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A Study of Michigan Local School District Community Information/Relations Systems

Stanley Joseph Olson
Western Michigan University

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A STUDY OF MICHIGAN LOCAL SCHOOL
DISTRICT COMMUNITY INFORMATION/RELATIONS SYSTEMS

by

Stanley Joseph Olson

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
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A STUDY OF MICHIGAN LOCAL SCHOOL
DISTRICT COMMUNITY INFORMATION/RELATIONS SYSTEMS

Stanley Joseph Olson, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University, 1983

The purpose of this study was to review the relationship between the operation of a full-time community information/relations program and citizen financial support in Michigan local school districts. The study also identified and investigated model components of successful full-time community information/relations programs.

Financial support records of 11 local school districts identified as operating full-time community information/relations programs (community information/relations districts) were compared to those records established by a comparable sample group of local school districts which did not operate a program (traditional districts) during a five year period, 1977-1982. This was done to determine whether districts operating community information/relations programs experienced greater citizen financial support during the review period than those that did not.

The findings of the statistical tests performed on the research hypotheses of the study indicated that there were no significant relationships between millage issue passage rates for community information/relations districts when compared with traditional districts during the review period. No associations were found between the two groups of districts in respect to passage of renewal, additional, or overall millage issues from 1977-1982.

Among the 11 districts identified as operating full-time community information/relations programs, five Michigan local school districts were evaluated by use of selected criteria as being successful community information/relations programs. From responses on a primary review instrument and a secondary listing of questions administered during indepth interviews, a number of model program components were identified by successful community information/relations program administrators and were reported in the study.

The investigation revealed that the operation of a community information/relations program had positive impact upon citizen financial support in selected local school districts. By conducting a careful analysis of local conditions and developing a greater understanding of the composition and structure of community information/relations program components, and by careful, directed implementation of selected components, benefits related to maintained and increased citizen support can be experienced by Michigan local school districts.

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In the words of the poet James Russell Lowell: "The foolish and the dead alone never change their opinions." I at one time held the opinion that completion of a doctoral dissertation was beyond my ability to achieve. Fortunately, I have escaped the fate of being identified, at least for the time, with either of Lowell's aforementioned categories. Through the kindness, assistance and guidance of many persons, I have accomplished that which I previously believed I could not do. I owe a debt of gratitude to the many individuals who contributed to my achievement. It could not have been done without them.

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Stanley Joseph Olson

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CHAPTER I

NEEDS STATEMENT

Introduction

Of the major problems facing all communities in the nation today, one which ranks among the most serious is the decline in the image of the local school system. Deep concerns are being expressed by school administrators and personnel that, as Hill (1977) stated, "many Americans are losing or no longer have an understanding and acceptance of the role and effectiveness of the free public school, and its importance in the preservation of our way of life" (p. 53). Franklin and Kimbrough (1979) stated, in regard to the decline in public support, "educational leaders today are experiencing a state of low credibility...If public confidence is allowed to decline still further the schools of this country will be seriously threatened" (p. 106). Riles (1977) perhaps best captured the severity of the problem by stating that "large numbers of people, parents, politicians, and journalists are in a negative, highly critical mood toward public schools. Public confidence in the educational system has never been lower" (p. 6).

Major opinion polls have expressed that confidence in public schools has declined steadily over the past decade. Regional, as well as national opinion polling operations, have consistently reported the measurable erosion of public image once held by the public systems.

The decline in the image of the public school system has resulted in a like decline in financial support. During the 1950's and early 1960's voter approval of school financial issues, whether annual operating budgets or bonds for new schools, was viewed by most school administrators as mere formality. Beginning in the late sixties, however, voter support for school financial issues declined steadily. This trend toward diminishing financial support by local taxpayers continued throughout the 1970's and has taken root in the 1980's.

Many reasons have been given for public education's loss of stature and declining support by the American public. Among these reasons are the significant demographic, social, and economic changes which have taken place in the United States over the past decade. These changes have had a direct effect upon the public schools by widening the distance between them and the community. Decline in traditional populations served by local schools, value shifts by the American society in general, and recent economic downturns, as well as numbers of other occurrences, have served to sever the contact and positive relationship once shared between Americans and their public school systems.

For years educators have recognized the fact the local school district financial survival is directly dependent upon the attitudes and opinions of the voting public. They have established that if the local community does not possess a knowledge of school programs, personnel, needs and conditions, financial support declines. McCloskey (1965) underscored this belief by stating:

Financial support means public decisions and actions which provide sufficient funds to pay for adequate school programs. In view of the many conflicting financial demands confronting most citizens, there is no reason to expect that those who lack a high level of active interest in education or those holding it in low esteem will reward it adequate support (p. 30).

Much support is given to the idea that an essential element in producing continuous school financial support is the maintenance and operation of an ongoing community information/relations program. Authors who are proponents of local school district community information/relations operations have never advocated that the maintenance of one of these systems will alone provide the needed citizen support to pass school financial issues. Primarily, a community information/relations system keeps the membership of a school district's internal and external public aware, informed, and hopefully, involved in the day to day life of one of the communities most important institutions--the public school. The system delivers good news and bad news. It operates on a year-round basis. It listens continuously, receiving valuable and needed input from all segments of its constituency. If working properly, it involves all citizens.

If, as much of the literatures suggests, being informed and involved leads to understanding, then a positive and supportive climate for schools can be found in school districts where community information/relations systems operate. If such a climate exists, it can be concluded that this positive atmosphere might affect positive voter response. If positive voter response is seen to be a by-product of the operation of a community information/relations system, then

serious thought should be given to the use of one of these systems to improve citizen support by local school districts. The data collected, analyzed, and interpreted from this study is intended to result in a better understanding of the relationship between local school district community information/relations system operations and citizen support.

Needs Statement

Michigan's public schools could be seen to benefit from an improvement in citizen support. Depressed economic conditions, state aid cutbacks, and a decline in financial support at the local district level have resulted in a less-than-optimistic future for Michigan public schools. Runkel (1982) reported the financial conditions expended by Michigan schools by stating:

We're now trying to get a handle on what's going to happen with districts that are opening schools in terms of their ability to meet the payrolls...Education has already been cut dramatically in Michigan due to this economic recession. Obviously at this budgetary time, in terms of balancing the (state) budget, there aren't a lot of options. But certainly it's going to be very terrifying for education, both at the elementary and secondary level, at the university level and the community college level.

I have to say we're at the point where cuts will damage education. We've made cuts and made cuts and made cuts. We've had three years of cuts. We have some districts, obviously because of our formula (those not dependent on state aid), that do have money. But the in-formula districts are at the bone and into the bone (p. 1).

In the State of Michigan, a first-ever assessment of citizen attitudes regarding the public schools was conducted in December, 1981. Findings from that statewide survey of public opinion

conducted by the Michigan Department of Education (Project Outreach, 1982) reported 47 percent of Michigan residents gave their public schools a grade of "C" or below and 72 percent of respondents stated that Michigan schools "stayed the same" or "got worse" over the few years previous to 1981 (p. 1). Although somewhat difficult to generalize responses of Michigan citizens regarding support for public schools from a first-time survey, response percentages of selected questions from the Michigan survey compared consistently with the aforementioned declining percentages of the 1981 Gallup Poll.

Perhaps the best measure of declining citizen support for Michigan public schools is derived from a review of annual finance election records. Election results during the past decade, statewide, suggest that the supportive climate which once existed in local school districts has diminished measurably. It was reported by the School Support Services division of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE, 1982) that within the state during the 1981-82 school year 88 percent of millage renewal elections were successful, but only 27 percent of financial issues requesting additional monies and 47 percent of combination (renewal-additional) issues were passed. These figures show a striking change from those collected in 1973-74. In that year the Department of Education (MDE, 1974) reported 95 percent of all renewals, 59 percent of all additional issues and 77 percent of all combination issues being approved by Michigan voters.

Further analysis of Michigan school finance election records resulted in additional evidence of declining support. Comparisons of millage election results of the past ten years by five year segments

(1972-73 to 1976-77, compared to 1977-78 to 1981-82) showed overall millage passage rates for the comparison periods decreased 12.6 percent, passage of additional millage fell 13.4 percent and approval rates for combination issues fell 20.2 percent.

During the 1981-82 school year, the shutdown of four Michigan school districts, in rural, suburban, and urban settings, became a reality. The school districts of Pontiac, Alpena, Taylor, and Harper Creek, were on the verge of closing or had actually shut their doors, before being given a last minute reprieve by local voters. Numbers of other Michigan public school districts were seen to be approaching these types of conditions. Runkel (1982) reported that 14 Michigan school districts were in a "critical" financial condition existing on minimal millage alone with less than a third of the finances required to operate a full year. He also stated that 15 other districts were experiencing "serious" financial shortfalls in which operating monies could only be sustained by massive cutbacks and deficit spending (p. 3).

In an effort to reverse the trend toward declining citizen support the Michigan Department of Education directed funding to two programs related to community information/relations systems. In the fall of 1980, a Title IV-C Demonstration Project Grant was awarded to the Macomb County Intermediate School District for a program entitled The Marketing of Education. The program began with a survey to assess the condition and status of public education in Macomb County. The results of the survey provided foundations for a marketing program designated The Macomb Marketing Plan designed to

improve the overall image of the public schools.

The Macomb Marketing Plan (1981) was written to be developed in three phases. Phase One was "targeted at elementary parents and was focused on the basics--reading, writing, and arithmetic" (p. 10).

Goals developed for Phase One of the program included the following:

1. to demonstrate that public schools are doing a good job of teaching basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic
2. to alert school staff to public attitudes toward public schools
3. to help schools be more responsive to public needs
4. to help school staff improve their effectiveness in communicating with the public
5. to provide a communication/marketing program which can be replicated in schools throughout the nation
6. to make marketing a priority activity in Macomb County's 21 school districts
7. to develop and produce materials which will build better understanding of public school programs and services
8. to maintain public education's position as a leader (pp. 10-11).

Phase Two of The Macomb Marketing Plan was directed at secondary school students and their parents. The focus of this phase of the project was the "basics and beyond" (p. 10). This second part of the program, conducted in the 1981-82 school year started with a survey of high school seniors. Specific program objectives were developed from survey results. Phase Three of the program scheduled for development in the 1982-83 school year will be directed toward those "without children in school" (p. 10).

In addition to the Macomb project, the Michigan Department of Education sponsored a second program designed to assess public attitudes. The department established a program it called Project Outreach in 1981, and conducted a statewide survey of public opinion regarding Michigan's public schools. Project Outreach also conducted forums for Michigan high school students at sixteen intermediate school districts throughout the state. Cass (1982) reported these forums were designed to "provide students with an opportunity to gain new insights about public education, develop leadership skills and provide feedback to the educational decision makers relative to the education programs, services, and activities which the students consider to be priority issues" (p. 1).

Other organized efforts relating improvement of public image to improvement of public relations skills were recently developed in Michigan. In June of 1982, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Phillip Runkel, directed a letter to all local district superintendents inviting them to attend state sponsored workshops offering instruction in post-millage survey techniques and election campaign planning (Michigan Department of Education 1982). The Michigan Education Association published a membership newsletter entitled Reading, Writing, and Freedom in June of 1982. The publication listed dozens of public relations activities which the MEA advocated be used by state teachers to increase citizen understanding and support of public schools (M.E.A., 1982). Michigan State University in its 27 year old off-campus school administrator training program also acknowledged the need for greater public relations

skill development. It announced that the theme for its 1982-83 Administrative Extern Program was, "School and Community Relations" (MSU, 1982) and scheduled this program to begin in September, 1982.

As a result of declining financial support being experienced by local school districts and the fact that they, for better or worse, are tied to the millage election as their only means of increasing school revenues, a number of Michigan school districts operate full-time community information/relations systems in an effort to improve their ability to maintain financial support from their citizens. The 1982 Michigan Education Directory listed 14 local school districts as employing an individual on a full-time basis to specifically and solely oversee a school public relations program. These districts were: Benton Harbor, Birmingham, Brighton, Dearborn, Detroit, East Lansing, Flint, Grand Rapids, Livonia, Plymouth-Canton, Southfield, Utica, Warren Consolidated, and Wyoming public school systems. The 1981-82 membership directory of the National School Public Relations Association (N.S.P.R.A.) and the Michigan School Public Relations Association (M.S.P.R.A.) also identified each of the aforementioned Michigan local school districts as employing an individual to operate an on-going community information/relations system.

In a time when financial support for Michigan public school systems is at its lowest point in a decade and public opinion regarding public school operations is seen by school officials as being far from desirable, it would seem logical that a review of the state's local school district community information/relations systems be undertaken. The extraordinary amount of attention being directed

to efforts to improve communications and public relations skills of local school districts gives further emphasis to the necessity of this endeavor. It is the purpose of this study to collect and review data relative to the operation of on-going local school district community information/relations systems in Michigan and how these systems affect public opinion and support. The analysis and interpretation of the data collected in the study should result in an increased and better understanding of the relationship between the maintenance of these systems and citizen support.

Problem Statement

As previously discussed in the introduction of this study, numbers of books, dissertations, essays, and journal articles suggest an observable relationship between the existence of a community information/relations system and success at election time. Systems which operate on a consistent, year-round basis have been linked directly to having measurable impact on citizen support. There appears to be a need for additional research to review this relationship for four reasons. First, regarding the relationship between the operation of a community information/relations system in a local school district and success at election time, little data have been accumulated to substantiate this relationship. Second, much of the literature which advocates the operation of a community information/relations system by a local school district to increase and improve citizen support is written by school public relations professionals as opposed to those who could be viewed as more objective sources. Third, much of the literature which suggests a relationship between

system operation and millage success provides little specific information relative to the components of community information/relations programs which successfully affect citizen support. Fourth, after conducting a literature search independently and with the assistance of the Educational Resource Information Clearinghouse (E.R.I.C.) and after reviewing over 120 essays, dissertations, books and periodical articles, this investigator found not a single study designed to review the relationship of community information/relations systems to citizen support in the State of Michigan.

A review of literature which advocates the use of a community information/relations system by a local school district finds little information available which discusses data-based relationships between operation of the system and citizen support. Many writers establish the belief that on-going community information/relations systems are essential in developing and maintaining citizen support. Dissertations by Bissell (1978), Harney (1980), Kubalek (1979), McMullan (1969), Martin (1978), Moskowitz (1975), McKenzie (1969), and Murphy (1966) all address the need to use on-going community information/relations systems to promote citizen support in financial elections. Other writers who have discussed this general relationship include: Knezevich (1966), Banach (1976), Bagin and Lefever (1971), Harrison (1971), Hukill (1973), Jones (1977), Lutz (1980), Rubin (1979), and Stanley (1980).

Despite the convincing efforts of the aforementioned authors to establish the role sound communications practices play in helping to provide support for schools, few data-based link-ups are revealed.

It is the intention of this investigation to provide evidence which underscores the relationship between the operation of a community information/relations program and citizen support.

A second concern of the investigation is that much of the literature which advocates usage of an on-going communications program is written by school public relations professionals. Authors such as Bagin, Banach, Hill, Gallup, and Stanley, among others, all have written extensively advocating the use of these systems to engender community support. Most of these field-based authors are very convincing in their assessments which discuss this relationship.

A need to review this relationship by someone who has no direct ties to the professional field of school public relations is seen to exist. It appears that, perhaps some added credibility might be developed for local school district use of on-going communications systems if a professional educator rather than a public relations professional provides data to support this advocacy.

A third concern of this study is the need to identify and discuss components of operating community information/relations systems evaluated as being successful. If the study is to have any value to the field of public education, it will need to recognize and review components of successfully operating systems so as to provide models for use by local districts. The literature aforementioned in this investigation is replete with examples of public relations and communications programs operated in school settings. What is viewed as being absent is a specific investigation and review of community information/relations systems seen to be operating

successfully and affecting (either directly or indirectly) citizen support. If local school districts are to consider the use of an on-going communications system as a key element in their everyday operation they must be able to perceive a sound relationship between system usage and citizen support. They must also be able to identify and relate specific components of these systems to their own local settings.

A fourth concern of this study is that little of the literature which reviews the relationship between community information/relations systems and citizen support is Michigan-based. Although general discussions of the use of these systems during financial elections are provided by Banach and Westley (1972), Rubin (1979), and Franks (1981), a direct identification and review of systems seen to successfully affect citizen support in Michigan has not been discovered.

At a time when public opinion and citizen financial support for public schools are near an all-time low in the State of Michigan, a study such as the one being advocated is seen to be of value. If a sound relationship can be shown between operating community information/relations systems and citizen support in Michigan school districts, and specific component models of successful programs can be identified, another tool can be provided to local school districts statewide to promote stability.

Based upon: (a) the review of school-community relations literature; (b) the review of dissertations and related literature; (c) the current and anticipated future conditions affecting public

education; and (d) the assumptions regarding need for further information supporting the relationship between the operation of community information/relations systems and citizen support, a demonstrated need for this study has been established. The study would:

1. review and analyze the public opinion environment in which public schools currently operate
2. synthesize the relationship between on-going communication programs and citizen support
3. identify general components of community information/relations systems
4. gather and analyze data linking citizen support to the operation of a community information/relations system
5. provide a viewpoint discussing year-round communication operations in local school districts from a source outside the field of school public relations
6. identify specific model components of successful community information/relations systems operating in Michigan local school districts.

It is anticipated that this study will produce information which can be used by Michigan school districts to develop a community information/relations system on a local district level.

Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to review the relationship between the operation of a community information/relations program and citizen support in local Michigan school districts, and to identify model program components of successful systems. This will be accomplished by the following objectives:

1. to identify those Michigan local school districts which operate a community information/relations system using the following criteria:

a. employment of an individual specifically and solely assigned to operate a community information/relations system as identified by the Michigan Education Directory, the membership directory of the National School Public Relations Association (N.S.P.R.A.), and Michigan School Public Relations Association (M.S.P.R.A.)

b. operation of a system for a minimum of a five year comparison period, 1977-78 to 1981-82. This time sequence has been selected as a comparison period because it represents: (1) a financial support decline period for Michigan school districts, and (2) a public opinion decline period for public schools as measured by major opinion polls compared to the previous five year period, 1972-73 to 1976-77.

2. to compare the financial support records of local school districts identified as operating a community information/relations system with a comparable sample group of local school districts which did not operate a system during the aforementioned five year period of 1977-78 to 1981-82. This will be done to determine if districts operating community information/relations programs experienced greater citizen financial support during the comparison period than those that did not.

3. to identify and establish from review and analysis of the data collected, five local school districts which operated a successful community information/relations system during the comparison period of 1977-78 to 1981-82. An examination of the systems operated by these five districts will be conducted to determine:

a. model program components which are common to the five local districts operating successful systems

b. a listing of model program components which are replicable in most local school districts in the State of Michigan.

Procedures

Data Collection and Analysis

Michigan local school districts which are operating community information/relations systems as determined by the criteria cited in the preceding section will be identified. Michigan local school district financial election records from the 1977-78 school year to the 1981-82 school year as provided by the Michigan Department of Education will also be reviewed. Upon the development of a general data base from review and analysis of this information, a primary instrument will be developed to do the following:

1. validate the status required by the study of local districts to be identified as operating community information/relations systems (e.g., employment of an individual to solely and specifically operate the system, existence of the operation of the system in the local district during the selected comparison period)
2. gather financial election records of districts operating systems for the comparison period indicated in the objectives of the investigation
3. establish a general listing of community information/relations program components identified by local school districts as being indigenous to systems operating over the comparison period. The component areas used in the primary review instrument will be those offered by Flatt (1981).

Once the primary instrument is completed, it will be mailed to districts operating community information/relations systems. Upon return of the completed primary instrument, the financial election records of these districts will be translated into scores for the comparison period and matched with those of a randomly selected

sample group of districts not operating systems using an appropriate statistical procedure. The general research hypothesis is that there is no difference between the citizen financial support levels of districts operating community information/relations systems and the citizen financial support levels of districts not operating systems over comparable periods.

From the results of the primary review, five local school districts operating successful community information/relations programs will be selected for a secondary review. These districts will be visited individually for the purposes of identifying model program components which are common among the programs of all five districts, and of establishing a listing of model program components which are replicable in most local school districts in the State of Michigan.

Population for the Study

The population for this study will consist of two groups. One group will be made up of those local school districts which are identified as operating community information/relations systems. A comparison group of districts which are equal in size, wealth, and demographic factors to the first group and which do not operate community information/relations systems, will comprise the second group.

Limitations of the Study

In any investigation of factors which influence citizen support, many variables could be reviewed within the area to be studied. This section delimits the variables and defines the parameters in the study.

1. The variables that will be identified in the study will be limited to those obtained from instruments used to investigate those districts which are identified as operating community information/reasons systems.

2. The statistical analysis planned for use in the study will be limited to measuring relationships of citizen support patterns between districts which are identified as operating community information/reasons systems and those identified as not operating these systems.

3. The study will be limited to only selected Michigan school districts operating community information/reasons systems and their levels of citizen support compared to the records of a sample group of those which do not.

4. The study will be limited only to a review of community information/reasons programs of local school districts and will not take into account other variables which might influence citizen financial support.

5. Upon preliminary review of local school districts maintaining community information/reasons systems, it was found that Detroit Public Schools could be identified as a district operating one of these systems. Because of the unique status the Detroit

system has among all other Michigan school districts (in terms of size, demographic composition, and geographic location) and the difficulty in comparing the Detroit system to others, it was eliminated from review in this study.

Definition of Terms

The definitions included in this section are provided to the reader for clarification and interpretation. The definitions will not necessarily apply to universal application of the terms which follow outside the dimensions of this investigation.

Community Information/Relations System

Community information/relations system is a multi-faceted, planned, systematic, year-round process of communication between an educational system and its publics. Components of the system include written, verbal, and performance-based communication programs which are constructed to receive and assess feedback as well as to deliver information. The system is usually directed by a trained, full-time professional identified with the functions of the operation.

Internal Publics

Internal publics refers to those individuals and/or groups who are directly involved, on an employment, administrative, or policy making basis, with the day-to-day operations of a local school district. Examples of internal publics would include: teachers, custodians, central office personnel, and board of education members.

External Publics

External publics refers to those individuals and/or groups of a given community who receive services from and/or contribute support to the local school district but are not members of district employee, administrative, or policy making groups. Examples of external publics would include: students, parents, and non-parents,

Citizen Support

Citizen support refers to directed actions which contribute positively to the day-to-day operation of a local school district. The most significant form of citizen support is positive response of the voting public in school financial elections.

Traditional School Districts

Traditional school districts refer to school systems which do not operate community information/relations systems.

School Millage Issues or Elections

School millage issues or elections refers to any school election, either for operating levy or bonded indebtedness, that a school district conducts for the purpose of financing the school system on an on-going basis.

Renewal Issues

Renewal issues are those election issues designed to provide a continuation of operating monies previously approved by voters of a local school district.

Additional Issues

Additional issues are those election issues designed to provide additional monies for operation of a local school district.

Combination Issues

Combination issues are those election issues which offer for voter response renewal and additional election issues in a single package.

Bond Issues

Bond issues are those election issues designated to build, equip, and/or repair facilities of a local school district.

