had any training on how to select teachers?

(If so) Where was the training? Who gave it?

(If not) How much have you discussed teacher selection with your superintendent (or central office, if that applies)?

7. Do you think you need more selection training?(If so) In what areas?

(If not) So, you're comfortable with your present selection system?

8. For your hires over the past three years, what were the criteria you used to select teachers? How were those criteria set and who set them?

9. How do you go about recruiting teachers?

Follow up: Who handles recruiting?

When does your district recruit?

10. Once you get applications sent in, how are they screened to decide who gets considered?

Follow up: Who does the screening?

What are the criteria for screening?

11. Please describe your interviews. Talk about some of your key questions, how long the interviews last, and what you're really looking for in the interview. Are the interviews planned? Who is involved?

12. How do you decide whether or not a candidate can teach? When do you make this decision?

13. Describe what happens after your level. Who makes the final decision?

Appendix B

Letter of Request and Consent Form

111

Dear _____:

My name is John Jarpe and I'm a doctoral student at Western Michigan University. I've also been a K-5 principal In St. Joseph, Michigan's Public Schools for the past eight years. I'm working on my dissertation research and I need your help in responding to an interview.

My field of interest is teacher selection. My study will examine the ways principals and their districts go about hiring teachers. You were randomly chosen for the survey interview. In order to fit my interview profile, you need to have been involved in the teacher selection process in your school for the last three years. If you have not been in your present position for three years or if your district does not involve principals in teacher selection, thank you for reading this so far, but I'll need to get a replacement.

If you can help me with my survey, I would appreciate it very much. I will need about thirty minutes of your time and I'll talk to you over the phone. I will be using a data analysis method which involves analyzing your responses to my questions, so I will need to tape record our conversation. I can assure you that complete confidentiality and anonymity will apply to your answers. At no place in the report will I use your name, the name of your school or district, or the names of any of your staff members or people you interviewed.

Once again, I will be most appreciative if you could share your time and experience with me. Please complete the attached stamped postcard if you can help me out.

Sincerely,

John H. Jarpe

_____Yes, I can be interviewed. I consent to have

     my taped responses used as survey data.

I prefer a phone interview at ____o'clock (AM

PM) on _____(preferred day of the week)

     My phone number is:___ ____ _____

     Student enrollment: Building___ district____

     Number of teachers:___ Total years experience as

     a principal:_____

     __I have had teacher selection responsibilities for

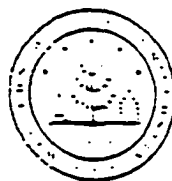   the past three years.

     My name:_____

     Signature:_____

From

          John H. Jarpe

          1732 Trafalgar

          St. Joseph, Mi. 49085

Appendix C

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Approval Letter

114

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008-3899
616 387-8293

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

To: Robert O. Brinkerhoff
        John H. Jarpe

From: Richard A. Wright, Chair
        Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Subject: HSIRB Project # 96-05-07

Date: May 20, 1996

This is to inform you that your project entitled "Selection Practices in Michigan Elementary Schools," has been approved under the exempt category of research. This approval is based upon your proposal as presented to the HSIRB, and you may utilize human subjects only in accord with this approved proposal.

Your project is approved for a period of one year from the above date. If you should revise any procedures relative to human subjects or materials, you must resubmit those changes for review in order to retain approval. Should any untoward incidents or unanticipated adverse reactions occur with the subjects in the process of this study, you must suspend the study and notify me immediately. The HSIRB will then determine whether or not the study may continue.

Please be reminded that all research involving human subjects must be accomplished in full accord with the policies and procedures of Western Michigan University, as well as all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Any deviation from those policies, procedures, laws or regulations may cause immediate termination of approval for this project.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Project Expiration Date: May 20, 1997

Appendix D

Interview Transcript

116

Codes	2-a interview transcript	quotes, notes

Building enrollment: 450

District enrollment: 2200

Staff size: 18

Years of experience: 10

Q. How many new teachers have been hired in your school in the past three years?

A. In this building? I would say, probably, about...six.

Q. What was the extent of your involvement in those hirings?

A. Well, as a member of the selection committee and , ultimately, in on the final decision along with the superintendent.

Q. Does your district have a written selection plan or policy?

A. Yes, we do.

Q. Do you follow that plan?

A. Yes.

Q. How specific is it, and tell me what it is.

A. Well, the main procedure is to, once a position is posted--there's a

procedure for that as well; once a position is posted, a committee is selected at the building affected. Applications are reviewed, candidates are selected for a first interview the committee does a first interview, and, if necessary, a second interview series is set up. Ultimately, we try to narrow it down to two to three candidates. Those candidates then meet with the superintendent and any other administrative or special staff--that might be the special education supervisor, curriculum director, and so on. The principal again. Then a decision is made, normally between the superintendent and principal. Sometime before that last step, a Teacher Perceiver is also given.

Q. How and when are the building's staffing needs determined?

A. Well, certainly in the spring of each year, or at the beginning of the

calendar year, we start to look at our current staffing, what changes would be necessary for the following year. We currently have an early retirement process, so we try to get those completed as early as possible so we can get postings.

Q. What's your role in that staff needs determination?

A. Evaluating our student enrollment, our staffing needs at the building level and making recommendations to the superintendent.

Q. How were the job descriptions for those open positions handled?

A. First of all, if it would be a newly created kind of position, then the job description would be written. If it's an existing position, we normally would look at a job description and see if it needs revision, but otherwise, it's just posted as is. Our standard teaching openings don't have specific job descriptions. In the posting,

obviously, we list the requirements that we are looking for.

Q. So, are the job descriptions by district or by building?

A. They would be by district.

Q. Have you had any training on how to select teachers?

A. I guess, just more informally, through college work, but, mostly just on-the-job type of thing.

Q. How much have you discussed teacher selection with your superintendent?

A. Quite a great deal. Our administrative team has worked on that area. The past two years, especially.

Q. Do you think you need more selection training?

A. I don't think so.

Q. So, you're comfortable with your present selection system.

A. Yes.

Q. For your hires over the past three years, what were the criteria that you used to select teachers?

A. Well, each would be specific to the position, but, for my situation, with classroom teachers, I'm looking at ZA endorsement for primary level; we look at experience--in the classroom and related kinds of experiences--we look at the college preparation and we look at ancillary kinds of preparation as far as workshops, and awareness of current strategies...

Q. How were those criteria set? And, who set those?

A. Primarily, they were set by me. Along with the superintendent, if necessary, but primarily by the building principal--just looking at what the job encompasses.

Q. How does your district go about recruiting teachers?

A. We publicize in all the college publications.

Q. Who handles that?

A. The superintendent's office.

Q. When do they typically do that?

A. It's on an as-needed basis when they open a position.

Q. Would it be for all positions that open?

A. Yeah; through the superintendent's office.

Q. Once you get those applications sent in, how are they screened?

A. First of all, they're collected at the superintendent's office. The building principals pick them up as needed. The initial screening committee, which would normally involve the teaching staff, there might even be some support staff involved, or, parents--whatever--would go through those under normal circumstances--this time of year, it's maybe just the principal to go through it and then call in the committee for interviewing.

Q. What are the criteria for screening?

A. Again, looking back at the needs of the specific job--if, for example, we have identified ZA endorsement, that's one of the things we're going to look at. But again, I guess just looking for the criteria that we set up in the first place. Do we want to look at somebody with experience, do we want to look at someone that has certain training, like, say in reading--maybe project READ or Reading Recovery, whatever it might be--very specific to the position available.

Q. Please describe your interviews in terms of some of the key questions, how long the interviews last, and, really what you're looking for

A. Our first interviews will typically last three quarters of an hour to an hour. We try to get just a general feel for the person, to give them a chance to share some of their

personal background, educational background with us, we look at what teaching experience they've had, like student teaching, experiences they've had with students, how they motivate them. For a classroom teacher, we're looking at lesson planning, design, thematic approach, classroom management, team cooperation, experience working with teams, and so on...maybe diagnostic work with kids, work with at-risk kids, minorities...why they chose a career, what their goals are, what strengths show up, what areas seem to need strengthening, how they've demonstrated initiative. Professional growth.

Q. Are the interviews planned?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you follow the Teacher Perceiver Instrument at that point?

A. No.

Q. Who is involved at that first interview?

A. That building site committee. Teaching staff, principal, possibly support staff, possibly parent.

Q. After that interview, are there other interviews?

A. Yes. Generally, there's a second interview. If we're looking at a position for which we have numerous candidates, we may have six to ten or twelve initial interviews. Then those are narrowed down. So, we'll pull back in some candidates for a second interview and, then, narrow it down to two to three from there.

Q. At the second interview, is that where the Teacher Perceiver is used?

A. Sometimes. Normally, between the first and second interview. Certainly between the interviews and the final recommendation.

Q. How do you decide whether or not a candidate can teach?

A. Well, I guess, through the questions designed to get at that.

We also, very often, will have a teacher teach a sample lesson.

Q. In front of who?

A. It may be in front of the initial committee, or it may be in front of the final selection committee.

Q. Not with kids?

A. It could involve kids, yes, we've done that as well.

Q. When do you make the decision whether or not somebody can teach?

A. That's ongoing. An ongoing evaluation. I guess, throughout the process.

Q. What happens after your level? And, who makes the final decision?

A. Ultimately, the final candidates are discussed between the building principal and the superintendent. Again, it may also involve the curriculum director or special ed. supervisor. But, ultimately, the building principal and the superintendent. make a joint decision.