Summary

It appears that:

1. The steady decline in positive citizen opinion and financial support for local school districts has prompted new and renewed focus upon the use of community information/relations systems to improve the citizen support.
2. A number of authors have advocated the use of community

information/relations systems on a local level to improve image and financial support but have failed to show a data-based relationship between system operation and citizen support.

3. The Michigan Department of Education and training programs provided by institutions of higher education are directing concerted efforts to upgrade communications and public relations skills of local school district personnel.

4. Few authors outside of the profession of school public relations have reviewed the effects that the operation of community information/relations systems have on community support and positive voter support.

5. Literature discussing local community information/relations systems fails to identify specific model components of successful Michigan systems.

6. There is an observable need for a study which could provide Michigan public school districts with information and model program components which could be used to impact citizen opinion and support on the local level.

It is the intention of this study to deal with these identified needs and therefore to provide new information to the study of the effectiveness of community information/relations systems.

An introduction to the study, needs statement, problem statement, the objectives, procedures, limitations of the study, and the definition of terms used in the study all are stated in Chapter I. Chapter II will review related literature and research relevant to the study. Chapter III will provide descriptions of the populations

studied, sample selection processes, and will outline the methodology to be followed. Analysis and discussion of the findings of the study will be the main emphasis of Chapter IV. Chapter V will conclude the study. It will contain a discussion of the results and implications of the study findings as well as appropriate conclusions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Introduction

The need for citizen understanding and support of the nation's public school systems has never been greater than it is today. A faltering public image and economic uncertainties have combined to shake the faith Americans once had in public education as the key to financial and social achievement. The intent of this chapter is to examine literature which discusses this situation as well as to review publications, articles, and studies that prescribe solutions for problems which are associated with it.

Specifically, this chapter will focus upon literature and research which discusses the decline in citizen acceptance of America's public school systems, the like decline in financial support for public schools, factors and changes which have affected attitudes, the relationship between citizen understanding and support of public school systems, the link between community information/relations system operation and voter support, and the components associated with the operation of local school district community information/relations programs. This approach to the review of literature was selected due to the limitation of available literature which addressed the specific aspects of the study. The approach was also seen as the most logical means to underscore the need for a study of this type.

It should be noted by the reader that a majority of the works cited specifically, or appearing in the bibliographic section of this study, are from periodicals. After review of reference materials available from a substantial number of libraries, collections and professional field sources, it was found that a vast majority of the publications which dealt with the topics discussed were from educational journals and periodicals. Although several single-volume books were used, a scarcity of information in book form on the topics discussed were observed. This lack of information in book form might lead one to conclude that the topic of developing formal community information/relations systems in public school districts is comparatively new to the public education scene. One might further conclude that because of this newness the topic warrants further study.

The review of the literature and research will be presented in the following order:

1. Erosion of attitudes regarding public schools.
2. Declining financial support related to citizen attitudes.
3. Demographic, economic, and social changes have affected attitudes.
4. Public understanding and citizen support.
5. Community information/relations programs and voter support.
6. Identifying and developing components of local school district community information/relations programs.

Erosion of Attitudes Regarding Public Schools

Public school districts across the nation have experienced a measurable decline in public acceptance over the past decade. Banach (1974) reported that, "although public interest in public education continues to be strong, public confidence is eroding" (p. 17). Bagin and Wherry (1982) stated, "public confidence in education has been and is low. The field of education is suffering from low prestige" (p. 30). Williams (1981) suggested that the image decline experienced by public education might be at a very serious level by stating, "...many people believe the schools are in fact dangerous--that they have the capacity to make smart children stupid" (p. 65).

Among the best and most complete reports discussing the nationwide decline in public acceptance of America's school systems are from public opinion polls. Gallup (1981) in his thirteenth annual survey of the American public's attitudes toward the public schools revealed that public school image has been steadily declining since he began formal measurement of it in 1968. Gallup indicated that although 1981 survey figures did not show a substantial decline over the previous year, evidence of an up-turn in the ratings was still lacking (p. 3).

Each Gallup survey since 1974 asked respondents to rate their public schools using a standard reporting system of A (excellent performance), B (good performance), C (mediocre performance), D (sub-par performance), or Fail (poor performance). Poll results indicate that a steady drop of the public's rating of the public

schools has been registered. Table 1, which follows, displays this consistent decline.

Table 1
Public Attitudes Toward the Public Schools by
Grade as Reported by Gallup Polls 1974 - 1981

Ratings Given the Public Schools	1981 %	1980 %	1979 %	1978 %	1977 %	1976 %	1975 %	1974 %
A Rating	9	10	8	9	11	13	13	18
B Rating	27	25	26	27	26	29	30	30
C Rating	34	29	30	30	28	28	28	21
D Rating	13	12	11	11	11	10	9	6
Fail	7	6	7	8	5	6	7	5
Don't Know	10	18	18	15	19	14	13	20

In 1981 a total of 36 percent gave the public schools a rating of A or B in the survey. The 1980 figure was 35 percent, and the 1979 total for the A and B rating was 34 percent. The designation of A or B acceptance of the public schools by the public in 1974 was 48 percent (Gallup 1981). It is easily seen that in a short span of time public attitudes regarding the public school system have changed measurably despite recent improvement.

Adding to the negative conclusions drawn from the decline of A and B ratings is the fact that increased belief that schools are failing or nearly failing has been recorded in Gallup Surveys.

Although the rate of those public schools only increased two percent from 1974 to 1981, the D rating (indicating a sub-par performance) more than doubled from six to 13 percent (Gallup, 1981).

Other Gallup Poll results also display evidence of deterioration in public acceptance of America's public school systems. In a section of the 1979 Gallup Poll, the national survey sample was asked if education was better or worse than when they were in school.

Gallup (1979) reported the following response:

Respondents in the 1973 survey were asked if they thought the present generation of school children received a better or worse education than they did in their day. The same question was asked in the present survey with significantly different results.

In 1973 those interviewed said, by a large majority, that children today get a better education. Asked to tell why, they cited the following reasons: a wider variety of subjects, better facilities and equipment, better teaching methods, better teachers and better opportunities for all ethnic groups. Those who held the opposite opinion (that education today is not so good as in earlier times) gave these reasons: less discipline, lower standards, less interest on the part of teachers and students, and too many irrelevant subjects in the curriculum.

The views of the minority have, since 1973, become the views of the majority...The greatest changes in the period between 1973 and 1979 occurred in the Western states where views are virtually opposite of those held in 1973. In 1973, 54 percent said that schools were better; 25 percent said they were worse. In 1979, 27 percent say they are better; 51 percent say they are worse.

Another significant change has been found in the views of better educated citizens. Respondents who have attended college say the schools are worse than in their day by a margin of 46 percent to 36 percent. In 1973 they held the opposite view (p. 37).

Nationally, 41 percent of those participating in the survey felt schools were better today, compared to 42 percent who felt they were worse (p. 37).

Numbers of other recent polls support the Gallup findings. Wherry (1981) reported the findings of a continuing University of Chicago study regarding the degree of public confidence in various institutions (including education) expressed by the American public. He described the results of the survey as follows:

In 1973 and 1974 education ranked second only to medicine among all institutions ranked in the survey. By 1975, education dropped precipitously to fifth place, then squeaked into fourth place in 1977 just prior to another breathtaking drop to the lowest point in the history of the survey, sixth place in 1978. The survey, now being made on an every-other year basis, was not taken in 1979, but 1980 saw only a small increase to fifth place with an improvement of 1.4 percentage points over 1978--a less than statistically significant change.

The fact is that, any way you look at it, the decline the esteem of the public for their public schools has been alarming (p. 4).

Bagin (1976) discussed the results of a report from the U. S. Office of Education entitled The Condition of Education -- 1976. The report showed a substantial decline in public confidence in people running educational institutions. Bagin revealed:

In 1974, for example, 49 percent of those surveyed reported "a great deal of confidence" in educational administrators. This dropped to an astounding 30.9 percent in 1975. Said the U.S.O.E. report: "While education outranked major companies and other governmental units, it fell below the scientific community and remained below medicine in its ability to sustain confidence" (p. 7).

The National School Public Relations Association (1979) reviewed public opinion research over the past 40 years and established some findings which concur with those released by other polls. Among their findings N.S.P.R.A. included:

1. Satisfaction with the public schools has been dropping since the 1950's. "A 1946 national survey found 28 percent satisfied with the performance of their schools... satisfaction rose to 82 percent in 1955...In recent years polls are showing 50 percent to 60 percent satisfied with school performance" (pp. 3-4).

2. A 1975 General Mills American Family Report showed that "about four out of ten parents agree that one cannot count on the schools to teach children to read and write" (p. 4).

Reports from opinion polls can only add to the evidence produced statewide and locally that the public does not feel the public schools are producing the results they desire. The negative public perception of America's public schools, an accurate appraisal or not, has indeed become a product, or belief, which is real to millions of citizens.

Declining Financial Support Related to Citizen Attitudes

Consistent with decline in public school image has been the decline in public school financial support. Gallup from 1969 to 1972 and again in 1981 asked members of his national survey sample if they would vote to raise taxes for the purpose of giving additional support to their local public school system. Responses from the survey sample indicated an increasingly negative response to this question consistent with the decline in supportive attitude previously reviewed in this chapter.

Table 2, which follows, discusses this declining financial support trend.

Table 2
Public Attitudes Toward Financial
Support of the Public Schools
as Reported by Gallup Polls (1969-72 and 1981)

National Results	Favor Raising Taxes %	Opposed to Raising Taxes %	Don't Know
1981 Survey	30	60	10
1972 Survey	36	56	8
1971 Survey	40	52	8
1970 Survey	37	56	7
1969 Survey	45	49	6

The survey results show roughly the same downward trend as the support ratings given the public schools. Opposition to raising taxes increased 11 percent in the same ten year period (1971-1981) as support for raising taxes fell 15 percent (Gallup, 1981).

Gallup (1979) also reported that over one-third of the American public..."favored the placing of mandatory limits or caps on the amounts of monies in the annual budgets of public schools" (p. 37).

Records of millage election results from different states also reflect the trend toward declining financial support. During the 1969 fiscal year for example, voters approved 57 percent of the bond elections held in this country. Only 50 percent of school bond elections held during the first quarter of 1971 were approved by

voters (Piele, 1972). Jones (1977) reported findings of financial election results during the 1970's. Displaying an alarming trend toward decreasing financial support his information reported:

An analysis by Community Support Service of the School Research and Service Corporation, Anaheim, Calif., covering 74 school finance issues on the March 2, 1976, primary ballot in California, showed that only 19 passed, and of the 19, only seven involved tax increases. And not one single finance issue passed in any California school system with more than 3,000 voters.

In Illinois, results of school bond and tax rate referenda show that the percentage of bond issues passing dropped from 75 percent in 1969-70 to 47 percent in 1974-75, while the percentage of tax levies passing dropped from 51 percent in 1969-70 to 37 percent in 1974-75.

Nationally, in 1976, 878 bond issues for \$3.43 billion in school construction were submitted to voters in school districts across the country, and only 52.6 percent of them--462, for \$1.44 billion--were approved. Worse yet, the defeats, although less than 50 percent, involved 58 percent of the money sought. Putting it another way, in 1976 angry voters across America said "no" to \$2 billion needed for school construction.

And statistics for tax levies, although not officially available on a national level, undoubtedly were far worse (p. 7).

Conditions which currently affect Michigan public schools differ little from national scene. They too have suffered from a decline in citizen support over the past decade. Along with the perceived erosion of citizen approval for the public school system in Michigan has come a decline in financial support. In the last ten years, passage of financial issues, particularly those requesting additional support, has fallen measurably.

Table 3, which follows, shows the decline of overall operating millage approval by Michigan voters over the past decade.

Table 3

Michigan Local School District Operating Millage
Election Results (All Issues) 1972-1982

Year	Total Number of Millage Issues	Millage Issues Passed Amount, %	Millage Issues Failed Amount, %
1981-82	863	448 (52%)	415 (48%)
1980-81	870	425 (49%)	445 (51%)
1979-80	718	397 (55%)	321 (45%)
1978-79	587	378 (64%)	209 (31%)
1977-78	626	377 (60%)	249 (40%)
1976-77	743	438 (59%)	305 (41%)
1975-76	710	421 (59%)	289 (41%)
1974-75	546	385 (70%)	161 (30%)
1973-74	650	494 (76%)	156 (24%)
1972-73	516	405 (78%)	111 (21%)

It was reported by the School Support Services Division of the Michigan Department of Education that comparisons of millage election results of the past ten years by five year segments (1972-73 to 1976-77, compared to 1977-78 to 1981-82) showed overall operating millage passage rates decreased by 12.6 percent. During this same comparison period, passage of additional millage fell 13.4 percent and approval rates for combination issues (renewal and additional millage packaged in one issue) fell 20.2 percent (MDE, 1982).

Demographic, Economic and Social Changes
Have Affected Attitudes

Among the many reasons given for public education's loss of stature and declining financial support by the American public are the significant demographic, social, and economic changes which have taken place in the United States during the past decade. It is suggested that these changes have had a direct effect upon public schools by widening the distance between the public schools and the community. Included in these changes are the following statistics:

1. According to research conducted by the Gallup Poll, 68 percent of the adult population nationwide has no school age children. They forecast that in five years this figure will be close to 75 percent (Gallup, 1980).
2. By 1990 one out of every five Americans will be 55 years of age or older (U.S. Census Bureau, 1981).
3. The number of people living alone rose to 18.9 million in 1981, a 75 percent jump since 1970 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1982).
4. The ratio of divorced persons to 1,000 married persons living with their spouses rose to 10 from 47 in 1970 and 35 in 1960 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1982).
5. The number of one parent families in the United States is growing each year. It is predicted that nearly one-half of all children born in 1980 will live, for a considerable period of time, with only one parent. According to the latest census information, one in every seven American children are being raised by a single parent, one in four in urban areas (U.S. Census Bureau, 1980).
6. Numbers of neighborhood schools are being shut down nationwide due to decline in traditional enrollment. Student enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools fell from 45.9 million to 40.9 million in the period 1971 to 1981 (M.A.R.R.S., 1982).

7. The number of two parent families in which both parents are employed outside of the household in 1980 is estimated to be at almost 60 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 1981).

8. A real decline in the standard of living has taken place over the past decade due to inflation and economic downturns. The median net (after taxes and inflation) income of the average American in 1977 was \$8,218.00, in 1979 it was \$7,963.00 meaning less income for the individual and the government (U.S. Census Bureau, 1981).

9. It is estimated by 1995 the number of American high school graduates will decrease 22 percent from the total number of high school graduates in 1979. The Northeast and Northwest regions of the United States will be expected to decline 40 percent and 32 percent respectively over their 1979 levels during this 16 year period (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 1980).

Along with economic and demographic changes of the past decade, American values for many have also undergone a transition. Moore (1980) cited the work of noted sociologist, Daniel Yankelovich, in discussing this change. He suggested that "in the early 1970's the value of upward mobility and its related behaviors characterized half of America. By the mid-1980's, Yankelovich predicts traditional values will be held by only 20 percent of the American people" (p. 2). Moore stated that "the new values, now possessed by a majority of Americans will emphasize self-fulfillment rather than commitment to the time honored 'work ethic.' He believes that: (1) instead of conformity, today's American wants to be different; (2) instead of denying himself today and worrying about tomorrow, we find a new focus on today and living for self; and (3) instead of hard work to earn rewards over time, today's American wants instant gratification" (p. 3).

Banach (1982) further reviewed the changes in basic American values. He discussed a survey conducted by Doyle, Dane, Berbach, Inc. which described the values shift. Said Banach:

The values and lifestyles of America's middle generation, ages 21-49, are changing. The 75 million people in this age group are increasingly concerned with themselves... Almost half of these middle generation people believe in enjoying life now and not worrying about the future. To them leisure and recreation are important ingredients in life. In fact 67 percent say leisure and recreation are necessities not luxuries.

The middle generation still believes in a strong family life...But they're less willing to sacrifice for it. Sixty-five percent say their children will have to make their own way with less help from their parents. And 25 percent say they may have to provide less to their family to obtain things important to them (p. 2).

Hubbell (1981) suggested that in the research he conducted since 1971 "the whole nature of society in which schools operate has rather dramatically shifted and changed..." (p. 12). He further stated that "nationally, the percentage of people, adults, who have children of school age is around 35 percent, and of that slice less than 30 percent have them in public schools; and almost 7 out of 10 people have no children of school age" (p. 12). The results of these changes have implications in regard to public school support, Hubbell believes. He states:

As the population changes, there are fewer and fewer people who really know what schools do and how well they do it, and more and more people who have (a) no vested interest in the schools, (b) very little contact, if any, with them, and (c) very little information and in fact, little understanding of how well or how poorly schools do what it is they're supposed to do (p. 12).

Riles (1981) echoed this sentiment in a speech before the California Community Education Association by stating:

Three-quarters of the public has no direct contact with the schools of this nation. Predictions for 1990 drop the figures to 18 percent of the population with children in school. How easy it would be for 82 percent of the public to feel they had no stake in their success or failure, perhaps even in their existence.

Since people who know the schools support them, it's obvious that we need more people involved directly with our schools if we are to have the support public education needs for survival in this era of diminishing revenues (p. 4).

Clearly it can be seen, that changes in the demography, society, and economy of the United States have had a profound effect on the basic structure and composition of the American nation. The distance, both real and perceived, that these changes have produced between Americans and their schools has created a major roadblock to the continuing support of all public school systems.

Public Understanding and Citizen Support

Berelson and Steiner (1964) in their basic research in communication revealed that, "people seek out and will respond to persuasive communication consistent with their predisposition to believe on an issue" (p. 544). Their comment related to this study suggests that citizen awareness of and involvement with the public school system will produce support on an on-going basis.

The belief that public understanding and participation in the decision making process is directly related to support of the public schools has long been held in educational circles.

Literature in school public relations is replete with suggestions regarding the development of public understanding in order to gain

agreement on the needs of the school program (Knezevich, 1966).

Kindred (1957) stated, "the failure of school boards and administrators to supply them (the voting public) with accurate and understandable information...or to give them a part in educational and financial planning, has been responsible for the inadequate support of public education" (p. 30).

Selakovich (1967) further underscored the relationship between the lack of citizen understanding of public school operations and the lack of financial support by stating:

The lack of understanding has serious consequences for the taxpayer, the school people and the society. In practice, the lack of understanding results in the success of certain financial programs which may be of limited value to society and the failure of other which might adequately support a first-rate educational system.

There is a great deal of current evidence that school people and citizens generally do not understand either the process of educational finance or the financial needs of education. In many parts of the nation the general attitude prevails that so long as the schools are able to open their doors in September, so long as there are enough teachers to staff each classroom, there is no financial crisis in education. The evidence is there in the form of local school board issues that fail to pass, revenue bills which fail to get out of legislative committees or are vetoed by governors, proposals for increased taxation which go down to defeat at the polls, and so on (p. 133-134).

A number of authors view the lack of interest in and understanding of school problems and needs by its citizenry to still be a major issue. Harrison (1971) stated:

In addition to the lack of confidence in the school board's and administration's abilities to plan properly and carefully and to spend money wisely, these two other factors should be considered as reasons for no votes: lack of public understanding of what's happening in education today and what the future holds, and the public stereotype of teachers as self-serving militants and students as radical ingrates (p. 92).

Hubbell (1980) after extensive involvement with hundreds of opinion survey programs in local school districts during the 1970's offered that "lack of contact with and the little information from the public schools has been largely responsible for an apparent decline in public confidence in public education" (p. 23). Gallup (1973) remarked "the more respondents know at first hand about the public schools the more favorable are their views; the less interested and less well informed, the less favorable are their views" (p. 6). Atkenson (1970) suggested that citizens "want information before they dig into their pockets for more money" (p. 27). Caudill (1977) believes that "the public does not understand the problems confronting its schools and, consequently, cannot be expected to support the resolution of those problems" (p. 27).

The Task Force on Building Public Confidence in Education of the National School Public Relations Association in 1979 identified four basic reasons for lack of public confidence in education (N.A.S.S.P., 1979). Among the four was included, "the poor and ineffective job that has been done to keep the public informed about education" (p. 4).

Throughout the review of literature, strong emphasis was given to the relationship between citizen understanding of educational issues and practices and citizen support.

If public education is ever to regain lost status and receive adequate financial support for its programs and services, it must begin to communicate more consistently and effectively.

Community Information/Relations Programs and Voter Support

A great deal of support is given to the belief that an essential element in producing continuous local school district millage and bond issue passage (the ultimate measure of school support) is the operation of an ongoing community information/relations program. Banach (1976) cited, "districts with year-around communication programs are most successful in financial elections" (p. 2). Bagin and Lefever (1971) stated that campaign tips are helpful but "should not be substituted for a year-round, two-way communications and public relations program between school and community..." to obtain voter approval (p. 36). Harrison (1971) suggested that school boards and administrators can overcome financial support problems when they "have extensive two-way communications with the public throughout the year" (p. 92). Hukill (1973) in a study of Iowa school financial elections reported "...you must institute a continuing public relations campaign to restore confidence and involvement in the school district before any bond issue is attempted" (p. 12). Jones (1977) stated that to win finance elections, "an effective, year-round communication program with the community far in advance of any election campaign, is essential" (p. 9). Lutz (1980) reported that "specific voter-related, continuous public relations programs... should be started" to be successful at election time (p. 23). Rubin (1979) stated that election success was "due to systematic, year-round, two-way communication efforts..." (p. 54). Stanley (1980) stated that "...an effective public relations program is essential in securing voter funding support" (p. 10).

A number of dissertations which reviewed school district financial elections also called for the use of an ongoing community information/relations system by local districts to advance opportunities for success. Bissell (1978), Kubalek (1979), Martin (1978), Moskowitz (1975), and Murphy (1966) all concluded in their studies that a well planned, continuous program of public relations should be maintained at all times in an effort to retain public support of schools.

The purpose of the study by Bissell (1978) "was to develop a public relations program to be used to pass a school financial election" (p. 3). Bissell concluded that "since money is essential in providing for the educational needs of children then every school administrator must be prepared to go to the public with defensible requirements. This will require activity in the political arena and will require expertise in the field of public relations" (p. 103).

Kubalek (1979) reviewed public relations practices in Community Education programs and concluded:

From the literature it was concluded that many of the problems in communicating with the public and obtaining and maintaining public support for educational programs originate with the lack of identifiable, organized programs to facilitate desirable interactions between the public and the educational organization (Abstract).

Martin (1978) attempted to determine and assess the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful school bond election campaigns in Texas in the years 1976 and 1977. Among the major recommendations made from the study were: (1) Public school educators and boards of education should communicate with the public continuously, making

public relations and information activities an ongoing process; and (2) Public school educators and boards of education should involve the P.T.A. and other lay groups in the activities of the school district (Abstract).

Moscowitz (1975) examined "electorate behavior in school property tax millage elections and its relationship to the school finance reform movement" (p. 1). One of his conclusions related to public relations program development stated that "any new scheme to alter the present system, of citizen approval must recognize the emotional and political context within which local control is a dominant force" (p. 163).

Recommendations made by Murphy (1966) after reviewing selected variables in California bond issue elections included the belief that "a well planned continuous program of public relations should be maintained at all times in an effort to retain public acceptance and support of schools" (Abstract).

On a consistent basis the literature related success of millage and bond issues in local districts to the operation of some form of a community information/relations program. If the ultimate measure of citizen approval of a school district is continuous financial support, then much heed should be paid to the development and maintenance of these systems on the local level.

Identifying and Developing Components of Local School District Community Information/Relations Programs

If operation of community information/relations systems is seen to positively affect citizen attitudes and promote financial support

in local school districts, it is an important task of the literature review to identify components of such systems. Few sources examined directed specific formats and operating schedules for community information/relations systems. Most of the literature reviewed suggested actions which systems must undertake to be effective rather than spelling out specifically what measures or approaches to use to carry out such actions.

Bagin and Wherry (1982) reported a set of ten recommendations for local school districts and their community information/relations programs to approach in an attempt to win back the public's commitment to education. The ten recommended steps were:

1. We must make sure that everyone involved knows what our schools are doing well, what our problems are, and what we are doing to solve them.
2. We must agree that doing a good job is our most basic obligation as educators. We must constantly pursue excellence in education.
3. We must make sure that people have positive personal experiences with their schools.
4. We must improve staff morale.
5. We must become politically involved.
6. We must take the public's concern about discipline seriously and work to address the problem.
7. We must stop fighting among ourselves and start building coalitions to support quality education.
8. We must use every means at our command to get today's non-parents involved with their schools.
9. We must involve the business community in our efforts to make good schools better.
10. We must establish two-way communication with all school audiences (p. 3).

The same opinion poll (Gallup, 1979) which delivered unfavorable news about the public's perceptions of the nation's public school systems, also cited suggestions on how schools could improve their sagging images through use of their community information/relations program. From responses of those polled, the report stated that it was generally agreed that education in local districts could be best achieved through the cooperative involvement of parents, community, and schools. Further, those responding to the specific examples of how public schools might begin to return to a more respectable status than that currently perceived, made several suggestions. Among the suggestions were the following:

1. Better communication. The local community cannot be expected to take a keen interest in the schools if people know little about them. The media should carry much more school news, especially news about the achievements of students and the schools, the means being taken to deal with school problems, and new developments in education. Media research has shown that there is far greater interest in schools and in education than most journalists think. At the same time, the schools should not rely solely on the major media. Newsletters are important to convey information that the media cannot be expected to report.

2. More conferences. Many of those included in the survey recommend that more conferences about the progress and problems of students be held with parents - both father and mother. Special monthly parent meetings and workshops are also suggested as a way to bring teachers, administrators, and parents together. Survey respondents also recommend courses for parents and special lectures. P.T.A. meetings, some suggest, could be more useful to parents if school problems and educational developments were given more attention.

3. Invite volunteers. Some respondents suggest that, if more members of the community could serve in a volunteer capacity in the classrooms and elsewhere in the school, they would further better community understanding of the problems faced by the schools. In addition their involvement in school operations would increase their own interest in educational improvement at the local level.

4. Plan special occasions. Interest in the schools and in education could be improved, some suggest, by inviting members of the community--both those who have children in the schools and those who do not--to attend meetings, lectures, and social events in the school buildings. As noted in another section of this survey report, only one person in three across the nation attended a lecture, meeting, or social occasion in a school building during the last year. In 1969, when the same question was asked, a slightly higher proportion said they had attending a lecture, meeting or social occasion in a school building (p. 41).

One can interpret, perhaps, from these statements that the same public which was openly critical of the public school system and perceived it not to be as good as in times past, suggested a means by which the public schools could regain lost status. By communicating more consistently and effectively and becoming closer with their publics, public schools could begin to recapture the acceptance they had lost over the past decade (Melbo, 1973).

All literature reviewed stressed the need for broad based and continuous community involvement and input in program development. Bartner (1972) called for the need for school districts to "...maintain formal community contacts...close relations with parents...enlist the assistance of key community leaders and organizations..." (p. 98). Nylin (1978), in speaking of communications systems stated, "...to be effective, participants need to be drawn from the broad spectrum of the public, both parents and the community-at-large and from the various roles within the school system" (p. 43). Perhaps White (1972) stated best the need for on-going public involvement and feedback in school communications programs by saying, "If you know your public, and if you involve yourself with your public, you will be

practicing the communicating game at its best...It must be a two-way approach" (p. 26).

With broad based community involvement, most literature suggested a comprehensive communication policy should be established and recommended to the board of education for approval. The policy should include a rationale or statement of purpose as well as the actions to be taken and a statement as to who should be responsible for carrying out these actions.

Although there may be a self serving factor involved, since many sources reviewed were written by people working in a public relations function, the authors of a large number of books and articles stressed the need for a public relations specialist or public information director. It was repeatedly noted that a professional was needed to initiate, maintain, and further develop a community information/relations program. Koerner (1970) described this belief best by the following quote:

Boards that pooh-pooh the idea of hiring a public relations specialist are bad news. Most likely they'll wind up as bad news in the local press as well as in the minds of their constituents. What they need is the expertise of someone who understands how to develop and shape and maintain a district's image.

Pressures exerted by the public to find out precisely what goes on in school districts--how money is appropriated and spending priorities determined, what the curriculum contains, where the building program needs bolstering--are increasing at topsy rates virtually everywhere. Simultaneously, boards are beginning to realize that threatened loss of support of their programs jeopardizes the structure and possibly even the existence of the public school system as it functions now.

It is impossible to remember a time when people had more education and were as eager to get involved in a cause. Often the conviction they take up has a profound effect

in local education. Witness the disastrous decline in successful school bond elections.

Contemporary school problems emerge as so-called people problems. If you doubt it, here's a partial list: teacher and student militancy; collective bargaining; integration; bussing, dress codes. Skilled public relations experts can help superintendents and boardmen meet problems such as these. A panacea or cure-all they are not. Given the proper status, however, plus sufficient resources and support, such specialists usually perform most satisfactorily for a board, sometimes even spectacularly (p. 45).

Sources reviewed emphasized that the job of the community information/relations director must not be given to someone as a task that is to be done on the same time as his/her regular job. Special time must be allocated and designated specifically for the communication task. If a full-time job cannot be created, then possibly a half-time position could be devised.

An example of this might be a teacher who spends half of his/her day working with the district's communication program. Districts might also consider hiring a community resident who has a communication/public relations background in a half-time or quarter-time position. No matter what the final personnel decision is, the literature suggests there must be a specific community information/relations position created.

Another pre-program implementation emphasis stressed by several authors was the need for boards of education to agree to an information/relations system format which espoused three fundamental beliefs. Input and output components, the involvement of the publics and an on-going operational status to the program were seen as being essential to the beginning of any effective system. Bagin (1968) specifically

outlined the three as follows:

1. A two-way system. Not only do school officials inform, but they are kept informed. Not only do they state opinion and express needs, but they listen to the opinions and desires of others.
2. For all people. The audience is not just teachers, not just parents, not just community leaders. The audience is everybody, including students.
3. Continuous. The good school communications system does not operate only before tax levies, only in quarterly newsletters, only when the news media will print articles about the system. District officials should be consciously operating their two-way communications system every day of the year, even though the same things don't necessarily happen every day.

Until the public stops viewing the schools' communications system as one-way propaganda, there will be poor communication, and public education will continue to suffer the consequences.

Once boards and administrators acknowledge that honest, continuous and comprehensive two-way communications are essential, the acknowledgement should be stated in sound policy, and real practice. Every board should adopt a written policy that clearly spells out what the communications system is and who in the district is responsible for making it run (p. 2).

Among the few succinct and complete discussions of components of a community information/relations system in a local school district is the model presented by Flatt (1981). In her discussion, the author outlines the basic elements of both an internal and external public relations program designed to impact a total school district community. The basic components of an internal local school district public relations program discussed by the author include:

1. Staff Newsletter - distributed on a regular basis to all employees, certified and classified, full and part-time. Fill it with news about the school system, not "messages" from the top.

2. Board Report - issued the morning after each board meeting and distributed to staff and community leaders.

3. New Employee Orientation - at least one at the beginning of each year, more often if a large school system with new employees joining the staff throughout the year.

4. Superintendent's Council/Cabinet - an advisory group to the superintendent that meets on a regular basis to keep the boss up to date on what's happening in the field.

5. Administration/Staff/Board Study Committees - these provide an opportunity for real staff involvement in issues affecting every aspect of the school program.

6. Staff Recognition and Awards Programs - an organized program to provide that needed "pat on the back" for a job well done, this can be for exemplary actions throughout the year as well as for retiring personnel.

7. Communications In-Service for Certified and Classified Staff - these programs should include full and part-time employees, teachers, secretaries, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, administrators--everyone in the "school family"--to train them in their roles as school communicators.

8. Staff Surveys - communication can't be all one-way, so it is necessary occasionally to survey the staff to solicit their input and opinions on key issues.

9. Student Advisory Council - particularly valuable at the secondary level, a group of this nature allows student involvement in the activities of their school district.

10. Communications Components in All Major Programs - whether it's a renewed emphasis on basic skills, a program to eradicate vandalism or a plan to improve discipline in the schools, every major project undertaken by a school district should have written into it at the planning stage a communications component. This will show the goals, objectives and activities both to internal and external publics (p. 2).

Elements of a community information/relations system designed to address the information and citizen participation requirements of an external program included:

1. Community Newsletter - issued on a regular basis and distributed to all households in the district, not just parents of children in the public schools.
2. News Media Relations - An organized program to get the news about the district to radio, television, and print media and to respond to inquiries from the media.
3. Community/Adult Education Programs - with 70 percent of the households of America containing no public school-aged youngsters, programs of this nature may be the only vehicle a school district has to get the general public into the schools.
4. Speakers Bureau - a group of administrators, board members and teachers available to address community and parent groups on topics related to education and your school system.
5. Business Leaders Breakfasts/Luncheons - another technique for familiarizing community leaders and non-parents with your schools and their programs.
6. Program Brochures - explain special education, psychological services, kindergarten, the lunch program, Title I, standardized testing, etc., in brochures that can be distributed to staff, parents and community members.
7. Newcomers Kit - a package of information about your district that can be distributed to new residents through the Chamber of Commerce, Welcome Wagon, realtors, banks, and others.
8. Discount Program for Senior Citizens - as taxpayers, they often feel they don't get any tangible return on their dollar, so why not issue them "Gold Card" passes allowing them free or reduced price admission to school programs such as athletics, music and drama?
9. Citizen Advisory Committees - they can study textbooks, curriculum, bond or levy elections, building programs and many other items that affect the local school system and are paid for by their tax dollars.
10. Opinion Surveys - two-way communication is the key to success, so occasionally you have to get into the community to find out what citizens are thinking and what they want from their schools (p. 3).

After a period of negative school-community confrontations, usually culminating with the inability to pass a millage proposal, an examination of the communication and public relations components of the local school district program more often occurs. In many cases, the outcome of this examination is a decision to develop and put into effect a large-scale, multi-dimensional communications system to inundate residents with information until the next millage proposal is successful, followed by a return to the previous form. This practice seems to abound in most public school systems. It is seen by many as being the reason why school districts have image problems with their publics. Smith (1971) concluded that the more unplanned and unsystematic one's public relations program is, the greater it handicaps one's school in operating at maximum efficiency. His statement seems to highlight the practice maintained by most districts in reactionary approaches with public relations programs, i.e., dealing with the symptoms, not the causes of the problems approach. Because of this practice, each follow-up attempt at public communication is usually viewed by the community with skepticism or with even lower credibility than previous attempts delivered at times of crises. The overall operation of a school or school district suffers because of it.

A review of the literature associated with the field of school public relations suggests that, although certain fundamental components should be present in local school district community/information

relations systems, program must be customized to deal with specific local needs and conditions. Jones (1978) stated:

Every community has its own pulse, its own heartbeat, its own likes and dislikes, different feelings and emotions, different causes for agitations and alarm, and different reasons for being satisfied with the status quo. And each community, almost without exception, has some very strong feelings, both pro and con, about its schools (p. 16).

To operate a program which will meaningfully affect public opinion and participation in a school district, certain developmental steps must be taken on the local level. The primary step toward development of a program is a need assessment. Referred to by several different titles, such as a communications review or a public relations audit, the need assessment basically consists of the general investigation of a district's community relations status with its publics. Unruh and Willier (1974) provided one of the more complete need assessment approaches to developing a community information/relations program in a local school district. They suggested that a task force comprised of both school personnel and community members be selected with the specific assignment of reviewing what a school district is currently doing, what it should be doing, and how to move from what is, to what should be, in the area of communications and public relations. They outlined specific guidelines to be followed in terms of state of action, specific actions or tasks to be completed and the amount of time which should be spent on each effort. The following guidelines were suggested:

Stage	Activity	Time Allotment
1. Planning	1. Definition and description of needs or problems	1 to 2 months
	2. Identification and selection of community groups	
	3. Orienting, informing representatives	

Stage	Activity	Time Allotment
	4. Defining outcomes sought	
2. Development of design	1. Identify population targets (Publics, both internal and external)	2 months
	2. Division of labor: committees organized	
	3. Types of materials to be developed	
	4. Selection of media	
	5. Responsibilities reviewed	
3. Communications problems	1. Description of output; materials and media (currently used by district to communicate)	2 months
	2. Description of inputs; procedures and instruments (currently used by district to listen)	
	3. Constructing and refining the instruments	
	4. Responsibilities identified	
4. Data collection	1. Use of questionnaire, interviews, group meetings to collect data input (on how best to refine system)	1 month
	2. Data and information processing	
	3. Review and feedback	
5. Analysis and interpretation	1. Analysis of tendencies and deviations	2 months
	2. Analysis of attendance areas, groups	
	3. Item analysis validation against interview data (are results reliable?)	
	4. Interpretations	
	5. Review and feedback	
6. Reporting	1. Number and type of reports	1 month
	2. Types of materials, graphics	
	3. Use of media for dissemination	
	4. General report-publics	
	5. Special reports-target publics or groups	
	6. Review and feedback	

Stage	Activity	Time Allotment
7. Decision	Go or hold (on development of formal community information/relations system) (p. 41-42).	9 to 10 months

A significant number of works reviewed recommend with great emphasis the use of a survey as a method of obtaining information as well as communicating with a school district's publics. The benefits derived by the use of surveys were stated to be numerous. Hoeft (1975) identified what he felt to be a major benefit from their use by stating, "Surveys take the speculation out of what is felt to be true" (p. 22). Nagle (1973) stated:

It (a survey) can measure the level of public understanding in a district and, at the same time, establish the kinds of communication channels between schools and public necessary to raise that level. Most important, a good poll can tell school leaders what the public really thinks (p. 26).

A more specific listing of various benefits was given by Gallagher (1976). He listed them as:

1. The schools are responsible for two of the community's most important assets - its children and its money. We should, therefore, learn what the local citizens think about what we're doing with their children and how we're spending their tax dollars.
2. With the advent of data processing and computers, long range planning has become more feasible. Public opinion polling can provide a school with information on shifting political and social changes in a community.
3. New and more effective methods of communicating with the public can be revealed by a survey.
4. Schools can answer the charges of a small pressure group with the results of a school survey which shows that the pressure group may not reflect the wishes or ideas of the entire public.

5. Surveys can uncover new educational ideas that educators may have overlooked.

6. People get an opportunity to "sound off" and to be heard through a public opinion poll. They feel important if we ask for their opinions and ideas. This can engender much good will toward a school.

7. A poll can focus public attention on a school or college and can foster better credibility provided decisions are made from valid findings of a survey (p. 20).

Although several articles reviewed discussed pitfalls associated with surveying, many offered practical information on how it could be done with a minimum of labor and expense. Anderson (1979) provided detailed descriptions on how volunteer labor was used to conduct a community poll. The article discussed a survey program in the Apple Valley-Rosemont, Minnesota, school district by school district residents under the leadership of a professional. Besides returning a great deal of information to the district, the survey project also produced a strong district support unit because of the involvement.

Banach (1979) gave a general guideline for preparing a local school district survey. He listed the following basic steps:

1. Decide what you want to know. Sound easy? It's not. In fact, it's the hardest step in surveying. You have to really think about the information you need to make decisions. Talk about your needs informally with friends or more formally with committees. If you fail here you'll flunk your survey test completely.

2. Ask yourself why you want to know this. Why? To make sure that it's really information that will help you run a good school. What good will it do to know this? How will it help you? This will also help you organize your thinking and possibly trigger other questions that need to be included.

3. Ask if you can get this information without

doing a survey. Do you need some demographics about your school neighborhood to help plan after-school activities for students and adults? Maybe everything you need is in the latest census estimate, or in figures put together at city hall or by the chamber of commerce. If the information you need already is available don't waste time with a survey.

4. Decide whom you are going to survey. This involves selecting a universe (group) from which you'll draw a sample. Whom you will survey depends on what you want to know. Are you interested in how parents view your career counseling program? Maybe you should survey parents of your students...or maybe you shouldn't. If you pick parents in the current student file you miss the parents of recent graduates - people with valuable opinions since their children have been through the program and know how it works. You also miss citizens without students in your school - citizens who pay taxes and also have opinions about the value of teaching students about the world of work. Along with deciding what you want to know, deciding whom to ask to find out is a key step for success.

5. Determine the type of survey method you'll use. There are three basic types of surveys: Written questionnaires (usually mailed), personal interviews, and telephone surveys. Each has advantages and disadvantages. All things considered, the telephone survey seems to have the most flexibility for school people. It's easy to do, quick, accurate, cheap, and can generate useful information in short time periods.

6. Establish confidence limits for your survey. In other words, how "accurate" do you want to be? Would you feel comfortable knowing that the information you gain in this survey is accurate nine of 10 times, plus or minus five percent? Or can you be a little less stringent? You may be surprised to find that you can learn the opinions of 1,000 parents by sampling as few as 63 (a 90 percent confidence rating with plus or minus 10 percent sampling error rate), or as many as 278 (95 percent confidence plus or minus five percent sampling error). Using the higher number, only 20 volunteers are needed to bring the calls per person down to a very manageable 25 or less - something that can be done easily in one night.

7. Develop a timeline for your survey project. Start with the date you'll conduct the survey and work backward from that point. List all the activities that

have to take place so everything will go smoothly on the day you begin interviewing. Be sure you indicate who has responsibility for what by when. This is an obvious attempt to help you plan...to keep you on track (p. 31-32).

Warren (1965) spoke to the results gathered by a community survey. He state that "...the survey is not, and should not be, an end in itself" (p. 307). Surveys should never be looked upon as a final response to school district problems, but rather as a vehicle to be used to deal with problem areas. Another significant point established by the review of related literature which goes hand-in-hand with Warren's statement is the emphasis for use of the data gathered by a survey effort. Several of the sources read were emphatic in suggesting that the actual conducting of a survey basically mandated utilization of the knowledge obtained from it. Without action stemming from the survey process the sponsoring agency lost credibility and support from those involved with the process as well as those surveyed. The results of a situation such as this could be far more harmful than the problem the survey effort was intended to explore.

Summary

In Chapter II, the review of literature emphasized the image problem public school systems are experiencing today. On local, state, and national levels the acceptance of public schools has steadily declined over the past decade. Related to the erosion of public confidence has been a measurable decrease in citizen financial support for public school systems.

Many reasons are given for the change in citizen attitudes regarding their schools. Basic changes in American demographic, economic, and social structures and institutions were seen to have had a measurable effect on declining citizen support. An aging society, more single parent families, a basic change in values emphasizing self-fulfillment rather than group achievement, have all contributed to creating a break in continuous and favorable contact with the public schools.

A case was made for the need to develop citizen understanding in order to maintain citizen support. Specific emphasis was given to the belief that operation of community information/relations programs on a continuous basis had a positive effect on voter support and subsequent success at the ballot box (seen to be the ultimate measure of local school support).

Components of local school district community information/relations systems were identified by the literature reviewed. Most of the literature focused upon actions which systems must undertake to be effective rather than specifying measures or approaches used to carry out such actions. A stress for citizen involvement was made in terms of the development and operation of a program. The need for a communications professional or someone with directed experience in the field operating on a full (or continuous part-time) basis was indicated in a number of the readings. The major reason for this was to provide expertise and to insure that the preparation of the program will reflect the three major elements of information/relations programs viewed as necessary for successful acceptance of

the program by a district's publics. These elements were identified as two-way communication, participation by all people in a given district, and a continuous operation of the system.

Specific and necessary elements of a local district community information/relations program were discussed in the literature review. Stress was given to the belief that equal attention must be paid to both internal and external publics in the on-going operation of a program if it was to be successful in maintaining positive citizen support.

Literature in the field of school public relations related that although certain fundamental components should be present in local school district community information/relations systems, programs must be customized to deal with local needs and conditions. The readings also indicated that in preparation for the development of a customized community information/relations system, school districts should follow a consistent plan. This plan included the following steps: (1) planning or development effort; (2) development of study group design; (3) identification of common problems; (4) survey of publics; (5) analysis and interpretation of survey data; (6) reporting of data; (7) decision and recommendation; and (8) action.

Finally, a number of sources encouraged the use of a communication needs assessment with its major component, a survey, to lay the groundwork for a formal community information/relations program. Discussion of the favorable and unfavorable aspects of surveying were cited in a number of the books and articles read. Several encouraged the use of community volunteers, under the supervision

of a professional to conduct a polling of citizen attitudes. The rationale for the use of volunteers was to institute from the beginning the concept of community-school involvement. Another factor was identified as being the fact that in many survey efforts using citizen volunteers, the volunteer group evolved into a support group for the recommendations resulting from data collected.

Chapter III will outline and discuss the methodology to be used in the remainder of this dissertation.

CHAPTER III

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is designed to provide descriptions of the survey methods and research procedures followed in conducting the investigation. It should be noted that the methodological approach and general study design employ components suggested for use by Jones (1972), which were discovered in the literature review for this study. Particular use of components authored by Jones were in the matching of school districts for millage success comparison, reporting of data used to match districts with community information/relations programs to those without, and the general organization and format of the primary survey instrument.

The procedural components of the study that will be identified and described in this chapter are as follows:

1. The selection of the time period for the study.
2. The population and sample selection method.
3. The selection of school districts.
4. The description of school districts.
5. The instrumentation.
6. The collection of data.
7. The statistical approach.

Selection of Study Time Period

The time period 1977-1982 was seen to be a very important five year span in terms of the study. It was selected as the comparison period of the investigation for three significant reasons. The primary reason was, as previously noted in the study, that this time span represented a period in which formal measurement of citizen opinions regarding America's public schools reached an all time low in ratings as reported by major opinion polls.

Secondly, the time period also represented a financial support decline period for Michigan local school districts. It was perceived that more could be learned regarding the effectiveness of local school district community information/relations programs during a comparatively negative period of time than in one which conditions were uniformly positive. Given the reported declines of citizen opinion and financial support from 1977-1982, it can be concluded that this time sequence represents a comparatively negative period for Michigan public schools.