Appendix E

Summary Table

Summary Table #10

Key Interview Questions

(multiple responses)

Principals who report key questions which focus on teaching experiences, abilities, philosophies, or methodology. (n=30).
2-A; 3-A; 3-B; 4-A; 4-B; 4-C; 5-A; 5-B; 5-C; 5-D; 5-E; 5-H; 5-I; 5-K; 5-M; 5-N; 5-O; 5-P; 5-Q; 5-R; 6-A; 6-B; 6-C; 6-D; 6-F; 6-H; 6-I; 6-J; 6-K; 6-L

Questions focus on personal background, candidate traits, hobbies, goals, and influences. (n=26).
2-A; 3-A; 3-B; 4-A; 4-B; 4-C; 5-A; 5-B; 5-D; 5-E; 5-G; 5-J; 5-K; 5-L; 5-N; 5-O; 5-P; 5-R; 6-A; 6-C; 6-D; 6-E; 6-G; 6-I; 6-J; 6-L

Questions focus on discipline, class management, class organization. (n=21).
4-B; 4-C; 5-A; 5-C; 5-E; 5-F; 5-I; 5-J; 5-K; 5-L; 5-M; 5-O; 5-Q; 6-A; 6-C; 6-D; 6-E; 6-F; 6-H; 6-J; 6-K

Subject area knowledge or knowledge about educational trends/research. (n=17).
2-A; 4-C; 5-A; 5-C; 5-E; 5-J; 5-K; 5-L; 5-M; 6-A; 6-C; 6-E; 6-F; 6-G; 6-I; 6-J; 6-K

Situational/hypothetical questions. (n=11).
3-B; 4-B; 5-G; 5-K; 5-M; 5-P; 6-C; 6-D; 6-E; 6-G; 6-I

Writing Assignment (n=8).
4-A; 5-A; 5-O; 5-Q; 6-B; 6-D; 6-E; 6-F

Parent relations. (n=6).
4-C; 5-C; 5-I; 5-K; 5-O; 6-F

Teamwork potential. (n=6).
2-A; 4-A; 5-G; 5-P; 6-F; 6-I

Appendix F

Site-Ordered Descriptive Sort

129

Site-Ordered Descriptive Matrix #10

Key Interview Questions

Principals report in-depth focus on
teaching ability and candidate traits. (n=14)
2-A; 4-A; 4-B; 4-C; 5-E; 5-K; 5-O;
5-P; 6-A; 6-C; 6-D; 6-H; 6-I; 6-J

Positive Indicators

2-A: Questions key on
real past experiences.

4-A: "What would your
last employer say if we
were to call him up?"

4-C: "Why are you the
best candidate?"

5-K: "Describe a lesson and how
you delivered it."

6-C: "What books have you read
lately?"

6-H: Questions are based on the
evaluation criteria.

Negative Indicators

4-B, 5-K, 5-P, 6-C, 6-I:
Emphasis on more
hypothetical   vs.   real   past
experiences.

Some teaching ability focus; some focus
on candidate traits; less depth. (n=9)
3-A; 3-B; 5-J; 5-L; 5-N; 5-R; 6-E; 6-G; 6-L

Positive Indicators

3-B, 6-E: Past experiences
questioned.

5-N: "What educator stands out most in your life?"

"Tell what you know about this list. (of educational terms)."

5-R: "How will your experiences fit this job?"

6-E: Writing component.

Negative Indicators

3-A, 5-J, 5-L: Heavier emphasis on traits, background vs. teaching strengths.

3-B, 5-P: Hypothetical favored over real past experiences.

6-G: List of terms handed out before interview. "So we're not hitting them cold."

Positive Indicators

5-A, 6-F: Writing assignment.

5C, 6-F: Parent relations also

Questions focus on teaching ability and curriculum knowledge (little attention to candidate's affective traits). (n=7).
5-A; 5-C; 5-D; 5-I; 5-M; 6-F; 6-K

questioned.

5-M: Teaching   of reading is key.

6-K: "Why do you want to teach here?"

Negative Indicators

6-F: Interviewers   are separated   from   each other—principal does

not hear responses to teacher/parent questions, vise-versa.

All seven do not mention qualities, traits.

5-D: Very   general questions.

"Why education?" "Why are you good?"

Negative Indicators

5-B, 5-H, 5-G, 6-B: Can't remember specific questions.

5-F: What

would your class look like?

Key questions are not mentioned or very in focus. (n=6).