A third reason for the selection of this particular period dealt with the relationship of the length of program operation to its effectiveness. Although most districts operating community information/relations systems reviewed in the study had done so for over ten years, it was concluded that, if effective, those programs should observably impact community support in a five year period. Whether each district with a community information/relations program met the required number of a five year lifespan was measured specifically by the survey instrument used in this study.

Population and Sample Selection Method

The population from which subjects were selected for inclusion in the study was defined as the following:

1. Local school districts in the State of Michigan which operated community information/relations systems on a full-time basis during the period 1977-1982. These districts are referred to as "community information/relations" districts in the study.

2. Local school districts in the State of Michigan which did not operate a full-time community information/relations program during the period 1977-1982. These districts are referred to as "traditional school districts" in the study.

Community information/relations program districts were identified for inclusion in the study by use of the 1982 Michigan Education Directory, the 1981-82 Michigan School Public Relations Association Membership Directory, and the 1981-82 National School Public Relations Association Directory. These publications were cross-referenced to identify districts with full-time directors and programs.

Traditional school districts were identified after all community information/relations districts were established. Using the 1982 Michigan Education Directory and the 1980-81 Michigan Department of Education Bulletin 1014, groupings of three or more traditional school districts (See Appendix A) were selected by the method discussed in the following sentences for possible comparison with those districts identified as operating full-time programs. After groupings were completed, traditional districts were matched to community information/relations districts in terms of similarities in student enrollment, state equalized valuation per pupil, total annual expenditures per

pupil, average teacher salary, and total mills levied. To be included in a comparison grouping, traditional districts had to match a community information/relations district on three out of the five criteria stated.

It should be noted that the 1980-81 Michigan Department of Education Bulletin 1014 was used for gathering comparative data for both sets of school districts. Since a later version of this publication, as of February, 1983, had not been released by the Michigan Department of Education, the 1980-81 edition, therefore, represented the best resource of comparative data available at the time of this study.

From the comparison groupings of traditional school districts, one district was selected at random to be specifically paired with a community information/relations district (See Appendix B). Each district was contacted to verify their status with respect to operation or non-operation of a full-time community information/relations program before proceeding with data collection.

Selection of Community Information/Relations Districts

Criteria for Community Information/Relations Districts

Fourteen of Michigan's 530 local school districts were identified as operating full-time community information/relations programs during the comparison period, 1977-1982. These districts were: Benton Harbor, Birmingham, Brighton, Dearborn, Detroit, East Lansing, Flint, Grand Rapids, Livonia, Plymouth-Canton, Southfield, Utica, Warren

Consolidated, and Wyoming public school systems. Eleven community information/relations districts were finally selected for review in this study. The criteria used for selection of these districts were as follows:

Criterion 1 - All selected community information/relations districts had to be identified as employing an individual specifically and solely assigned to operate a community information/relations program as identified by the Michigan Education Directory, and the membership directories of the Michigan School Public Relations Association (M.S.P.R.A.) and National School Public Relations Association (N.S.P.R.A.).

Criterion 2 - All selected community information/relations districts had to be identified from among State of Michigan public, kindergarten through twelfth grade, school districts.

Criterion 3 - All selected community information/relations districts had to be identified as operating a full-time community information/relations program during the period 1977-1982. Upon close evaluation, it was found that the Southfield Public Schools program did not fit this criterion because of operating a full-time program for only two years. As a result of Southfield not meeting this criterion, it was dropped from the membership of community information/relations districts selected for the study.

Criterion 4 - All recognized community information/relations districts had to have recorded identifying information which could be used to compare them with traditional districts in the study. This information included student enrollment, state equalized valuation per pupil, total annual expenditures per pupil, average teacher salary, and total mills levied. In review of this information it was found that Detroit Public Schools, due to its size, demographic composition, and financial structure was unique among all other Michigan school districts. Because of its uniqueness and subsequent non-comparability with other districts, Detroit was omitted from the membership of community information/relations districts selected for the survey.

Criterion 5 - All selected community information/relations districts had to have conducted a minimum of one millage election during the five year comparison period established for the study, 1977-1982. During the review of data regarding millage election of community information/relations districts, it was found that Grand Rapids Public Schools did

not conduct a millage election during the period 1977-1982. Due to this finding, Grand Rapids was removed from the group of community information/relations districts selected for the study.

Criterion 6 - All selected community information/relations districts had to return a survey instrument designed to assess their programs. They must also have had all millage election results for the period 1977-1982 recorded with the School Support Services Division of the Michigan Department of Education.

Selection of Traditional School Districts

Criteria for Traditional School Districts

After establishment of the eleven community information/relations districts for the study, comparison groupings of three or more traditional districts were developed. From these groupings, individual traditional districts were randomly selected by blind lottery to match to each of the eleven community information/relations districts. The following criteria were established to identify traditional school districts for the study:

Criterion 1 - All traditional school districts must not have had a recognized full-time community information/relations program or director before, during, or after the comparison period 1977-1982. A minimum five year time period was established as the amount of time previous to 1977-1982 that a district had to be without a full-time program or director to be eligible for selection as a traditional district. Traditional school districts may have or have had components of a community information/relations program implemented in their district. However, if these operating components were not part of a full-time program overseen by a full-time director, those traditional districts were deemed eligible to be selected for the study.

Criterion 2 - All traditional districts had to be identified from among State of Michigan public, kindergarten through twelfth grade, school districts.

Criterion 3 - All traditional districts had to have recorded identifying data which could be used to compare them with community information/relations districts in the study. This information included student enrollment, state equalized valuation per pupil, total annual expenditures per pupil, average teacher salary, and total mills levied. To be eligible for random selection as a district for comparison in the study, traditional districts had to match a community information/relations district in three of the five criteria stated.

Criterion 4 - All traditional school districts had to have conducted a minimum of one millage election during the five year comparison period established for the study, 1977-1982.

Criterion 5 - All traditional school districts must have verified the non-existence of a full-time community information/relations program over the aforementioned time period through telephone contact with district personnel administrators.

Criterion 6 - All traditional school districts must have had millage election results for the period 1977-1982 recorded with the School Support Services Division of the Michigan Department of Education.

Traditional districts which were randomly selected to be matched to community information/relations districts were: Muskegon, Bloomfield Hills, Lake Orion, Farmington, Grosse Ile, Saginaw, Royal Oak, Avondale, Milford-Huron Valley, Walled Lake, and Clarkston.

Table 4, which follows, lists the community information/relations districts and traditional districts as they were paired together for the study.

Table 4

Final Listing of Paired Community Information/
Relations Districts and Traditional Districts

Community Information/Relations School Districts	Traditional School Districts
Benton Harbor Area Schools	Muskegon Public Schools
Birmingham Public Schools	Bloomfield Hills Public Schools
Brighton Area Schools	Lake Orion Community Schools
Dearborn Public Schools	Farmington Public Schools
East Lansing Public Schools	Grosse Ile Township Schools
Flint Public Schools	Saginaw Public Schools
Livonia Public Schools	Royal Oak Public Schools
Plymouth-Canton Community Schools	Avondale Public Schools
Utica Community Schools	Milford-Huron Valley Schools
Warren Consolidated Schools	Walled Lake Consolidated Schools
Wyoming Public Schools	Clarkston Community Schools

Description of School Districts

Community Information/Relations Districts

The Benton Harbor school district encompasses rural, suburban, and urban population centers in Berrien County in Southwest Michigan. The student population is 8,712 students, which ranks the district 31st in the state in student population. The state

equalized value per pupil is \$24,314.00, and total expenditures per pupil \$2,238.18, giving the district a state comparative ranking of 509th and 146th in those respective areas. Benton Harbor maintains an average teacher salary of \$17,983.00, ranking it 333rd in the state in that category. The school district levies 31.72 mills. Benton Harbor has operated a community information/relations program for over 10 years.

Birmingham Public Schools are located in an upper middle class suburban section of Southeast Michigan's Oakland County. Its student population of 9,392 students ranks it 29th in size among the state's 530 public school districts. Birmingham's state equalized value per pupil is \$110,987.00, ranking it 18th in the state in that category. Total expenditures per pupil are \$3,562.00, giving the district a 5th ranking among Michigan school districts. Ranking 5th among Michigan schools is Birmingham's average teacher salary of \$28,503.00. Although allocated and voted mills total a higher amount, Birmingham levies 29.50 mills for annual operation. It, too, has operated a community information/relations program for over 10 years.

Brighton Area Schools are located in a rural suburban portion of Southeastern Michigan's Livingston County. The district has an enrollment of 5,588 students ranking it 65th among state districts in that category. Brighton ranks 239th and 227th in state equalized value per student and total expenditures per pupil with respective totals of \$43,338.00 and \$2,040.00. In average teacher salary, it ranks 151st with a figure of \$20,789.00. Brighton's allocated and voted mills total 32.00. The district began their first full-time community information/relations program in 1974.

The Dearborn Public Schools are located in the suburbs of Southeastern Michigan's Wayne County. Their 13,977 students place them at a 16th ranking in student population among state districts. A state equalized value per pupil of \$120,599.00 and total expenditures per pupil of \$3,522.00 rank the Dearborn schools 11th and 7th overall in the state in those respective categories. Average teacher salary is also high (18th ranking) at \$26,612.00. Dearborn Public Schools levy 26.49 mills for operation. The district has operated a full-time community information/relations program for over 35 years.

East Lansing Public Schools reside in the suburbs of mid-state Michigan's Ingham County. Among state schools, they rank 90th in student population with 4,612 students; 125th in state equalized value per student at \$58,554.00; 34th in total expenditures per pupil at \$2,814.00; and 147th in average teacher salary at \$20,847.00. Mills totaling 39.60 are levied by the district for annual operation. East Lansing has operated a full-time community information/relations system since 1971.

The Flint Public School district is located in an urban setting in Genesee County, approximately 60 miles northwest of Detroit. It is the state's third largest district with 35,113 students. Flint schools' state equalized value per student at \$34,748.00, ranks it 373rd among state districts. Total expenditures per pupil of \$2,951.00 and average teacher salary of \$22,420.00 rank the district 28th and 93rd in those respective categories. Flint levies 41.00 mills for annual operation. It has operated a full-time community information/relations program since 1953.

Livonia Public Schools are located in Southeastern Michigan's suburban Wayne County. The district is the state's seventh largest with a student population of 22,365. Livonia with state equalized valuation per pupil of \$62,747.00 ranks 109th, total expenditures per pupil of \$2,629.00 ranks 53rd, and an average teacher salary of \$27,910.00 ranks 10th among state districts. The district claims 36.7 mills as its annual operating levy. The district began operating a community information/relations program on a full-time basis in 1962.

The Plymouth-Canton Community School district is located in rural and suburban sections of Southeastern Michigan's Wayne County. Its large student population of 17,269 ranks it 12th in that category statewide. It ranks 180th in state equalized value per pupil at \$47,842.00, 144th in total expenditures per pupil at \$2,241.00, and 68th in average teacher salary at \$23,557.00. The district levies 35.26 mills for annual operation and has had a full-time community information/relations program for almost eight years.

Located in the suburbs of Southeastern Michigan's Macomb County is the state's fourth largest district in student population, with 28,216 pupils, Utica Community Schools. The district has a state equalized value per pupil of \$41,087.00, ranking it 263rd, a total expenditures per pupil level of \$2,060.00, ranking it 224th, and an average teacher salary of \$22,521.00, giving it an 88th ranking among state districts. Utica levies 32.55 mills for operation and began its full-time community information/relations program in 1966.

Also in suburban Macomb County is located the Warren Consolidated School district. It, too, is among the state's largest districts,

ranking sixth with 25,918 students. Its state equalized valuation per pupil ranks 135th at \$55,662.00. Warren Consolidated ranks 91st in total expenditures per pupil at a level of \$2,425.00 and maintains a 23rd ranking in the state for its average teacher salary of \$25,960.00. The district has had a full-time community information/relations program since 1970 and levies 33.95 mills for annual operations.

Wyoming Public Schools are located in Western Michigan's Kent County. The district exists in the suburban Grand Rapids area and has a student population of 7,236, ranking it 44th among state districts. Wyoming's state equalized valuation per pupil is \$36,652.00, ranking it 338th among Michigan schools. Its total expenditures per pupil level of \$2,117.00 and average teacher salary of \$24,400.00 ranks the district 188th and 49th respectively in those two categories. Wyoming levies 31.30 mills for annual operation. It began its full-time community information/relations program almost nine years ago.

Traditional School Districts

Muskegon Public Schools encompass rural, suburban, and urban areas of Muskegon County in Southwestern Michigan. The district student population is 7,787, which ranks the district 40th in the state in that category. The state equalized value per pupil is \$26,891.00 and the total expenditures per pupil, \$2,849.00, giving the district a state comparative ranking of 494th and 31st in those respective areas. Muskegon's average teacher salary is \$20,606.00, which ranks 161st in the state. The district levies 33.80 mills annually for operation. According to the district personnel office, the responsibilities for

the district's public relations and communications program are divided among district administrators. Muskegon Public Schools are investigating the local implementation of a full-time community information/relations program at this time.

The Bloomfield Hills Public Schools are located in an upper middle class suburban section of Southeast Michigan's Oakland County. Its student population of 7,283 ranks it 42nd in size among the state's 530 public school districts. Bloomfield Hills' state equalized value per pupil is \$109,883.00, ranking it 19th in the state in that category. Total expenditures per pupil are \$3,457.00, giving the district a 10th ranking among Michigan school districts. Ranking 50th among state districts is Bloomfield Hills' average teacher salary of \$24,395.00. Operational mills of 27.20 are levied by the district for annual usage. The district employs a full-time publications editor but parcels other component areas of the school public relations program to other administrators.

Lake Orion school district is located in Oakland County in Southeastern Michigan. The student population of the district is 5,964, ranking it 60th among state districts. The state equalized valuation per pupil is \$38,798.00 and the total expenditures per pupil level is \$2,139.00, ranking the district 304th and 180th respectively in those two areas. Lake Orion's average teachers' salary is \$20,827.00, 148th highest in the state. The district levies 30.11 mills for operation annually. The community information/relations function is a non-formalized responsibility of the community education program and several other administrators.

The Farmington Public Schools are located in suburbs of Southeastern Michigan's Oakland County. Their 11,705 pupils place them at a 19th ranking in student population among state districts. A state equalized valuation per pupil of \$74,998.00 and a total expenditure per pupil of \$2,992.00 rank Farmington Public Schools 62nd and 25th overall in the state in those respective categories. An average teacher salary of \$25,360.00 places the district 32nd among state districts in that category. Mills of 33.53 are levied annually for district operations. District administrators are assigned components of the public relations program.

Grosse Ile Township Schools in Southeastern Michigan are found in the western suburbs of Wayne County. Among state school districts, they rank 235th in student population with 2,153 students; 111th in state equalized valuation per pupil at \$62,338.00; 37th in total expenditures per pupil at \$2,794.00; and 41st in average teacher salary at \$25,170.00. Mills of 41.80 are levied by the district for annual operation. In addition to the superintendent's office assuming responsibility for the district newsletter, various public relations operations are divided among members of the administrative staff.

Saginaw Public Schools are located in Saginaw County, approximately 75 miles northwest of Detroit. The school district ranks 10th among state districts in student population with 17,759 students. Saginaw school district's state equalized value per student at \$34,385.00 ranks it at 378th among state districts. Total expenditures per pupil of \$2,505.00 and average teacher salary of \$23,323.00 rank the district 77th and 72nd in those respective categories. Saginaw levies 31.80

mills for annual operation. The Community Education director and other district administrators are assigned community information/relations program responsibilities.

The Royal Oak Public School District is located in Southeastern Michigan in the suburbs of Oakland County. The district is the state's 27th largest with a student population of 9,624. Royal Oak, with a state equalized valuation per pupil of \$63,184.00 ranks 107th total expenditures per pupil of \$3,074.00 ranks 22nd, and an average teacher salary of \$27,658.00 ranks 11th among state districts. The school district levies 37.91 mills for operation annually. Public relations program tasks are handled by the district director of personnel on a part-time basis.

Avondale Public Schools are found in the Oakland County suburb of Auburn Heights. The district's student population is 3,024 which ranks it 159th in the state in that category. It ranks 175th in state equalized valuation per pupil at \$48,137.00, 123rd in total expenditures per pupil at \$2,314.00, and 57th in average teacher salary at \$24,577.00. Mills of 35.27 are levied for operation annually by the district. The superintendent of Avondale Public Schools is responsible for operating components of the district's public relations program.

The Milford-Huron Valley Schools are located in Southeastern Michigan's Oakland County suburbs and maintain a student population of 10,130. This total ranks the district 22nd in the state in that category. Ranking 264th in state equalized value per pupil with a \$40,931.00 figure, 184th in total expenditures per pupil at a level

of \$2,127.00, and 109th in average teacher salary with a figure of \$21,873.00. The district levies 33.00 mills annually for operation. A part-time media relations program was identified as being the only public relations component operating in the district.

Also located in suburban Oakland County are the Walled Lake Consolidated Schools. The Walled Lake district has a student population of 10,582, making it the 21st largest district in the state. State equalized valuation per pupil in the district ranks 149th in the state at \$52,904.00. Total expenditures per pupil ranks 97th at \$2,377.00. Average teacher salary ranks 47th among state districts at \$23,418.00. The district, which suggests it operates not even a part-time public relations program, levies 32.23 mills for annual operation.

Clarkston Community Schools are located near the suburban Flint area in the far northeastern section of Oakland County. A student population of 6,652 ranks Clarkston schools 52nd among state districts in size. A state equalized valuation of \$37,858.00, a total expenditure per pupil level of \$2,128.00, and an average teacher salary of \$22,503.00 rank the district 321st, 183rd, and 89th among state school districts in these respective categories. Mills of 28.48 are levied by the district for annual operating millage. Components of a public relations program are divided among several administrators for operation.

Instrumentation

The instruments used to gather data for review were developed by the investigator. They included a primary data collection

questionnaire and a secondary listing of questions designed to add depth and dimension to the responses collected by the primary instrument.

The Primary Questionnaire

The primary questionnaire (See Appendix C) was divided into four major areas. Section A was designed to gather school district classification data which were used to match community information/relations program districts to traditional districts. Section B of the primary instrument was constructed to draw information identifying the components operating internally in programs from districts with community information/relations systems. Section C was developed to collect information identifying external components of community information/relations programs from these same districts. Section D of the primary instrument was constructed to gather millage election information from school districts which operated community information/relations districts.

Section A

Section A of the primary questionnaire was designed to gather school district classification data which were used to match community information/relations program districts to traditional districts. Questions one through 13 addressed specific district identification information needs of the study such as: name of district, superintendent of district, name of community information/relations program director, telephone numbers of the local district, district student enrollment, total district population, operating millage rates, number of schools

in the system, total general fund expenditures per pupil, district size in square miles, total district budget, rural, urban, or suburban classification of the district, district socio-economic status, student population stability and the number of years in the district in which the present superintendent has served in that capacity.

Questions 14 through 17 were constructed to gather information confirming the operation of a full-time community information/relations program in local school districts. This section included questions regarding the number of years a district employed a full-time community information/relations program administrator, and the number of years the program was operational in a local school district.

Section B

Section B of the primary instrument was constructed to draw information identifying the components operating internally in programs from districts with community information/relations systems. Internal components of systems are designed to promote the acceptance of, and participation in, community information/relations programs by the internal publics (e.g., staff members, administrators) of a local school district. Questions 18 through 27 provided data regarding internal system components. These questions utilized a four level scale which identified level one (no existence of the component in the local school district system), level two (occasional use of the component), level three (usual use of the component), and level four (consistent use of the component) applications of community information/relations system internal components. Questions touched upon such

topics as the use of staff newsletters, staff reports of board actions, employee orientation programs, employee advisory groups and study committees, staff recognition awards, staff communications inservice programs, staff surveys, student advisory groups, and required communication components in all major programs with which the staff has involvement.

Section C

Section C of the primary questionnaire was directed toward identifying external components of local school district community information/relations systems. External components of systems are designed to assess attitudes, and inform and involve members of a district's external publics (e.g., parents, taxpayers, governmental agencies). Questions 28 through 38 also used the aforementioned four level response scale. These questions prompted responses as to whether or not districts maintained external system components, such as community newsletters, a press and media contact program, adult and community education programs, a speaker's bureau, business leader luncheons, district program brochures, newcomer's information kits, senior citizen "gold card" programs, citizen advisory committees, regular community opinion surveys and written board policies supporting the operation of a community information/relations program.

Section D

Section D of the primary instrument was structured to gather data regarding the relationship between the community information/

relations program and the millage election program of local school districts. This section also contained a school millage election form to collect data regarding results of local district elections for the period 1977-82. Questions 39 and 40 used the four level response scale previously mentioned in the discussion of the primary instrument. These questions gathered responses as to whether or not community information/relations program administrators in the local school district directed school millage campaigns, and whether or not the administrator perceived that the operation of a full-time system positively affected election results.

The millage election form which appeared in this section collected data such as date and year of election, type of issue(s) (operational or for bonded indebtedness), whether the issue(s) represented renewal or additional millage, the amount of the issue(s) and whether the issue(s) passed or failed.

The Secondary Listing of Questions

A secondary listing of questions was used to add depth and dimension to responses collected by the primary instrument. This grouping of questions (See Appendix D) was asked of the administrators in the five most successful community information/relations programs to further establish standard operating components of programs recognized as successful by this study. The criteria used to identify the five most successful community information/relations districts included: (1) passage of 70 percent of all issues during the comparison period of 1977-82; (2) a 100 percent passage rate of

either renewal, additional, or bond issues during the comparison period offered independently of other issues (i.e., not combined with other types of issues); and (3) the meeting of all criteria required of local school districts identified as operating community information/rerelations systems in this study.

Questions appearing on the secondary instrument were asked of administrators of successful community information/rerelations programs during in-depth interviews which followed the receipt and tabulation of data from the primary instrument. Responses to the questions provided information regarding reasons districts developed a full-time program, identification of the most important and effective program components which ultimately influenced voter support, future trends which may change the programs, reasons why more districts did not operate a full-time program, attitudes regarding greater value being attached to either internal or external program components, reactions to the study format and findings as tabulated from the primary instrument.

The Collection of Data

Using the aforementioned primary survey instrument, the secondary listing of questions, and the other instruments and resources previously mentioned in this chapter, data were collected. Specifically, five different stages were recognized in the data collection process. The following review of these five stages details the different methods and resources used to collect study data.

Stage 1 - Primary Questionnaire

Following the identification of fourteen local school districts operating full-time community information/relations programs and the elimination of Detroit Public Schools from the study, a primary data collection instrument was sent to the program director of each district. Instruments were mailed on November 27, 1982. Included in each mailing was a study endorsement on Michigan Department of Education stationery. Those persons identified as supporting the study effort included: Dr. Phillip Runkel, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; Dr. William Banach, President of the National School Public Relations Association; Mr. Ned Hubbell, Director of Project Outreach; and Dr. Donald C. Weaver, Director of Western Michigan University's Leadership Training Center.

Also included in the mailing was an introductory letter and a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of completed instruments. A deadline for instrument return of December 17, 1982, was requested of those being surveyed. Follow-up telephone contacts were made with those school districts which did not return surveys by the deadline. All completed surveys were received by December 28, 1982.

Stage 2 - Review of Primary Questionnaire Responses

Upon return of completed primary questionnaires, responses were organized for review. At this point it was found that a number of the responding school districts had indicated identifying data in Section A of the instrument which was inconsistent with that reported in the

1981-82 Michigan Education Directory. As a result of these inconsistencies it was decided that the use of the 1980-81 Michigan Department of Education Bulletin 1014 would be most appropriate to provide data from which districts could be compared. The Michigan Department of Education identified this publication as their foremost resource for the comparison of local school districts using financial and demographic data. Information which appears in this publication is provided annually by each Michigan local school district using a uniform process and format. A later version of this publication was not used due to the fact that it was not available during the time the study was conducted.

Community information/relations districts were listed and individually identified by student enrollment, state equalized valuation per pupil, total expenditures per pupil, average teacher salary, and operating millage totals. Also listed were the results for all millage and bond issue elections for each district as reported by local districts on the survey instrument. These results were verified by a review of each reported election and issue(s) by use of an annual publication of the School Support Services Division of the Michigan Department of Education known as Annual Operational Millage and Bond Issue Report (1976-1982). This publication each year lists all districts which sponsor an operational or bond issue election by month, specific issue(s), amount of issue(s), and whether or not the issue(s) passed or failed.

At the completion of listing all identifying information and millage election information, responses to survey instrument questions dealing with community information/relations program components were tabulated. Responses were recorded for internal program components,

external program components and the relationship of the program administrator and program to local school district millage election efforts.

The next stage of the investigation was not begun until all community information/relations program districts were reviewed to insure that they met the identifying criteria established in the study. During this review it was found that the requirement of a minimum five year operation of a full-time community information/relations program was not met by the Southfield Public Schools' system. It was also observed that Grand Rapids Public Schools sponsored no district financial issues during the comparison period established for the investigation. Due to the fact that these districts did not meet the criteria for membership in the study as a community information/relations district, they were eliminated from the listing of this group.

Stage 3 - Selection of Traditional Districts

Once a final listing of 11 community information/relations school districts was established, the identification of traditional school districts began. Again, it was primarily by the use of the Michigan Department of Education Bulletin 1014, that groupings of at least three traditional school districts were matched to each of the districts identified as operating a full-time community information/relations system. Groupings of these traditional school districts were selected to be matched to each district which operated a system. Student enrollment, state equalized value per pupil, total expenditures per pupil, average teacher salary, and millage rates of traditional

districts, were again used to compare school districts. Traditional districts were required to match community information/relations districts in three of the five listed comparison criteria to be selected for review. Upon completing the groupings of three traditional school districts matched to each community information/relations district, single traditional districts were selected at random for one-to-one match-ups.

Stage 4 - Information Collection from Traditional Districts

Each traditional school district finally selected for review in the study was uniformly contacted to verify the non-existence of a full-time community information/relations program operation within the district. Telephone contacts were made to the personnel office of each traditional district to obtain this verification during the period of December 28-30, 1982. As previously stated, most districts identified various community information/relations program components operating in their districts. All traditional school districts, however, confirmed that no full-time system operated within their districts as established by the criteria for such a system in this investigation.

Data collection for the selected groupings of 11 traditional school districts continued by the establishment of financial election results records for each district. This was done by the use of the same Annual Operational Millage and Bond Issue Report used to verify financial election results reported by community information/relations districts.

Before initiating the next stage of the data collection process, all traditional districts were reviewed to insure that they met the identifying criteria established in the study. All districts which were selected as traditional school districts were determined to have met all criteria for membership within this grouping.

Stage 5 - Indepth Interviews of Successful Community Information/Relations Program Directors

Once a general tabulation of data was collected from both sets of grouped school districts, a secondary listing of questions was established. This listing of questions was directed to administrators of five community information/relations school districts recognized as successful by this study.

Indepth interviews were scheduled and conducted during the period of February 7-14, 1983, with the community information/relations program administrator of East Lansing Public Schools, Flint Public Schools, Birmingham Public Schools, Utica Community Schools, and Brighton Area Schools.

The Statistical Approach

It was believed that the true test of the effectiveness of the full-time operation of a community information/relations system was based upon its impact on citizen support, that is in the results of district financial elections. Given two groups of local school districts of generally equal size, financial disposition and demographic composition, the on-going operation of a full-time community information/

relations system in one set of districts should produce greater citizen support and millage success than the group of districts which did not.

Using the data collected by the primary questionnaire, Michigan Department of Education records and resources, and the secondary listing of questions administered during indepth interviews, the statistical approach was structured. Financial election records of community information/relations districts and traditional districts were collected during the comparison period 1977-1982. Election results for the period were analyzed according to specific issues. Totals of renewal issues, additional issues, and overall issues (the combination of renewal and additional issues) which had been won or lost during millage elections were established for both sets of school districts during the comparison period. Bond issue results for both sets of districts were also collected during this period, but were found to be few in number and were, therefore, eliminated from further review.

As a result of an extensive review of literature and evaluation of the beliefs of numerous school officials and personnel statewide, it was believed that the groupings of school districts which operated full-time community information/relations systems would produce better financial issue passage results during the comparison period than traditional school districts. To test these beliefs, the following hypotheses were established:

Research Hypothesis 1 - There is a difference in renewal millage issue passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period.

Research Hypothesis 2 - There is a difference in additional millage issue passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period.

Research Hypothesis 3 - There is a difference in overall millage issue passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period.

The statistical approach selected as appropriate to test the stated hypotheses was the Chi-square test. This treatment was selected because it measures the degree of association which exists between variables which place cases or information into mutually independent categories.

Observed frequencies were compared to expected frequencies by means of 2 x 2 contingency tables. The level of significance with one degree of freedom was established at the .05 probability level.

From the results of the primary review, five local school districts operating successful community information/relations programs were selected for secondary review. These districts were visited individually to identify model program components which were common among the programs of all five districts, and to establish a listing of model program components which were replicable in most local school districts in the State of Michigan. All five districts were also asked to comment as to the results of the study and to provide perceptions regarding the relative effectiveness of the operation of a full-time community information/relations program in a local school district.

Summary

The emphasis of this chapter was to present and review the time period, population and sample selection method, selection of school districts, description of school districts, the instrumentation, the collection of data and the statistical approach used in the study. Criteria were established to identify members of the two sets or groups of local school districts which were reviewed, and to establish a basis for the selection of these districts.

Study instrumentation consisted of an investigator produced primary questionnaire and a secondary listing of questions. Data collection was discussed in terms of the different stages required to conduct the process.

The Chi-square test was selected as the statistical approach to measure the degree of association which existed between the study variables. Other data produced by use of the secondary listing of questions was recorded and will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter IV will present and review the analysis and discussion of the study findings.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This chapter will present and review data collected which was related to the design of the study. The chapter will be organized into three parts to discuss data collected by the primary review instrument, secondary listing of questions, and other sources previously identified in the study.

The organization of Chapter IV will include the following parts:

1. Testing the research hypotheses.
2. Analysis of primary instrument findings.
3. Analysis of findings of the secondary listing of questions.

Testing the Research Hypotheses

The first part of this chapter reviews the findings of the statistical approach established as appropriate to test the three research hypotheses. The Chi-square test was selected for testing each hypothesis because it could measure the degree of association which existed between whether a district did or did not have a community information/relations program and the results of financial issue elections.

Consistent with the design of the study, the following research hypotheses were tested:

Research Hypothesis 1 - There is a difference in renewal millage issue passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period.

Research Hypothesis 2 - There is a difference in additional millage issue passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period.

Research Hypothesis 3 - There is a difference in overall millage issue passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period.

Data detailing financial issues attempted, approved, and defeated in elections by community information/relations districts and traditional school districts during the comparison period, 1977-1982 were used to test research hypotheses. These data are found in greater detail in Appendix E of this study.

Research Hypothesis 1

The first research hypothesis of the study stated that there is a difference in renewal millage issue passage rates between community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period, 1977-1982. The belief being examined by this hypothesis was that local school districts which operated community

information/rerelations systems would produce renewal issue passage rates which were superior to those districts that did not.

A review of the data collected found that community information/rerelations districts sponsored 28 renewal issues in millage election during the comparison period. Of the issues sponsored, 23 were passed and five were unsuccessful. Traditional districts from which data were collected, also attempted 23 renewal issues during the period, 1977-1982. It was found that 22 of these issues were successful and only one issue did not pass.

A Chi-square test was computed to establish if a statistically significant relationship existed. Yate's correction for continuity was applied in the Chi-square calculations. This was seen to be appropriate due to the size (five and under) of the cell values for renewal issues not passed. Testing at the .05 probability level with one degree of freedom, a critical value of 3.84 was established for the data being tested. Computed results of the data produced a value for the test statistic of 2.52. Since the test statistic ($\chi^2 = 2.52$) was found to be less than the critical value of the Chi-square test ($\chi^2_{cv} = 3.84$), no statistical significance was established for the research hypothesis.

Table 5-1, which follows, presents a contingency table for describing these findings.

Table 5-1

Contingency Table Detailing Renewal Issue
Millage Results Comparisons Between
Community Information/Relations Districts
and Traditional Districts (1977-1982)

District Grouping	Renewal Issues Passed	Renewal Issues Not Passed	Totals
Community Information/ Relations Districts	23 *(24.71)	5 *(3.29)	28
Traditional Districts	22 *(20.29)	1 *(2.71)	23
Totals	45	6	51

*expected frequencies

Test Factors

H_1 : CI/R \neq T

$\alpha = .05$

$X^2_{cv} = 3.84$, $df = 1$

Conclusion: X^2 is not statistically significant. H_1 is rejected.

Computed Results

$X^2 = 2.52$

Total Frequencies = 51

Research Hypothesis 2

The second research hypothesis of the study stated that there is a difference in additional millage passage rates between community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period, 1977-1982. Consistent with the beliefs expressed

by the first hypothesis, the perception being examined by this hypothesis was that local school districts that operated community information/relations systems would produce additional issue passage rates which were superior to those established by traditional districts.

Data collected to test this hypothesis found that 28 issues for additional millage were attempted in millage elections during the comparison period by community information/relations districts. Among the additional issues attempted, 10 were passed and 18 were defeated. Traditional districts attempted 35 issues over the same comparison period. Issues passed by traditional districts totalled 15. Additional issues defeated in elections sponsored by traditional districts totalled 20.

A Chi-square test at the .05 probability level with one degree of freedom was again conducted to determine if an association existed between the two groups in regard to additional issue millage passage rates. A critical value of 3.84 was established to be compared to the test statistic for the data being tested. The test statistic for the computed results was .34. Since the test statistic ($X^2 = .34$) was less than the critical value of the Chi-square test ($X^2_{cv} = 3.84$), no statistical significance was established for the research hypothesis, and hence, it was rejected.

Table 5-2, which follows, details these findings using a contingency table.

Table 5-2

Contingency Table Detailing Additional Issue
Millage Results Comparisons Between
Community Information/Relations Districts
and Traditional Districts (1977-1982)

District Grouping	Additional Issues Passed	Additional Issues Not Passed	Totals
Community Information/ Relations Districts	10 *(11.11)	18 *(16.9)	28
Traditional Districts	15 *(13.8)	20 *(21.1)	35
Totals	25	38	63

*expected frequencies

Test Factors

$H_2: CI/R \neq T$

$\alpha = .05$

$\chi^2_{cv} = 3.84, df = 1$

Conclusion: χ^2 is not statistically significant. H_2 is rejected.

Computed Results

$\chi^2 = .34$

Total Frequencies = 63

Research Hypothesis 3

The third research hypothesis of the study stated that there is a difference in overall millage issue (combined additional and renewal issues) passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison

period, 1977-1982. Like the first and second hypotheses, the belief being expressed by this hypothesis was that local school districts operating community information/relations systems would produce higher overall millage issue passage rates compared to the rates established by traditional districts.

Data produced by combining renewal and additional millage issues of districts operating community information/relations programs found 56 issues were attempted by community information/relations districts during the comparison period. Among overall issues, 33 were passed and 23 were defeated in these districts. Traditional districts attempted 58 issues overall, with 37 being passed and 21 being defeated.

The Chi-square test was used for hypothesis three. A critical value of 3.84 was determined using a probability level of .05 with one degree of freedom. The test statistic which resulted from the computed results of overall election issue elections for both sets of school districts was .29. When the test statistic ($\chi^2 = .29$) was compared to the critical value of the test ($\chi^2_{cv} = 3.84$) no statistical significance was established for the research hypothesis. It was, therefore, rejected.

Table 5-3, which follows, displays a contingency table to further describe these findings.

Table 5-3

Contingency Table Detailing Overall Issue
 Millage Results Comparisons Between
 Community Information/Relations Districts
 and Traditional Districts (1977-1982)

District Grouping	Overall Issue Passage	Overall Issue Non-Passage	Totals
Community Information/ Relations Districts	33 *(34.39)	23 *(21.61)	56
Traditional Districts	37 *(35.61)	21 *(22.39)	58
Totals	70	44	114

*expected frequencies

Test Factors

H₃: CI/R ≠ T

α .05

$\chi^2_{cv} = 3.84$, df = 1

Conclusion: χ^2 is not statistically significant. H₃ is rejected.

Computed Results

$\chi^2 = .29$

Total Frequencies = 114

Additional statistical tests were computed in an attempt to further determine the significance of the data collected. Tests measuring the significance of a difference between proportions, and the calculation of a Phi coefficient were completed but without

establishing an association. A Mann-Whitney U test was also conducted which established a significant difference between the median percentages of millage election issue successes. The traditional school districts were found to have a median greater than that for the community information/relations districts in the study. These findings were seen to be worthy of further discussion and are addressed in the final chapter of the study.

Analysis of Primary Instrument Findings

It was the intention of the investigation to establish two distinct forms of data by the use of the primary instrument for the study. The first group of data were collected to be used to discuss the millage issue success comparisons stated in the study hypotheses. The second was to identify and discuss model components of community information/relations programs of those local school district operations seen as successful by this study.

As mentioned previously, the primary questionnaire used in the study was divided into four major areas. Section A was designed to gather school district classification data which were used to match community information/relations program districts to traditional districts. Section B of the primary instrument was constructed to draw information identifying the components operating internally in programs from districts with community information/relations systems. Section C was developed to collect information identifying external components of community information/relations programs from these

same districts. Section D of the primary instrument was constructed to gather millage election information from school districts which operated community information/relations programs.

A majority of the findings established by responses to Section D of the primary instrument were discussed in the first part of this chapter which dealt with the research hypotheses. Data produced by community information/relations school districts completing the first three sections of the instrument and questions 39 and 40 of Section D, are reviewed in the paragraphs which follow.

The information presented discusses responses which were averaged from community information/relations school districts organized in three response groups. The first group includes a review of data from the averaged responses of those school districts which operated community information/relations programs but were not viewed as "successful" by the criteria established for this identification in the study. This grouping is referred to as "general" community information/relations districts and includes averaged responses from the following school districts: Benton Harbor, Dearborn, Livonia, Plymouth-Canton, Warren Consolidated and Wyoming.

The second grouping from which averaged responses are reported is comprised of those community information/relations school districts identified as successful by the criteria previously established in the study. The community information/relations districts which comprise this grouping include: Birmingham, Brighton, East Lansing, Flint, and Utica.

The third group from which averaged responses are reported is

identified as "total." This grouping includes in its composition the memberships of both general and successful community information/reasons school districts.

The rationale upon which this organization of responses was based was: (1) to establish data which would help identify what could be seen as the standard type of local school district which operated a community information/reasons program; (2) to establish possible differences between those community information/reasons programs identified as general and successful; and (3) to assist in the identification of model community information/reasons system components of successful local school district programs.

Section A

Section A of the primary questionnaire was designed to gather school district classification data which were used to match community information/reasons program districts to traditional districts. Questions one through 13 requested specific identifying information from districts which operated systems. Question 14 through 17 were constructed to gather information confirming the operation of a full-time system in local school districts.

Data produced by responses to question in Section A of the primary questionnaire are organized in Table 6, which follows. It should be noted that the 1980-81 Michigan Department of Education Bulletin 1014 was used to assist in the classification of data in Section A, as previously mentioned in Chapter II of the study.

Table 6

Identifying Information for Community
Information/Relations Districts as Produced by the
Primary Questionnaire Questions 1-17

Identifying Factor	Average of General CI/R District Responses	Average of Successful CI/R District Responses	Average of Total CI/R District Responses
1980-81 K-12 Enrollment	15,912	16,584	16,225
1980-81 Total District Population	92,125	80,800	86,462
1980-81 Operating Millage Rates	32.57	34.9	33.75
1980-81 Total General Fund Expenditure Per Pupil	\$2,362.03	\$2,685.40	\$2,523.75
1980-81 S.E.V. Per Pupil	\$57,962.67	\$57,742.80	\$57,852.74
1980-81 Average Teacher Salary	\$24,403.67	\$23,016.00	\$23,709.84
1980-81 Total District Budget	\$42,130,963.00	\$27,449,455.00	\$34,790,209.00
District Size (Square Miles)	36.9	37.7	37.3
District Location	67% S.E. Michigan	80% S.E. Michigan	74% S.E. Michigan
District Classification	83% Suburban	80% Suburban	81.5% Suburban
District Socio-Economic Status	83% Above Average	80% Above Average	81.5% Above Average

Table 6 (continued)

Identifying Factor	Average of General CI/R District Responses	Average of Successful CI/R District Responses	Average of Total CI/R District Responses
Enrollment Status (1976-82)	83% Considerable Decline	40% Considerable Decline	61% Considerable Decline
Length of Superintendent Service in District	7.1 Years	6.9 Years	6.95 Years
Lifespan of CI/R Program in District	9 Years or More	9.6 Years or More	9.3 Years or More

Section B

Section B of the primary questionnaire was constructed to draw information identifying the internal components of programs from districts with community information/relations systems. Internal components of systems are designed to promote the acceptance of, and participation in, community information/relations programs by the internal publics (e.g., staff members, administrators) of a local school district. Questions 18 through 27 provided data regarding internal system components. These questions utilized a four level scale which identified level one (absence of the component in the local school district system), level two (occasional use of the component), level three (usual use of the component), and level four (consistent use of the component) applications of community information/relations system internal components.

Data gathered from responses are reported in both narrative and table form by the order of the questions as they appeared in Section B. Responses are reported by frequency and percent from general, successful, and total community information/relations districts for each question. Percentages used in reporting responses are rounded to equal totals of 100 percent.

The following data analysis was developed from responses to question 18 on the primary questionnaire of the study.

Question 18: Does your school district distribute a staff newsletter on a regular basis to all employees?

Response: Over 73 percent of total community information/relations districts reported the use of a staff newsletter on a consistent basis. Two-thirds (66 percent) of general districts and four-fifths of successful districts stated a consistent use of a staff newsletter to communicate with internal publics. Table 7-1, below, displays these results.

Table 7-1

Use of Staff Newsletter by Community
Information/Relations Districts

Question 18 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	1	16%	0	0%	1	9%
Occasionally	1	16%	1	20%	2	18%
Usually	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Consistently	4	67%	4	80%	8	73%
Totals	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%

The following data report reviews the responses by the survey group to question 19.

Question 19: Are reports of board actions promptly and regularly issued to staff and community leaders?

Response: It was apparent that reports of board actions are a high priority in community information/relations systems. All districts (100 percent) indicated a consistent operation of this program component. Table 7-2, below, discusses these findings.

Table 7-2
Use of Reports of Board Actions
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 19 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Occasionally	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Usually	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Consistently	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%
Totals	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%

The following analysis of data was developed from responses to question 20 on the primary questionnaire.

Question 20: Does your school district operate a new employee orientation program each year?

Response: A major difference in community information/relations system operational priorities was viewed from responses to this

question. General districts reported that 67 percent of their membership never operated a new employee orientation program, while successful districts revealed 80 percent of their districts did operate such a program. Table 7-3, which follows, further reviews these findings.

Table 7-3

Use of New Employee Orientation Programs
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 20 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	4	67%	1	20%	5	45.5%
Occasionally	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Usually	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Consistently	2	33%	4	80%	6	54.5%
Totals	6	100%	5	100%	11	100.0%

Responses to question 21 were organized in the data report which follows.

Question 21: Does your school district maintain an advisory group of employees that meets on a regular basis with the superintendent?

Response: A mixed array of responses were recorded to this question. Almost 60 percent of successful districts and 33 percent of general districts reported using a formal employee advisory group either occasionally or not at all. Other responses recorded seem to indicate an inverse relationship between successful and general districts regarding the operation of this component. Table 7-4 displays these responses.

Table 7-4

Use of a Formal Employee Advisory
Group by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 21 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	3	60%	3	27.2%
Occasionally	2	33.3%	0	0%	2	18.2%
Usually	3	50.0%	0	0%	3	27.2%
Consistently	1	16.6%	2	40%	3	27.2%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

The following data analysis was developed from responses to question 22 on the primary questionnaire.

Question 22: Does your school district maintain administration/staff/board study committees to provide opportunities for real staff involvement in issues affecting the school program?

Response: Use of internal staff participation in district issue study efforts appeared to be a high priority for both general and successful districts. General districts reported a consistent (67 percent) use of employee study groups. All successful districts either usually (20 percent) or consistently (80%) used employee groups to study issues. Table 7-5, which follows, displays group responses to this question.

Table 7-5

Use of Employee Group Study
Committees by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 22 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Occasionally	2	33.3%	0	0%	2	18.2%
Usually	0	0%	1	20%	1	9.1%
Consistently	4	67.0%	4	80%	8	72.5%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

The following data analysis was made from responses to question 23.

Question 23: Does your school district maintain an organized staff recognition and award program?

Response: Districts recognized as successful had a generally higher use of staff recognition and awards programs than general community information/relations districts. It was reported that 80 percent of successful districts used these programs consistently while 67 percent of general districts used them either usually or consistently. Table 7-6, which follows, describes further these findings.

Table 7-6

Use of Staff Recognition and Awards
Programs by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 23 Response Levels	General CI/R		Successful CI/R		Total CI/R	
	Dist. Responses Fre.	Pct.	Dist. Responses Fre.	Pct.	Dist. Responses Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	1	20%	1	9%
Occasionally	2	33.3%	0	0%	2	18.2%
Usually	1	16.6%	0	0%	1	9.0%
Consistently	3	50.0%	4	80%	7	63.6%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

Responses to question 24 produced the data discussed in the review which follows.

Question 24: Has your school district provided a communications inservice program for both current certified and classified staff?

Response: Measurable differences were seen between successful and general district responses to this question. While 80 percent of successful districts stated they consistently sponsored communication inservice programs for different staff groups, only 33 percent of general districts responded as usually or consistently operating this internal system component. Table 7-7 illustrates these differences more specifically.

Table 7-7

Use of All Staff Communications Inservice Programs
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 24 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	1	16.6%	1	20%	2	18.2%
Occasionally	3	50.0%	0	0%	3	27.2%
Usually	1	16.6%	0	0%	1	9.0%
Consistently	1	16.6%	4	80%	5	45.5%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

The following data analysis was developed from responses to question 25.