5-B; 5-F; 5-G; 5-H; 5-Q; 6-B

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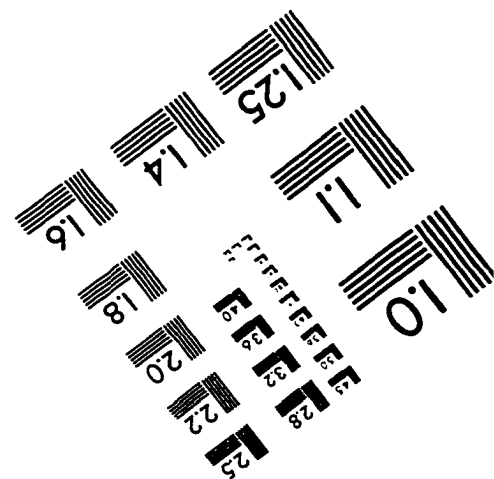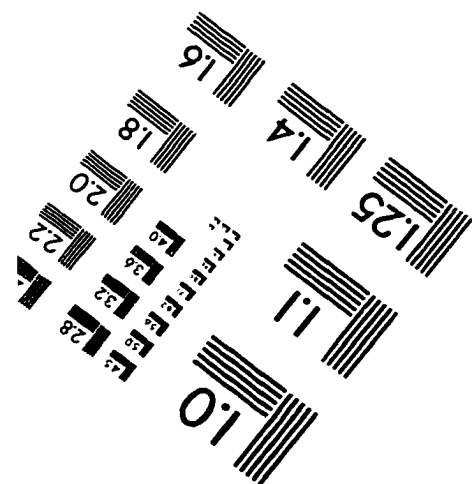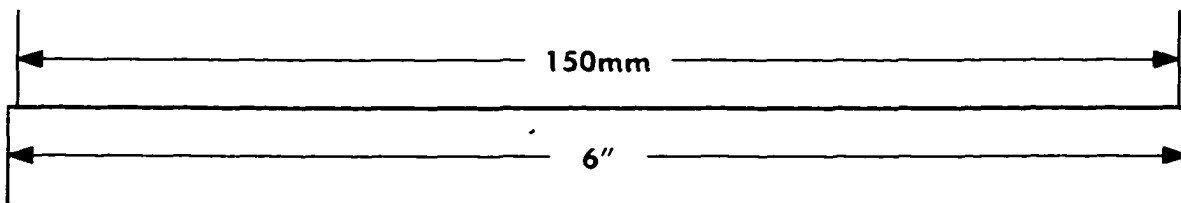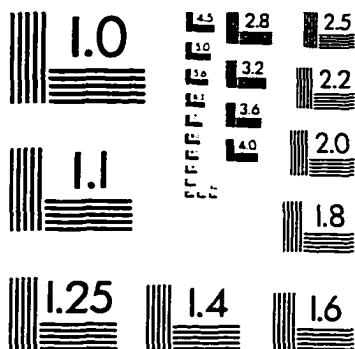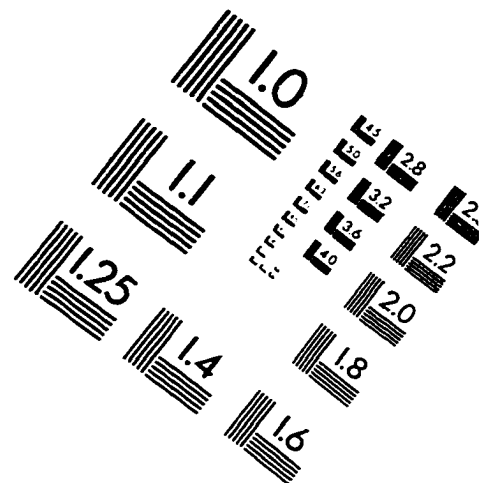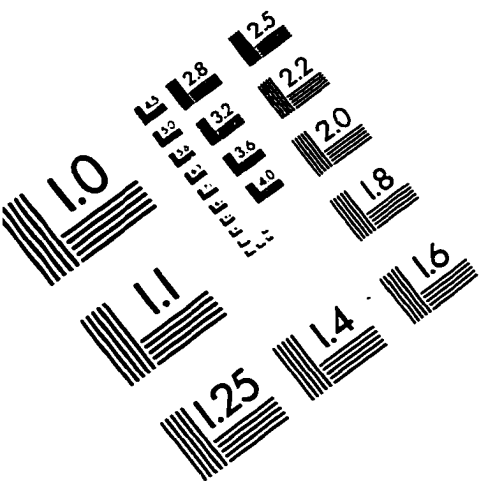
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IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA−3)

1.0

1.1

1.25 1.4 1.6

2.8 2.5
3.2 2.2
3.6
2.0
1.8

|←————————————— 150mm —————————————→|

|←————————————— 6″ —————————————→|