Question 25: Does your school district occasionally survey the district staff to solicit their input and opinions on key issues?

Response: Again, successful district responses are noted as measurably different from general district responses to this question. While only 16 percent of general school districts operating community information/relations programs indicated usual or consistent use of staff surveys as an operating component of the internal system, 80 percent of successful districts said staff surveys were used usually or consistently. Table 7-8, which follows, describes in greater detail these findings.

Table 7-8
Use of Staff Opinion Surveys
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 25 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	1	16.6%	0	0%	1	9%
Occasionally	4	67.0%	1	20%	5	45.5%
Usually	1	16.6%	2	40%	3	27.2%
Consistently	0	0%	2	40%	2	18.2%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

The following analysis of data was made from responses to question 26 on the primary questionnaire.

Question 26: Has your school district maintained a student advisory council at the secondary level to allow student involvement in the activities of their school district?

Response: General community information/relations program districts are perceived as placing greater emphasis on student advisory groups as part of an internal system operation than successful districts. While only 40 percent of successful districts identified the use of student advisory groups as a usual or consistent program component, 83 percent of general districts responded the same way. Table 7-9, which follows, reviews these differences,

Table 7-9

Use of Student Advisory Groups
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 26 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	1	16.6%	0	0%	1	9%
Occasionally	1	16.6%	3	60%	4	36.4%
Usually	1	16.6%	0	0%	1	9%
Consistently	3	50.0%	2	40%	5	45.5%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

The data analysis which follows was developed from question 27 responses.

Question 27: Does your school district require a communications component in all major programs which shows goals, objectives, and activities to both internal and external publics?

Response: Relatively consistent responses were recorded to this question from both successful and general districts. Four-fifths of successful districts (80 percent) stated that a communication component was usually or consistently required in all major programs. Two-thirds of general districts (67 percent) responded in similar fashion. Table 7-10, which follows, discusses these findings.

Table 7-10

Use of Required Communication Component
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 27 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	2	33.3%	0	0%	2	18.2%
Occasionally	0	0%	1	20%	1	9.0%
Usually	2	33.3%	1	20%	3	27.2%
Consistently	2	33.3%	3	60%	5	45.5%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

Section C

Section C of the primary questionnaire was directed toward identifying external components of local school district community information/relations systems. External components of systems are designed to assess attitudes, and inform and involve members of a district's external publics (e.g., parents, taxpayers, governmental agencies). Questions 28 through 38 also used the aforementioned four level response scale.

Data gathered from responses are reported in both narrative and table form by the order of the questions as they appeared in Section C. Responses are reported by frequency and percent from general, successful, and total community information/relations districts for

each question. Percentages used in reporting findings are rounded to equal totals of 100 percent.

The following data analysis was developed from responses to question 28 of the primary questionnaire of the study.

Question 28: Does your school district issue, on a regular basis, a community newsletter to all households in the district?

Response: A uniform response was recorded among all districts to this question. All (100 percent) general and successful districts stated they consistently issued a community newsletter to district citizens. Table 8-1, which follows, reviews these findings.

Table 8-1
Use of Community Newsletter
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 28 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Occasionally	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Usually	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Consistently	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%
Totals	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%

The data analysis which follows was developed from primary questionnaire responses to question 29.

Question 29: Has your school district maintained an organized program to get news about the district to radio, television, and print media?

Response: Again, a uniform response was recorded by both sets of districts to this question. All (100 percent) districts reported a consistent program of media contact. Table 8-2 discusses these findings as reported.

Table 8-2

Use of Media Contact Program
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 29 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Occasionally	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Usually	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Consistently	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%
Totals	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%

Data gathered from responses to question 30 are analyzed in this section.

Question 30: Does your school district have an adult/community education program which provides programs and services to residents of all ages?

Response: All general and successful districts (100 percent) reported a consistent use of an adult/community education program as an external system component. Table 8-3 reviews this response.

Table 8-3

Use of Adult and Community Education
Programs by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 30 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Occasionally	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Usually	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Consistently	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%
Totals	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%

The data analysis which follows was made from responses to question 31 of the primary questionnaire.

Question 31: Does your school district operate a speakers bureau to address community and parent groups on topics related to education and your school system?

Response: Both general and successful districts reported a mixed reaction to this question. Half of the general districts reviewed stated they usually or consistently maintained a speakers bureau as an external component of a community information/relations system. Two-fifths

(40 percent) of successful districts responded similarly. Table 8-4 reviews the responses to question 31 by general and successful districts.

Table 8-4
Use of a Speakers Bureau
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 31 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	1	20%	1	9%
Occasionally	3	50%	2	40%	5	45.5%
Usually	2	33.3%	1	20%	3	27.2%
Consistently	1	16.6%	1	20%	2	18.2%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

Responses to question 32 were used to develop the data analysis which follows.

Question 32: Does your school district conduct business leader luncheons/breakfasts to familiarize community leaders and non-parents with your schools and programs?

Response: Differences were observed between general and successful district responses to this question. While 80 percent of responses from successful districts indicated a usual or consistent use of business leader luncheons/breakfasts, only 16 percent of general districts responded in the same manner. Table 8-5, which follows, discusses these differences.

Table 8-5

Use of Business Leader Luncheons/Breakfasts
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 32 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	2	33.3%	1	20%	3	27.2%
Occasionally	3	50.0%	0	0%	3	27.2%
Usually	1	16.6%	1	20%	2	18.2%
Consistently	0	0%	3	60%	3	27.2%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

The following analysis of data was developed from responses to question 33 on the primary questionnaire.

Question 33: Has your school district developed program brochures that can be distributed to staff, parents, and community members which explain different district programs and operations?

Response: Similar responses from general and successful districts were recorded for this question. A vast majority of general districts (83 percent) and successful districts (80 percent) reported to usually or consistently producing and distributing district informational brochures as part of the external community information/relations program. Table 8-6 following this narrative reviews these findings.

Table 8-6

Production and Distribution of Information Brochures
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 33 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	1	16.6%	0	0%	1	9%
Occasionally	0	0%	1	20%	1	9%
Usually	4	67.0%	0	0%	4	36.4%
Consistently	1	16.6%	4	80%	5	45.5%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

Responses to question 34 were organized into the data analysis which follows.

Question 34: Does your school district have a newcomers kit which provides information about your district to newcomers?

Response: Again, responses from both groups indicate a majority of both usually or consistently make use of newcomers kits to have contact with their external publics. General districts usually or consistently used kits 67 percent of the time, while 80 percent of successful districts did the same. Table 8-7, which follows, discusses these findings.

Table 8-7
Use of Newcomers Kit
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 34 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	2	33.3%	1	20%	3	27.2%
Occasionally	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Usually	2	33.3%	1	20%	3	27.2%
Consistently	2	33.3%	3	60%	5	45.5%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

The following data analysis was derived from responses to question 35 on the primary questionnaire.

Question 35: Does your school district maintain a discount/"gold card" program for senior citizens, allowing them to get free or reduced price admissions to school activities?

Response: All districts, except for one, reported a consistent use of senior citizens gold card programs. Table 8-8 reveals these findings.

Table 8-8

Use of Senior Citizen Gold Card Program
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 35 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	1	20%	1	9%
Occasionally	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Usually	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Consistently	6	100%	4	80%	10	91%
Totals	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%

The analysis of data which follows was made from responses to question 36.

Question 36: Does your school district make use of citizen advisory committees to study and make recommendations regarding issues and concerns of the district?

Response: All districts from both groups reported either usual or consistent use of citizen advisory groups as one of the external components of a community information/relations system. Table 8-9 displays these responses.

Table 8-9
Use of Citizen Advisory Committees
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 36 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Occasionally	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Usually	2	33.3%	0	0%	2	18.2%
Consistently	4	67.0%	5	100%	9	82.0%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

Responses to question 37 were used to develop the data analysis which follows.

Question 37: Does your school district conduct regular community opinion surveys to find out what citizens are thinking and what they want from their schools?

Response: A majority of general districts (67 percent) and successful districts (80 percent) stated they used community opinion surveys usually or consistently as part of an external component operation of their community information/relations program. Table 8-10, which follows, reviews these responses.

Table 8-10

Use of Community Opinion Surveys
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 37 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Occasionally	2	33.3%	1	20%	3	27.2%
Usually	3	50.0%	1	20%	4	36.4%
Consistently	1	16.6%	3	60%	4	36.4%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

The following analysis of data was developed from responses to question 38.

Question 38: Does your school district have written policy supporting the operation of a community information/relations program?

Response: With the exception of one response, both sets of districts confirmed consistent use of written policy supporting the operation of a community information/relations program, Table 8-11 reveals responses to this question by district groups.

Table 8-11

Existence of Written Policy Supporting
the Community Information/Relations Program

Question 38 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	1	20%	1	9%
Occasionally	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Usually	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Consistently	6	100%	4	80%	10	91%
Totals	6	100%	5	100%	11	100%

Section D

Section D of the primary instrument was structured to gather data regarding the relationship between the community information/relations program and the millage election program of local school districts.

This section also contained a school millage election form to collect data regarding results of local district elections over a twelve year period which was discussed in the first part of this chapter. Question 39 and 40 used the four level response scale previously mentioned in the discussion of the primary instrument.

Data gathered from responses are reported in both narrative and table form by the order of the questions as they appeared in Section D. Responses are reported by frequency and percent from general, successful,

and total community information/relations districts for each question. Percentages used in reporting responses are rounded to equal totals of 100 percent.

The data analysis which follows was developed from responses to question 39 of the primary questionnaire.

Question 39: Does your school district's full-time community information/relations program administrator direct school millage campaigns for the district?

Response: While 67 percent of general districts answered that usually or consistently, the district's community information/relations program administrator ran district millage elections, 80 percent of successful districts answered the same way. Table 9-1, which follows, reviews district comments to this question.

Table 9-1

Direction of Millage Elections by
Program Administrators of Community
Information Relations Districts

Question 39 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	1	20%	1	9%
Occasionally	2	33.3%	0	0%	2	18.2%
Usually	2	33.3%	0	0%	2	18.2%
Consistently	2	33.3%	4	80%	6	54.5%
Totals	6	100.0%	5	100%	11	100.0%

Responses to question 40 produced the data discussed in the review which follows.

Question 40: Has the operation of a full-time community information/relations program in your district affected positively district millage election results?

Response: All districts responding to this question reported usual or consistent agreement with the belief that operation of a community information/relations system positively affected millage election results. Table 9-2 reviews the comments expressed by districts responding to this question.

Table 9-2
Perceived Positive Effects on Millage
Election Results as Produced
by Community Information/Relations Districts

Question 40 Response Levels	General CI/R Dist. Responses		Successful CI/R Dist. Responses		Total CI/R Dist. Responses	
	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.	Fre.	Pct.
Not at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Occasionally	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Usually	3	50%	0	0%	3	27.2%
Consistently	3	50%	5	100%	8	72.7%
Totals	6	100%	5	100%	11	100.0%

Analysis of Findings of the Secondary Listing of Questions

A secondary listing of questions was used to add depth and dimension to responses collected by the primary instrument. This grouping of questions was asked of the administrators in the five most successful community information/relations programs to further establish standard operating components of programs recognized as successful by this study. Questions appearing on the secondary instrument were asked of administrators of those programs identified as successful during indepth interviews which followed the receipt and tabulation of data from the primary instrument.

The secondary listing of questions was divided into three general sections. The first section, Section A, listed questions which asked those individuals responsible for the administration of the community information/relations program to reveal reasons for the development of a full-time program in the local school district; to describe personal training and background, and how it related to the operation of the program; and to discuss beliefs regarding the relationship of the community information/relations program to millage election issue success in the local district.

Section B of the instrument directed questions to successful program administrators which asked for specific identification of components seen to be vital to the program. Also included in the second section were questions related to internal and external program components; the relationship of the program to the millage election process in the local district, and future trends which were perceived

as affecting or changing the operation of the community information/relations program.

Section C of the secondary listing of questions asked successful program administrators about beliefs regarding whether or not all districts should employ an individual to coordinate a community information/relations program. Questions asking administrators why so few Michigan local school districts operated full-time programs; what importance they attached to staff participation in the operation of a program; how they believed community information/relations districts would compare to traditional districts in election issue results reviewed in the study; and how they would explain the findings of the study which did not establish differences between community information/relations districts and traditional districts in regard to millage election issue success were also included in this section.

No formal checklist was used to record responses of those being interviewed. Responses which were able to be compared and contrasted were recorded by the investigator and are reviewed below. Information gathered from these interviews is reported in narrative form by order of the section and of the questions as they appeared on the listing.

Section A

Section A of the secondary listing of questions asked administrators of successful community information/relations programs to reveal reasons for developing a full-time program in the local school district; describing their training and background, and how it related to the operation of the program; and to discuss beliefs regarding

the relationship of the community information/relations program to millage election issue success in the local district. Questions one through three (which has five parts) comprise the questions in this section.

The narrative which follows reviews the responses of successful community information/relations program administrators to question one.

Question 1: What is the reason this school district developed a full-time community information/relations program?

Responses: All districts interviewed stated that the ultimate reason for development of a full-time program was to positively impact citizen support. Three districts specifically cited the need for improvement in press relations and coverage as the means to improve community support. Two districts stated that millage problems and a lack of citizen involvement prompted the development of a system in the local district. The need for constant public contact and a method for dealing with crisis situations was also mentioned as partial basis for program development.

In discussion of the basis for development and/or continuation of a full-time community information/relations program in the local district, all successful program administrators cited direct participation by the district superintendent. They stated that the superintendent was either directly involved with the development of a program or in the maintenance of its daily operation. All successful administrators interviewed, with the exception of one, were members of the superintendent's cabinet in the local school district. Their

importance to the district in the estimation of the superintendent was underscored by the status of this position.

Question two responses are discussed in the narrative which follows.

Question 2: Describe your training and experience and how your background relates to the operation of the community information/relations program.

Responses: Administrators of three of the programs interviewed had backgrounds as reporters or editors of newspapers before assuming a full-time position with the community information/relations position of the local school district. Two individuals among these three also had broadcast media (e.g., television, radio) experience.

Of the two other administrators interviewed, one served as a Community Education director in the district before being elevated to the role as community information/relations administrator. The other was a secretary for the board of education before assuming a program administrator's role.

Four program administrators stated that they had completed undergraduate degrees in journalism or education which related to their current roles. Extensive knowledge of the school district, district personnel, community membership, key community media contacts, and having the faith of the district superintendent and board were cited as other background requirements for successful program operation by administrators.

All administrators stated that they combined human skills with technical background skills acquired prior to assuming the

administrative role or while serving in it. All administrators also reported they sought constant technical and conceptual skills' improvement through participation in conferences and training programs related to their field.

The information presentation which follows was developed through responses to question 3-a on the secondary listing of questions.

Question 3-a: Would your district be as successful millage-wise without the operation of a full-time community information/relations program?

Responses: Four of the five program administrators interviewed stated emphatically that the full-time operation of a community information/relations program directly contributed to millage success in the local district. The fifth administrator interviewed stated a belief that operation of a full-time system helped millage passage, but the extent to which it helped was unknown.

The following narrative reviews the responses to question 3-b.

Question 3-b: To what extent do you feel the operation of a program contributes to financial support stability in this district?

Responses: All district administrators, with the exception of one, responded that the operation of the program which listened to, informed, and involved district residents in the ongoing operation of a local school district, contributed greatly to financial support stability. Without the operation of a program, these administrators concluded, citizen understanding, involvement, and support levels would be lower and would, therefore, affect financial support.

Question 3-c responses are discussed in the narrative which follows.

Question 3-c: Is your school district so atypical that millage passage is a foregone conclusion?

Responses: Only one of five program administrators interviewed felt the uniqueness of their district possibly had created an environment for continuous millage support. The district that stated this belief had a very high community socio-economic level with large percentages of its citizenry having high educational levels and significant involvement in community affairs. It was the feeling of the administrator that community participation in local school affairs and citizen support would probably exist even if a program did not exist.

Overall, administrators generally reported that despite some features unique to each district, citizen financial support was never assumed and must be cultivated and nurtured by planned approaches.

The narrative which follows reviews the responses of successful program administrators to question 3-d of the secondary listing of questions.

Question 3-d: Michigan Department of Education records show that less than 40 percent of registered voters participate in local school district millage elections. Do you think that if a majority of those registered actually voted in your district, you would be as successful as you are in passage of millage issues?

Responses: All district administrators interviewed responded that election victories would be few if a majority of registered voters participated in school financial elections. Two major reasons were given for this response. One dealt with the great difficulty in reaching and actually communicating with the many and diverse

groups in the community. The second reason given was that, no matter how sophisticated the community information/relations system, all school-related occurrences which affect community opinion could not be controlled or influenced.

Administrators stated that one of the great challenges a program faces is the need to involve and provide information to those who do not have children in the public schools, which comprises the majority of most school district populations today. Respondents also suggested that many of the factors which influence community opinion are outside of their control and are not influenced by the positive relationships their programs create and maintain.

Several administrators suggested that the factors of not being able to reach all groups and not being able to control or influence all school-related occurrences, all the more emphasize the need for a full-time program to cultivate and maintain support from those citizen groups and individuals who do participate in school elections. Without the program operation, they inferred, the greater the size of the uninformed, uninvolved, and potentially negative voter group.

Question 3-e responses are discussed in the narrative which follows.

Question 3-e: Is everything done in the operation of this program millage related?

Responses: One district administrator responded that passage of financial support issues was the basis for the full-time operation of the community information/relations program. The administrator

stated that planning for school financial issue elections began the day after the last millage election and that every component of the community information/relations program operation was directed to influence positive voter response in a future election.

Generally, most of the other responding administrators suggested that their program operations were indirectly millage related. They stated that their programs were structured to improve community understanding, involvement and support which ultimately would affect millage election results in a positive manner. All districts, however, stated that citizen financial support was a definite objective which related to every aspect of the community information/relations program operation.

Section B

Section B of the secondary listing of questions asked successful program administrators for specific identification of components seen to be vital to the program. Also included in the second section were questions related to internal and external program components, the relationship of the program to the millage election process in the local district, and future trends which were perceived as affecting or changing the community information/relations program operation. Question four (which has four parts) is reviewed in this section.

The discussion which follows reviews successful community information/relations program administrators responses to question 4-a.

Question 4-a: Name and describe the most important and effective

community information/relations program components which ultimately influence voter support in your district.

Responses: The following components listed in no order of hierarchy were mentioned in response to this question: (1) programs promoting community involvement (e.g., citizen advisory committees, task forces, parent-teacher councils); (2) programs promoting staff involvement (e.g., staff advisory groups, community/staff dinners and presentations, staff recognition and appreciation programs, staff in-service programs); (3) community survey programs; (4) media relations and publications programs (e.g., coverage of school district events in the local media, school district newsletter, informational brochures); and (5) coordination of millage election programs and processes.

Also mentioned by all successful program administrators as being a component instrumental in influencing voter support was the operation of an adult and community education program. Although none of the administrators had direct control of adult and community education programs in their districts, all community information/relations systems had program linkages and consistent involvement with these operations. Most successful administrators described this relationship as essential to gain and maintain contact with non-parent groups and individuals.

Question 4-b responses are reviewed in the narrative which follows.

Question 4-b: If only 10 percent of the money you currently have available for your program were provided, what current program components would you operate to maintain the highest levels of community support?

Responses: In response to this question which indirectly asked for a prioritization of program components, most successful administrators suggested that they would maintain program components which create and maintain interpersonal contacts with the internal and external publics of their districts. Constant positive person-to-person contact, they related, was the least expensive and most effective means of maintaining community support.

Specifically cited in order of stated priority were: (1) programs promoting citizen involvement; (2) staff involvement and training activities; and (3) press and media relations programs. Administrators contended that these three program component areas were most vital in affecting citizen understanding, participation and, ultimately, support.

The information which follows was developed through responses to question 4-c on the secondary listing of questions.

Question 4-c: Regarding the internal and external components of your community information/relations program, what are more important and should receive greater emphasis?

Responses: All districts responded that consistent operation of both internal and external components were important in ultimately affecting citizen support. Four out of five suggested, however, that a well-trained, "image-aware" internal group (staff) who saw the need to maintain high levels of job performance and community understanding and involvement could influence citizen support far more than could the operation of any external components.

It was generally concluded that without a greater emphasis on the internal components of a program the desired image being directed to external publics by the local district might not be shared by staff members. This situation could result in counterproductive staff actions which could erode public acceptance, and ultimately, public support of the school district.

Another emphasis which resulted from discussions with successful program administrators dealing with this question, was the nature of internal publics themselves. It was suggested that one of the goals of a program operation was to expand the membership of what is referred to as the internal publics.

Parents, students, and district residents who are non-school employees, are generally perceived as members of external publics. Through intimate involvement and strong personal contacts with the school district, these elements can become self-perceived internal school district members who are solid advocates of district actions and policies. Thus, the membership of a district's internal public is expanded to include the aforementioned citizen advocates. At least three successful program administrators stated that the expansion of the internal public was seen as a vital program function.

The informational review which follows was developed from comments by successful program administrators to question 4-d.

Question 4-d: Describe the relationship between your program and the millage election process in this district.

Responses: Four of the five successful program administrators responded to this question by stating that the millage election process was a direct responsibility of their operation. All four respondents stated that included in this responsibility was the planning, organization, operation, and evaluation of both millage campaigns and elections.

The fifth district interviewed had an active role in millage campaign planning, but did not assume a coordinating role for the overall millage election program.

Section C

Section C of the secondary listing of questions asked successful community information/relations program administrators to state beliefs regarding the employment of an individual to coordinate a full-time system. Questions asking administrators why so few Michigan local school districts operated full-time programs, what importance was attached to staff participation in the operation of a program, how community information/relations districts would compare to traditional districts in election issue results reviewed during the study, and how the findings of the study which did not establish differences between community information/relations districts and traditional districts in regard to millage issue success could be explained, were also included in this section. Questions five through nine are reviewed in this section.

Question five responses are discussed in the narrative which follows.

Question 5: Do you feel all local school districts should employ an individual to specifically coordinate a community information/relations program?

Responses: All five successful program administrators stated the belief that local school districts could benefit most from a community information/relations program which operated on a full-time basis. All felt that to successfully administer the program to its peak efficiency, a full-time person should be employed.

Responses to question six of the secondary instrument are organized in the format which follows.

Question 6: According to most sources, only 14 of 530 local school districts in Michigan operate full-time community information/relations programs. Why is this so?

Responses: Reactions to this question from successful program administrators could be classified into three general areas. The first general response by administrators suggested that many districts operate the equivalent of a full-time program with the component responsibilities of the program divided among several individuals in a given district. In this type of structure, they stated, the basic program exists and operates without risking citizen or staff alienation by what could be perceived as the maintenance of additional administrative positions. The three successful program administrators all believed that this type of system was considerably less effective than a full-time operation but still could benefit the local school district.

The second general response by administrators cited that many

districts perceive programs as "typical public relations machines" which produce propaganda and distort facts. This negative sensitivity is reflected, they state, in the non-existence of the structure in most districts.

A third general response was that most school superintendents perceived no need for the development of a full-time system in the local school district. Successful program administrators suggested that most school superintendents are unsophisticated in the understanding of community information/relations operations and, therefore, do not see the benefits which could be derived from such programs. Two successful administrators offered that because this attitude is prevalent among local district superintendents in the state, it is in part to blame for the average tenure of less than three years served in the position by most superintendents.

Responses to question seven are reported in the discussion which follows.

Question 7: Do you feel that if one is assigned to coordinate a community/information relations program in a local school district the staff will assume the program is the responsibility of the administrator and will participate less in the program themselves?

Responses: All successful program administrators stated beliefs that suggested there was a natural tendency of local district staff members to assume that the responsibility for public relations activities belonged to the full-time administrator. All administrators added, however, that it was a primary responsibility of a program administrator to create and maintain widespread staff understanding of and

participation in the activities of the community information/relations program. Without participation of and support by the internal publics of a local school district, the gains which are produced by a program are minimal.

The narrative which follows discusses successful program administrator responses to question eight.

Question 8: In this study, millage election issue records of districts which operated full-time community information/relations programs were matched to the records of like districts which did not. Which set of districts would you speculate had the better millage issue passage rate?

Responses: Two of the five administrators who responded stated that operation of a full-time system did not necessarily guarantee millage issue success and did not speculate as to the results of the study. Three administrators believed that, given comparison groups of similar size, location, wealth, and general composition, that districts which operated full-time community information/relations programs would be more successful in passage of millage election issues than those that did not.

The narrative which follows reviews the responses of successful community information/relations program administrators to question nine.

Question 9: If I told you that the set of districts which did not operate full-time community information/relations programs exhibited a slightly better millage issue success record than that of districts which operated full-time programs, how would you respond?

What do you think are the reasons for this finding?

Responses: Although two successful program administrators were somewhat surprised with the study findings, three were not. Before offering perceptions as to why districts with full-time programs did not produce better millage issue success rates than those not operating full-time programs, most administrators questioned the structure of the study and matching of districts. When they were satisfied that the study approach was logical and seemingly sound, they offered the following reasons for the study findings:

1. Community information/relations programs are not identified as traditional structures of local school districts. The administrator of a program is also not viewed as having a defined role (with certain expectations of that role by staff and community) such as a building principal or superintendent. As a result of this non-traditional status on the part of the community information/relations administrator, the operation of the program and the acceptance of the program and administrator in the local district is varied at best. Because of this situation, the structure and quality of program components different greatly from district to district.

Successful program administrators suggested that where there existed no general understanding of the role of the community information/relations director and no clearly established expectations for the program, the effectiveness of the program would surely be hampered.

2. Components of full-time community information/relations

programs exist in many Michigan local school districts in part-time programs under the supervision of principals, personnel directors, community education directors, or other more traditional school administrators. Many of these part-time programs have been successful in promoting citizen understanding, participation and support in levels which compare favorably to those produced by full-time programs.

3. All factors which influence voter response cannot be controlled by the operation of a community information/relations system. A teachers' strike, an unpopular tenure case against an employee, or a severe budget cutting action might counteract the positive environment which is built and maintained by a full-time program. Factors of which local school districts have no control (e.g., local tax assessment increases) may also contribute to negative voter activity against local school districts.

The community support environment was seen as a setting which was difficult to influence initially, and even more difficult to influence continuously.

4. Levels of superintendent support and participation in full-time programs differ greatly from program to program. Without the continuous recognition and support of the community information/relations program by the chief executive of the local district, needed credibility and accompanying support are not obtained.

It was the expressed belief of administrators of successful programs that any of these factors, alone or in combination, could

undermine the operation of a full-time program and prompt less than successful results during millage elections.

Summary

Chapter IV presented and reviewed data collected which were related to the design of the study. The chapter was organized into three parts which discussed data collected by the primary review instrument, the secondary listing of questions and other sources.

Part One of the data analysis reviewed the results of the statistical tests. The findings of the statistical tests performed on all three research hypotheses indicated that there were no significant associations found between millage issue passage rates for community information/relations districts when compared to traditional districts during the comparison period. No relationships were found between the two groups of districts in respect to passage of renewal, additional, or overall millage issues from 1977-83.

Part Two of the analysis data discussed the findings of the primary survey instrument. Local school districts recognized as operating full-time programs were divided into two sub-groups for the review. Districts which operated systems but were not viewed as successful by the criteria established for that designation were identified as "general" community information/relations programs. Those districts which were identified as successful by meeting the criteria were referred to as "successful" community information/relations districts. A third sub-group was identified which included in its composition the membership of both general and successful districts

to report the averaged responses of both general and successful districts. This composite group was referred to as "total."

The rationale upon which this organization of responses was based was: (1) to establish data which would help identify what could be seen as the standard type of local school district which operated a community information/relations program; (2) to establish possible differences between those community information/relations programs identified as general and successful; and (3) to assist in the identification of model community information/relations system components of successful local school district programs.

Data were reported which revealed the standard type of local school district which operated a community information/relations program. It was found that the standard type of district had a total community population of approximately 86,462, a kindergarten through twelfth grade population of 16,225 students, and was approximately 37 square miles in size. This standard community information/relations district maintained an operating millage rate of 33.75 mills, a general fund expenditure total per pupil of \$2,523.75, state equalized value per pupil of \$57,852.74, an annual teacher salary average of \$23,709.84, and a total district budget of approximately \$34,790,209.00.

Almost three out of every four of these standard districts were from southeast Michigan. Over 80 percent were classified as suburban in community classification and held an above average socio-economic status. A majority of these districts experienced a considerable decline in student enrollment from 1976-1982. Length of current

superintendent service in the standard district was almost seven years. The average lifespan of the community information/relations program in the standard district was over nine years.

In review of data which discussed internal operating components of community information/relations programs, general and successful community information/relations districts reported the same or similar levels of use of staff news publications, regular staff briefings of board actions, staff study committees, staff recognition programs and required communications components in local district programs. A greater emphasis by successful districts as compared to general districts was placed upon the use of new employee orientation programs, total staff communication inservices activities, and staff opinion surveys. General districts placed greater emphasis on formal employee advisory committee and student advisory group use than did successful districts.

Data collected which discussed external operating components of community information/relations programs established general and successful districts as placing the same or similar emphasis upon the use of community newsletters, media contact and relations programs, adult and community education programs, a speakers bureau, informational brochures for district programs and activities, a newcomers kit, a senior citizens gold card program, citizen advisory committees, community opinion surveys and written district policy supporting the community information/relations program. The use of business leader luncheons/breakfasts, however, was shown to be held in higher regard by successful districts as compared to general districts.

Responses related to millage election programs on the primary instrument displayed general consistency between general and successful districts. Similar emphasis was placed by both district sub-groups upon the use of community information/relations program administrators to coordinate millage elections, and on the perceived positive effects that community information/relations program operation had on millage election results.

Part Three of the analysis of data reviewed the findings of the secondary listing of questions. These questions were asked of administrators in the five most successful community information/relations programs during indepth interviews to further establish standard operating components of successful district programs and to give greater depth and dimension to the nature and scope of these operations.

Responses to questions by successful program administrators revealed that full-time programs were initiated in districts to positively impact citizen support. Improvement in press relations, millage passage problems, the need for constant public contact and development of a means to deal with crisis situations were other reasons cited for program initiation. Stated as important by all successful districts was the situation of direct superintendent involvement in the development and maintenance of the community information/relations program in the local district.

The training and background of a majority of successful program administrators was in the media, both print and broadcast. It was cited that a balance of human, technical, and conceptual skills were

needed to be successful as a program administrator, as well as a constant updating of skills through conferences and training programs. Extensive knowledge of the school district and community, maintenance of key media contacts, and the faith and support of the superintendent and board were cited as other important background requirements.

A majority of successful program administrators reported that operation of the community information/relations system in the local school district was directly related to millage success and financial stability. Most successful programs had direct responsibilities for millage election programs in the local school district. Citizen understanding of the district and involvement in district affairs were recognized as vital in producing eventual citizen financial support. It was maintained that support could never be taken for granted in the local district but must be cultivated and nurtured by planned approaches of the community information/relations program.

It was stated by successful administrators that if a majority of persons living in the local school district actually voted, few school financial elections would be successful. Among the reasons given for this belief was the great difficulty in communicating and effectively involving the diverse elements of the community as well as the lack of ability of community information/relations programs to control all school-related occurrences. Several successful program administrators inferred that these reasons gave all the more emphasis to operating a full-time program so as to maintain constant support-building efforts.

Programs promoting community involvement (e.g., citizen advisory

committees, task forces, parent-teacher councils); programs promoting staff involvement (e.g., staff advisory groups, community/staff dinners and presentations, staff recognition and appreciation programs, staff inservice programs); community survey programs; media relations and publications programs (e.g., coverage of school district events in the local media, school district newsletter); informational brochures, and coordination of millage election programs and processes, were reported to be important community information/relations program elements in influencing community and, subsequently, voter support. Although none of the administrators had direct control of the adult and community education program in their districts, all community information/relations systems had program linkages and consistent involvement with these operations. Most successful administrators described this relationship as essential to gain and maintain contact with non-parent groups and individuals.

When asked to prioritize program components, most successful administrators suggested that those components which create and maintain interpersonal contacts with the internal and external publics of their district were most vital. Constant positive person-to-person contacts, they related, were the least expensive and most effective means of maintaining community support. Specifically cited examples in order of stated priority were: (1) programs promoting citizen involvement; (2) staff involvement and training activities; and (3) press and media relations programs. Administrators contended that these three program component areas were most vital in affecting citizen understanding, participation, and ultimately, support of the

local district.

Regarding the internal and external components of successful community information/relations programs, administrators stated that the internal emphasis had greater importance. It was generally concluded that without a greater emphasis on the internal components of a program the desired image being directed to external publics by the local district might not be shared by staff members. This situation could result in counterproductive staff actions which could erode public acceptance, and ultimately, public support of the school district. Expansion of internal publics to include students, parents, and citizens who have an intimate involvement in local school district affairs was also viewed as important.

All successful community information/relations program administrators perceived value in the employment of an individual to operate a full-time program. They saw as a primary role of the program administrator the recruitment of active involvement of all staff elements in the program. When asked for reasons why a large majority of Michigan local school districts did not operate a full-time system, successful administrators had several responses. One response stated that many districts have the equivalent of a full-time program but do not identify them as such and divide operating component responsibilities among several staff people. Another belief which was expressed was that many districts and particularly district superintendents, perceived programs in a negative sense rather than as potentially beneficial to the local district.

When given details related to the research hypotheses of the

study, a majority of successful program administrators speculated that districts with full-time programs would be more successful in passage of millage election issues than those without. After being informed that the data collected did not show this to be true, successful administrators suggested several reasons for the findings. One reason was a belief that the non-traditional status of the community information/relations program in the local district caused them to be poorly supported and therefore ineffective. Another reason which was speculated was that many of the districts used in the study to compare to the community information/relations districts had "hidden" full-time programs or part-time programs which were successful in promoting citizen financial support.

The inability of the community information/relations system to control all factors which influence voter response was seen to be another reason. The community support environment was seen as a setting which was difficult to influence initially, and even more difficult to influence continuously. Another reason which was reported cited that levels of superintendent support and participation in full-time programs differed greatly from program to program. Limited support and involvement by the local district's chief executive official limited credibility and harmed the effectiveness of many operations.

Chapter V discusses the conclusions and implications which can be drawn from the study findings.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The main purposes of Chapter V are to present a brief review of the problem, summarize the findings of the statistical tests performed on the collected data, report model components of successful community information/relations programs, discuss conclusions and implications which can be drawn from statistical results and the summary of collected data reported in Chapter IV, and review recommendations and suggestions for further research which resulted from the study.

Review of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to review the relationship between the operation of a community information/relations program and citizen support in local Michigan school districts. The research also identified and investigated model components of successful community information/relations programs.

The study compared the financial support records of local school districts identified as operating a community information/relations system with a comparable sample group of local school districts which did not operate a system during a five year period (1977-1982). This was done to determine whether districts operating community information/relations programs experienced greater citizen financial support during the comparison period than those that did not.

From review and analysis of the data collected, the study also identified and established five local school districts which operated successful community information/relations systems during the comparison period. An examination of the systems operated by these five districts was conducted to determine model program components which were common to the five districts operating successful programs.

There were three research hypotheses in this study:

Research Hypothesis 1 - There is a difference in renewal millage issue passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period.

Research Hypothesis 2 - There is a difference in additional millage issue passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period.

Research Hypothesis 3 - There is a difference in overall millage issue passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period.

Summary of Findings of Statistical Tests

The findings of the statistical tests performed on all three research hypotheses indicated that there were no significant relationships between millage issue passage rates for community information/relations districts when compared with traditional districts during the

comparison period. No associations were found between the two groups of districts in respect to passage of renewal, additional, or overall millage issues from 1977-1982.

Additional statistical tests were computed in an attempt to assess other aspects of the data collected. Tests measuring the significance of difference between proportions, and calculation of a Phi coefficient were done, without establishing an association. A Mann-Whitney U test was also conducted which established a difference between the median percentage of millage election issue success of the traditional school districts over that of the community information/relations districts. This finding, although not a formal part of the study, is discussed in the conclusions section of this chapter.

Model Components of Successful Community Information/Relations Programs

Among the 11 districts identified as operating full-time community information/relations programs, five Michigan local school districts were evaluated by use of selected criteria as being successful community information/relations programs. From responses to the primary review instrument of the study and the secondary listing of questions administered during indepth interviews, a number of model program components were identified by successful community information/relations program administrators.

Successful community information/relations systems reported five general areas which received the greatest emphasis in program

operation. These areas included: (1) programs promoting citizen involvement; (2) programs promoting staff involvement; (3) community survey programs; (4) media relations and publications programs; and (5) millage election programs. Specific components of these areas were identified by successful districts and were given priority rankings. These priority rankings of components were established using the responses of successful districts from the primary review instrument and secondary listing of questions of the study.

Table 10, which follows, presents the model components of community information/relations programs as reported by successful program administrators by segment of program and level of usual or consistent use.

Table 10
Model Components of Successful
Community Information/Relations Programs

Segment of CI/R Program	Program Component	Percentage of Usual or Consistent Use by Successful CI/R Districts
Internal	Staff Newsletter	80%
Internal	Board Action Reports to Staff	100%
Internal	New Employee Orientation Programs	80%
Internal	Formal Employee Advisory Group	40%
Internal	Employee Group Study Committees	100%

Table 10 (continued)

Segment of CI/R Program	Program Component	Percentage of Usual or Consistent Use by Successful CI/R Districts
Internal	Staff Recognition Awards/Programs	80%
Internal	Total Staff Communications Inservice Programs	80%
Internal	Staff Opinion Surveys	80%
Internal/ External	Student Advisory Groups	40%
Internal	Required Communications Component in Major District Programs	80%
External	Community Newsletter	100%
External	Media Contact/Relations Program	100%
External	Adult and Community Education Program	100%
External	Speaker's Bureau	40%
External	Business Leader Luncheon/Breakfast	80%
External	Informational Brochures	80%
External	Newcomer's Kits	80%
External	Senior Citizen Gold Card Program	80%
External	Citizen Advisory Committees	100%
External	Community Opinion Surveys	80%
Internal/ External	Written District Communications Policy	80%
Internal/ External	Millage Election Program Coordination	80%

Use of program components in addition to those reviewed in Table 10 were identified by successful community information/relations program administrators. These components were reported by individual districts and were seen to be unique to a single program rather than indigenous to most successful district programs.

Conclusions and Implications

The following conclusions are drawn based upon the findings of the study which were reported and summarized in Chapter IV.

1. Community information/relations systems are seen to have impact on voter support in selected local school districts, but not among all districts which operate them.

No association was found between millage issue passage rates for community information/relations districts when compared to traditional districts during the comparison period. At least five of the 11 community information/relations districts reviewed, however, were seen as successful. These districts passed 70 percent of all financial issues attempted during the comparison period, had a 100 percent passage rate of either renewal, additional, or bond issues during the comparison period offered independently of other issues, and exceeded state averages in the passage of overall millage issues.

All of the successful districts stated that they developed a full-time community information/relations program for similar reasons. Responses to questions by administrators of successful programs revealed that full-time programs were initiated in districts to

positively impact citizen support. Improvements in press relations, millage passage problems, the need for constant public contact and developing a means to deal with crisis situations were other reasons cited for program initiation. The successful administrators stated that the operation of the program which listened to, informed, and involved district residents in the ongoing operation of a local school district, contributed greatly to financial support stability. Without the operation of a program, these administrators concluded, citizen understanding, involvement, and support levels would be lower and would, therefore, affect financial support.

Administrators of successful programs also stated that where there existed no general understanding of the role of the community information/relations director and no clearly established expectations for the program, the effectiveness of the program was limited. Developing acceptance and support for the community information/relations program from internal and external publics, establishing a typically non-traditional local school district operation as a vital district component, was reported to be a primary responsibility by successful program administrators.

Differences were established between program operations of successful systems and other local school districts which maintained a full-time program. Successful program administrators reported higher levels of usual or consistent use of new employee orientation programs, staff recognition and awards programs, total staff communications in-service training programs, staff opinion surveys, and business leader luncheons/breakfasts than did other districts which operated community

information/relations programs.

In light of the negative trends observed by the decline of voter support for school financial elections statewide, it would be negligent of this study not to suggest that operation of a community information/relations system in some districts has contributed to citizen financial support. On a group basis, financial support levels of community information/relations districts are not significantly different from traditional districts. On an individual basis, however, some districts which operate full-time programs have consistently produced successful millage election results.

The implications suggested by these findings are that local school districts should not discount the possibility of operating a full-time community information/relations program based on the results of the testing of the research hypotheses of the study. Successful district programs should be further reviewed in order that the body of knowledge regarding the operation of genuinely successful programs and the local school district environment in which they exist, be expanded. This expanded knowledge would seemingly have profound impact on districts giving serious consideration to the development of a community information/relations program.

2. Districts which operate full-time community information/relations systems are not representative of a majority of Michigan local school districts,

Identifying data reported from districts which operated community information/relations systems revealed that these districts were not representative of a majority of Michigan local school districts. It

was found that the standard type of district which operated a system had a total community population of approximately 86,482, a kindergarten through twelfth grade population of 16,225 students, and was approximately 37 square miles in size. The standard community information/relations district maintained an operating millage rate of 33.75 mills, a general fund expenditure total per pupil of \$2,523.75, state equalized value per pupil of \$57,852.79, an annual teacher salary average of \$23,709.84, and a total district budget of approximately \$34,790,209.00.

Almost three out of every four of these standard districts were from southeast Michigan. Over 80 percent were classified as a suburban community and held an above average socio-economic status. A majority of these districts experienced a considerable decline in student enrollment from 1976-1982. Length of current superintendent service in the standard district was almost seven years. The average lifespan of the community information/relations program in the standard district was over nine years.

An evaluation of some of the data which identified the type of local school district that operated a community information/relations program reveals further the limited comparability of these districts to a majority of Michigan school districts. Information provided by the 1980-81 Michigan Department of Education Bulletin 1014 allowed the investigator the ability to rank standard community information/relations districts in comparison to other state local school districts. The results of this review established that the standard district operating a full-time program ranked among the top 17 percent of state districts in student population, was among the top 11 percent of state

districts in annual teacher salary, ranked among the top 24 percent of Michigan school districts in state equalized value per pupil, and in the top 42 percent of total annual expenditures per pupil rankings.

After evaluation of the identifying factors of districts which operated systems, it became evident that these districts were not representative of a majority of Michigan local school districts. The implications these findings present to the study suggest that districts seeking to develop community information/relations programs should carefully review the comparability of their district to those which operate systems before attempting implementation of a program. Demographic composition, financial status, and socio-economic factors, among other elements, should all be reviewed and considered before acceptance is given to the belief that the operation of a program will produce results in one district similar to those of another.

3. Superintendent support and participation is essential if the community information/relations system is to be effective in the local school district.

In discussion of the basis for development and/or continuation of a full-time community information/relations program in the local school district, all successful program administrators cited direct participation by the district superintendent. They stated that the superintendent was either directly involved with the development of a program or in the maintenance of its daily operation. All successful administrators interviewed, with the exception of one, were members of the superintendent's cabinet in the local school district. Their importance to the district in the estimation of the superintendent was underscored by

the status of this position.

Due to the non-traditional status of the administrative role and the existence of a formal community information/relations program in the local district, limited credibility and support are seen to be directed to the program in its initial stages by district staff and community. Generally, a distorted, "Madison Avenue public relations image" was attached to a formal program due to the standard beliefs held by many regarding the concept and process of community information/relations operations. Acceptance and approval of the program by the membership of both the internal and external publics was gained, when value was seen in, and positive benefits were produced by, the program.

Visible acceptance and participation in the activities of a community information/relations program by the district superintendent directs attention and credibility to the operation. In the eyes of the publics which are involved with the local school district, the chief executive official's actions and relationships to the program will establish the speed and level at which general acceptance and support of the program will be gained.

It was noted in the study that the average term of superintendent service in local districts which had community information/relations programs was over nine years. This was compared to the average tenure of less than three years for Michigan local school superintendents. It was seen that the stability of the superintendent in his/her role directed additional credibility, and subsequently, acceptance of programs by staff and community members.

Successful program administrators reported that once programs

were accepted by district internal and external publics, they were able to direct positive community sentiment toward the superintendent. Conditions, programs, and activities which were developed or highlighted by successful community information/relations systems were seen to be, at least in part, related to the leadership and direction of the local school district by the superintendent.

The implications these findings suggest are that visible relationships exist between the success of a community information/relations system and the status and tenure of the local school district superintendent. These relationships should be reviewed carefully and at length by districts which seek to implement programs.

4. All factors which related to voter support in local school districts cannot be affected or controlled by community information/relations systems.

Overall, administrators of successful community information/relations programs generally reported that despite some features unique to each district, citizen financial support was never assumed and must be cultivated and nurtured by planned approaches. Even after substantial effort was directed to the development and maintenance of citizen support through operation of a program, many variables and conditions were seen to have the potential to negatively impact upon the support base established.

Local school district millage election victories would be few, reported successful program administrators in the study, if a majority of registered voters in local school districts voted consistently. Two major reasons were given for this response. One dealt with the great difficulty in reaching and actually communicating with the many

and diverse groups in the community. The second reason given was that, no matter how sophisticated the community information/relations system, all school-related occurrences which affect community opinion could not be controlled or influenced.

Successful administrators stated that one of the great challenges a program faced was the need to involve and provide information to those who do not have children in the public schools. This group comprises the majority of most school district populations today and is growing. They also suggested that many of the factors which influenced community opinion are outside of their control and are not necessarily altered by the positive relationships the programs create and maintain.

Several administrators suggested that the factors of not being able to reach all groups and not being able to control or influence occurrences which were related to the local school district, further displayed the need for a full-time community information/relations program to cultivate and maintain support from those citizen groups and individuals who do participate in school elections. Without the program operation, they inferred, the greater the size of the uninformed, uninvolved, and potentially negative voter group.

Consistently reflected by successful community information/relations program administrators during indepth interviews was the belief that all factors which influence voter response could not be controlled by the operation of a system. Examples of a teachers' strike, an unpopular tenure case against an employee, or a severe budget cutting action were given as situations which might counteract the positive environment built and maintained by a full-time program. Factors were cited in which local school districts had no control (e.g., local tax assessment

increases) that also contributed to negative voter reactions against local school districts.

The implications suggested by these findings and conclusions are that local school districts should not look solely to the development of a community information/relations system to end financial election failures. Most program operations directly relate to informing and involving citizens in the daily operation of the local school district. Should this activity be substantial and consistent, eventual citizen financial support can be seen to result. Whether community information/relations systems should be looked upon as a panacea for dealing with a lack of millage election success is another question.

The literature presented revealed that literally hundreds of factors, conditions and occurrences influence citizen attitudes regarding local school district support. The operation of a community information/relations system and the citizen support the program is capable of producing, can affect to some degree these elements. It is an inaccurate belief at best, however, that system operations can successfully counteract all negative conditions in the local school district.

5. Part-time community information/relations programs are seen to have impact on voter support in selected local school districts.

The findings of the statistical tests of the study suggested that no differences were found in millage issue passage rates between full-time community information/relations districts and traditional districts during the comparison period. It was also noted that a

Mann-Whitney U test was conducted which established a difference between the median percentage of millage issue success of traditional districts over that of community information/relations districts in the study.

Although not a formal part of the study, districts which were selected as members of the traditional school district grouping were contacted and interviewed as to the existence of components of community information/relations programs. Many of the districts contacted confirmed the existence of some of the components of full-time systems operating in traditional districts. All, however, stated that no full-time program existed and, at best, a part-time administrative emphasis was directed to oversee these component operations.

Regarding the millage approval successes of members of the traditional group, administrators of successful programs stated the belief that many districts operated the equivalent of a full-time program with the component responsibilities of the program divided among several individuals in a given district. In this type of structure, they stated, the basic program existed and operated without risking citizen or staff alienation by what could be perceived as the maintenance of additional administrative positions. Although no central coordinator of the program existed in this type of system, it was speculated that this role was assumed by the district superintendent or an administrative designee.

Successful administrators also suggested that many community information/relations operations were present but not obvious in local school districts. Personnel directors, principals, and many community education directors were given the equivalent of full-time operation

responsibilities for community information/relations programs without conspicuous designation of the role or title for this responsibility.

The findings of the study and the expressed beliefs of successful community information/relations administrators lead one to believe there is a basis for the existence of part-time programs which produce successful millage issue passage results in local districts. The implications this conclusion suggests are that programs of part-time status need to be identified, defined on a standard component basis, and studied as to the effects these operations have on citizen support. Differences need to be established between these programs and full-time operations as well.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are derived from the conclusions of the study.

1. Local school districts in Michigan need to conduct serious assessment of their community information/relations efforts, particularly in regard to the development and maintenance of citizen understanding and support.

2. Michigan school districts need to extensively review the structure, composition, and operation of community information/relations programs and how they relate to developing and maintaining community support in the local school district.

3. Component operations of community information/relations systems should be implemented in Michigan local

school districts under planned programs coordinated by trained personnel for the expressed purpose of informing, involving, and listening to internal and external publics on an ongoing basis.

As demonstrated in this study, the operation of a community information/relations program has impacted positively citizen support in selected local school districts. By conducting a careful analysis of local conditions and developing a greater understanding of the composition and structure of community information/relations program components, careful, directed implementation of selected components, benefits related to maintained and increased citizen support can be experienced by Michigan local school districts.

The difficult period of negative citizen attitude and financial support currently being experienced by a large majority of Michigan districts affords many the opportunity to turn to components of community information/relations programs to deal with current conditions. It is possible that component operations of these systems can serve as major strategies for solution of at least a portion of these problems.

Future Research

There is an obvious need for more research to be conducted to address the impact that community information/relations programs have on citizen support in local school districts. Although this study adds to the existing knowledge regarding these operations, little empirical data exist which establish correlations between community

information/relations programs and the results they are believed to produce. It would appear that the existing body of knowledge regarding community information/relations systems is riddled with conjecture and normative error.

Attention and further review should also be given to several other areas suggested by the study. Among these areas are the following:

1. The relationship of local school district size and millage success in Michigan.
2. The component and structural definitions of part-time community information/relations programs in Michigan and the degree to which these programs are effective.
3. The relationship of the level of superintendent involvement in the program and millage success in local school districts.
4. A comparison of millage issue success records of community information/relations districts before and after the development of a program.

It is the sincere hope of the investigator that the findings of this study will contribute meaningfully to the field of school and community relations and communications. Through a greater understanding of local school district community information/relations programs, citizens and school personnel alike will realize the importance of these operations and the contributions these programs can make toward financial stability. The task of constantly developing a climate of informed and purposeful interest is one which is shared by all who have contact with the educational process,

APPENDIX A

Districts Selected for Study
with Comparative Criteria Displaying
Comparison Groups
(1980-81 M.D.E. 1014)

Districts Selected for Study
with Comparative Criteria Displaying
Comparison Groups
(1980-81 M.D.E. 1014)

District	Enrollment Total Rank	S.E.V. Per Pupil Total Rank	Total Expenditures Per Pupil		Average Teacher Salary		A	Mills V	T
			Total	Rank	Total	Rank			
1. x Benton Harbor	8,712 (31)	24,314 (509)	2238.18	(146)	17,983	(333)	8.18	23.00	31.72
o Muskegon	7,787 (40)	26,891 (494)	2849.00	(31)	20,606	(161)	8.30	25.50	33.80
Highland Park	8,923 (32)	16,378 (528)	2315	(122)	21,443	(124)	8.90	28.00	36.90
Beecher	4,842 (83)	23,160 (516)	2296	(128)	24,429	(48)	8.11	22.75	30.68
2. x Birmingham	9,392 (29)	110,987 (18)	3562	(5)	28,503	(5)	9.54	25.80	*29.50
o Bloomfield Hills	7,283 (42)	109,883 (19)	3457	(10)	24,395	(50)	9.54	21.99	27.20
Grosse Pointe	8,741 (34)	93,970 (26)	3269	(14)	28,165	(8)	8.65	26.55	31.14
Oak Park	3,901 (111)	72,627 (72)	3763	(2)	23,500	(20)	9.54	28.50	38.04
3. x Brighton	5,588 (65)	43,388 (239)	2040	(227)	20,789	(151)	8.60	23.40	32.00
Chippewa Valley	6,673 (51)	45,407 (215)	2138	(181)	20,538	(168)	8.58	25.95	34.49
Howell	6,224 (58)	43,868 (235)	2030	(233)	23,178	(74)	8.60	21.52	29.32
o Lake Orion	5,964 (60)	38,798 (304)	2139	(180)	20,827	(148)	9.54	21.50	30.11
4. x Dearborn	13,977 (16)	120,599 (11)	2522	(7)	26,612	(18)	8.90	21.00	26.49
o Farmington	11,705 (19)	74,998 (62)	2992	(25)	25,360	(32)	9.54	27.75	33.53
Ann Arbor	15,691 (13)	84,269 (47)	3099	(20)	23,658	(64)	11.22	23.33	32.32
Troy	11,636 (20)	75,423 (66)	2450	(88)	25,262	(37)	10.95	18.80	29.25
5. x E. Lansing	4,612 (90)	58,554 (125)	2814	(34)	20,847	(147)	9.00	30.60	39.60
Fitzgerald	3,644 (123)	64,184 (103)	2542	(69)	24,142	(56)	9.58	25.25	34.83
o Grosse Ile	2,153 (235)	62,338 (111)	2794	(37)	25,170	(41)	6.80	39.00	41.80
Romeo	4,727 (87)	50,122 (163)	2276	(135)	21,331	(127)	8.58	26.00	38.36
E. Grand Rapids	2,382 (212)	50,426 (162)	2453	(87)	22,872	(82)	10.10	29.80	38.43
6. x Flint	35,113 (3)	34,748 (373)	2951	(28)	22,420	(93)	9.15	33.80	41.00
o Saginaw	17,759 (10)	34,384 (378)	2505	(77)	23,323	(72)	10.05	21.75	31.80
Lansing	27,443 (5)	37,064 (330)	2587	(54)	20,847	(147)	9.00	30.60	39.60
Pontiac	20,130 (9)	38,593 (315)	2761	(40)	25,791	(24)	9.54	21.75	31.29
Taylor	17,279 (11)	32,349 (405)	2455	(84)	25,677	(26)	8.65	27.10	35.61
7. x Livonia	22,365 (7)	62,747 (109)	2629	(53)	27,910	(10)	8.90	27.80	36.7
o Royal Oak	9,624 (27)	63,184 (107)	3074	(22)	27,658	(11)	9.54	29.00	37.91
Wayne-Westland	22,266 (8)	27,295 (478)	2586	(56)	28,756	(4)	8.65	32.00	40.00
Berkley	5,375 (71)	46,799 (199)	2571	(61)	25,132	(43)	9.54	30.50	38.25

District	Enrollment		S.E.V. Per Pupil		Total Expenditures Per Pupil	Average Teacher Salary	Mills		T
	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total Rank	Total Rank	A	V	
Rochester	10,126	(23)	61,789	(114)	2260	19,489 (231)	9.54	24.47	32.91
Carmen-Ainsworth	6,640	(53)	66,770	(91)	2759	25,288 (36)	9.15	29.00	37.11
8. x Plymouth	17,269	(12)	47,842	(180)	2241	23,557 (68)	8.90	26.36	35.26
Portage	9,323	(30)	44,577	(220)	2065	21,942 (105)	9.0	23.20	32.20
South Lyon	4,214	(100)	47,073	(195)	1997	18,466 (296)	9.54	21.50	30.11
Alpena	7,277	(43)	47,385	(188)	2087	22,027 (48)	7.98	20.25	28.23
o Avondale	3,024	(159)	48,137	(175)	2314	24,577 (57)	9.54	27.75	35.27
9. x Utica	28,216	(4)	41,087	(263)	2060	22,521 (88)	9.58	24.45	32.55
o Millford Huron Val.	10,130	(22)	40,931	(264)	2127	21,873 (109)	9.54	24.40	33.00
Waterford	15,402	(14)	39,728	(287)	2306	23,258 (73)	9.54	22.25	29.77
Gibraltar	4,104	(102)	40,412	(274)	2113	23,729 (61)	8.65	27.35	36.00
Jackson	9,987	(25)	41,856	(254)	2414	23,538 (69)	7.65	26.25	33.90
10. x Warren Consolidated	25,918	(6)	55,622	(135)	2425	25,960 (23)	9.58	24.37	33.95
o Walled Lake	10,582	(21)	52,904	(149)	2377	23,418 (47)	9.54	24.00	32.23
West Bloomfield	5,167	(74)	72,459	(74)	2510	25,323 (44)	9.54	24.59	30.47
Bay City	12,289	(18)	52,513	(151)	2211	23,124 (76)	8.39	24.3	32.54
11. x Wyoming	7,236	(44)	36,652	(338)	2117	24,400 (49)	10.10	21.20	31.30
Kentwood	7,177	(45)	44,173	(228)	2088	20,105 (195)	9.0	20.10	28.98
Roseville	8,660	(36)	40,883	(265)	2474	27,493 (13)	9.58	25.19	34.77
o Clarkston	6,652	(52)	37,858	(321)	2128	22,503 (89)	9.54	20.79	28.48
Warren Woods	5,752	(64)	37,835	(322)	2572	22,951 (80)	9.58	27.50	36.66
East Detroit	8,070	(39)	36,700	(336)	2479	27,493 (13)	9.58	25.19	34.77
Belleville	7,133	(46)	42,573	(247)	2353	21,183 (132)	8.65	25.85	34.50
Rockford	4,028	(104)	35,187	(365)	1844	21,939 (106)	9.00	19.00	27.89
Fraser	6,630	(54)	40,843	(186)	2284	25,339 (33)	9.22	27.50	36.54
Davison	5,574	(66)	30,053	(441)	1983	22,207 (96)	8.11	21.89	29.87

x identifies districts operating full time community information/relations system

o identifies districts not operating full time community information/relations system selected for study comparison

* total mills approved not levied by district

T - total mills

A - allocated mills

V - voted mills

APPENDIX B

Districts Selected for Study
with Comparative Criteria (1980-81 M.D.E. 1014)

Districts Selected for Study
with Comparative Criteria
(1980-81 M.D.E. 1014)

District	Enrollment	S.E.V. Per Pupil	Total Expenditures Per Pupil		Average Teacher Salary		A	Mills V	T
			Total	Rank	Total	Rank			
1. x Benton Harbor	8,712 (31)	24,314 (509)	2238.18	(146)	17,983	(333)	8.18	23.00	31.72
Muskegon	7,787 (40)	26,891 (494)	2849.00	(31)	20,606	(161)	8.30	25.50	33.80
2. x Birmingham	9,392 (29)	110,987 (18)	3563 (5)		28,503 (5)		9.54	25.80	*29.50
Bloomfield Hills	7,283 (42)	109,883 (19)	3457 (10)		24,395 (50)		9.54	21.99	27.20
3. x Brighton	5,588 (65)	43,388 (239)	2040 (227)		20,789 (151)		8.60	23.40	32.00
Lake Orion	5,964 (60)	38,798 (304)	2139 (180)		20,827 (148)		9.54	21.50	30.11
4. x Dearborn	13,977 (16)	120,599 (11)	3522 (7)		26,612 (18)		8.90	21.00	26.49
Farmington	11,705 (19)	74,998 (62)	2992 (25)		25,360 (32)		9.54	27.75	33.53
5. x E. Lansing	4,612 (90)	58,554 (125)	2814 (34)		20,847 (147)		9.00	30.60	39.60
Grosse Ile	2,153 (235)	62,338 (111)	2794 (37)		25,170 (41)		6.80	39.00	41.80
6. x Flint	35,113 (3)	34,748 (373)	2951 (28)		22,420 (93)		9.15	33.80	41.00
Saginaw	17,759 (10)	34,384 (378)	2505 (77)		23,323 (72)		10.05	21.75	31.80
7. x Livonia	22,365 (7)	62,747 (109)	2629 (53)		27,910 (10)		8.90	27.80	36.7
Royal Oak	9,624 (27)	63,184 (107)	3074 (22)		27,658 (11)		9.54	29.00	37.91
8. x Plymouth-Canton	17,269 (12)	47,842 (180)	2241 (144)		23,557 (68)		8.90	26.36	35.26
Avondale	3,024 (159)	48,137 (175)	2314 (123)		24,577 (57)		9.54	27.75	35.27
9. x Utica	28,216 (4)	41,087 (263)	2060 (224)		22,521 (88)		9.58	24.45	32.55
Millford Huron Val.	10,130 (22)	40,931 (265)	2127 (184)		21,873 (109)		9.54	24.40	33.00
10. x Warren Con.	25,918 (6)	55,622 (135)	2425 (91)		25,960 (23)		9.58	24.37	33.95
Walled Lake	10,582 (21)	52,904 (149)	2377 (97)		23,418 (47)		9.54	24.00	32.23
11. x Wyoming	7,236 (44)	36,652 (338)	2117 (188)		24,400 (49)		10.10	21.20	31.30
Clarkston	6,652 (52)	37,858 (321)	2128 (183)		22,503 (89)		9.54	20.79	28.48

x identifies districts operating full time community information/relations system

* total mills approved not levied by district

T - total mills
A - allocated mills
V - voted mills

APPENDIX C

Primary Instrument of Study



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Lansing, Michigan 48909

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
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Dear

This is a letter to introduce Mr. Stanley Olson, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership at Western Michigan University. Mr. Olson is doing research in the area of community information/relations systems. It is anticipated that the results of his research will be beneficial to local school districts seeking to improve their internal and external communication efforts.

Mr. Olson's study will require two contacts with Michigan school districts which operate full-time public relations programs. The first contact will be through the use of a general survey. The second will be a personal visit to selected districts from the aforementioned group. From these contacts it is hoped that a better understanding of local school district communications/public relations programs will be achieved.

Enclosed you will find a brief survey for your completion. It should take approximately twenty minutes to complete. Included is a stamped, pre-addressed envelope for return of the completed survey for tabulation. We ask that you share your information with Mr. Olson to allow for achievement of an accurate and thorough study. Please return this survey by Friday, December 17, 1982.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Philip E. Runkel
Dr. Phillip Runkel
Superintendent of Instruction
Michigan Department of Education

William Banach
Dr. William Banach, President
National School Public Relations Assoc.

Ned S. Hubbell
Mr. Ned Hubbell, Director
Project Outreach

Donald C. Weaver
Dr. Donald C. Weaver, Director
W.M.U. Community Leadership Training Center

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
 Department of Educational Leadership
 Community Leadership Training Center

KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN
 49008

Dear

Over the past decade a general decline of citizen financial support for Michigan public schools has been recorded. It was reported by the School Support Services division of the Michigan Department of Education that within the state during the 1981-82 school year 88 percent of millage renewal elections were successful, but only 27 percent of financial issues requesting additional monies and 47 percent of combination (renewal-additional) issues were passed. These figures show a striking change from those collected in 1973-74. In that year 95 percent of all renewals, 59 percent of all additional issues and 77 percent of all combination issues were approved by Michigan voters.

For years, educators have recognized the fact that local school district support is directly dependent upon the attitudes and opinions of the voting public. They have established that if the local community does not possess a knowledge of school programs, personnel, needs and conditions, financial support declines.

As a result of declining financial support and the fact that local school districts, for better or worse, are tied to the millage election as their only means of increasing school revenues, a number of Michigan school districts operate full-time community information/relations systems. Operations of these systems are seen as a way to keep district citizens informed and involved and, therefore, supportive of the local district on an ongoing basis.

In a time when financial support for Michigan public school systems is at its lowest point in a decade and public opinion regarding public schools is seen by school officials as being far from desirable, it would seem logical that a review of the state's local school district community information/relations systems be undertaken. In partial fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Education, I am preparing a study to not only review these programs, but also to attempt to related their impact on citizen support in local districts.

Because this study specifically is designed to review districts which have a community information/relations system, not all school districts will be contacted. Your selection for review is based upon your operation of one of these systems on, what appears to be, a full-time basis. Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is very important if this study is to be meaningful and reliable. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will have implications for many districts seeking to improve their communication programs.

Please take about 20 minutes of your time to complete the attached questionnaire. Should you have questions or concerns about the instrument, please contact me at (313) 752-4516. I ask that you return the completed questionnaire by December 17, 1982 in the attached pre-addressed, stamped envelope.

The time you take with this study is most appreciated. If you would like to have a summary of the results directed to you after completion of the study, please check the space which appears on the last page of the survey instrument.

Sincerely,

Stan Olson
Ed.D. Candidate
Western Michigan University

COMMUNITY INFORMATION/RELATIONS PROGRAM ASSESSMENT
PRIMARY CONTACT INSTRUMENT

Instructions: The statements which follow attempt to assess the community information/relations program in your school district. Please complete all questions, either by checking (✓) the appropriate response or by providing the requested information.

Please complete and return in pre-addressed, stamped envelope by December 17, 1982.

		SECTION A - District Classification Data	
(1)	(2)		
		Date:	_____
(1)		School District Name:	_____
(2)		Name of Superintendent:	_____ Telephone: () _____
(3)		Name of Public Relations Administrator:	_____ Telephone: () _____
(4)		1981-82 K-12 Enrollment:	_____ 1981-82 Total District Population: _____
(5)		1981-82 Operating Millage Rates (Allocated):	_____ (Voted): _____ (Total): _____
(6)		1981-82 Number of Schools in System: Elementary:	_____ Jr. High/Middle: _____
			Sr. High: _____ Total: _____
(7)		1981-82 Total General Fund Expenditure Per Pupil:	_____
(8)		1981-82 District Size (square miles):	_____
(9)		1981-82 Total District Budget:	_____
(10)		Classification of District	
		_____ 1) Rural	
		_____ 2) Suburban	
		_____ 3) Urban	
		_____ 4) Other (please specify)	_____
(11)		Total Community Socio-Economic Status	
		_____ 1) Very low	
		_____ 2) Low	
		_____ 3) Slightly below average	
		_____ 4) Average	
		_____ 5) Slightly above average	
		_____ 6) High	
		_____ 7) Very high	
(12)		During the years 1976-1981 your school district's kindergarden through 12 (non-adult education) population has:	
		_____ 1) Declined considerably (lost over 500 students)	
		_____ 2) Declined (lost less than 500 students)	
		_____ 3) Stayed about the same	
		_____ 4) Grew	
		_____ 5) Grew considerably (gained more than 250 students)	

- (13) Number of years your present superintendent has been in the district as superintendent.
- ☐ 1) 1-2 years
 - ☐ 2) 3-4 years
 - ☐ 3) 5-7 years
 - ☐ 4) 8-9 years
 - ☐ 5) 10 years or more
- (14) Number of years your school district has employed (on a full-time basis) a community information/relations administrator.
- ☐ 1) Our district does not employ an individual whose sole task is the operation of a community information/relations system.
 - ☐ 2) 1-2 years
 - ☐ 3) 3-4 years
 - ☐ 4) 5-7 years
 - ☐ 5) 8-9 years
 - ☐ 6) 10 years or more
- (15) The first year your school district employed (on a full-time basis) a community information/relations administrator. 19____
- (16) Number of years a full-time community information/relations program has been in operation in your school district?
- ☐ 1) Our district does not operate a community information/relations system on a full-time basis.
 - ☐ 2) 1-2 years
 - ☐ 3) 3-4 years
 - ☐ 4) 5-7 years
 - ☐ 5) 8-9 years
 - ☐ 6) 10 years or more
- (17) The first year your school district operated a community information/relations system on a full-time basis. 19____

SECTION B - Internal Community Information/Relations Program Review

- (18) Does your school district distribute a staff newsletter on a regular basis to all employees?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
 - ☐ 2) Occasionally
 - ☐ 3) Usually
 - ☐ 4) Consistently
- (19) Are reports of board actions promptly and regularly issued to staff and community leaders?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
 - ☐ 2) Occasionally
 - ☐ 3) Usually
 - ☐ 4) Consistently

- (20) Does your school district operate a new employee orientation program each year?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
 - ☐ 2) Occasionally
 - ☐ 3) Usually
 - ☐ 4) Consistently
- (21) Does your school district maintain an advisory group of employees that meets on a regular basis with the superintendent?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
 - ☐ 2) Occasionally
 - ☐ 3) Usually
 - ☐ 4) Consistently
- (22) Does your school district maintain administrative/staff/board study committees to provide opportunities for real staff involvement in issues affecting the school program?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
 - ☐ 2) Occasionally
 - ☐ 3) Usually
 - ☐ 4) Consistently
- (23) Does your school district maintain an organized staff recognition and award program?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
 - ☐ 2) Occasionally
 - ☐ 3) Usually
 - ☐ 4) Consistently
- (24) Has your school district provided a communications inservice program for both current certified and classified staff?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
 - ☐ 2) Occasionally
 - ☐ 3) Usually
 - ☐ 4) Consistently
- (25) Does your school district occasionally survey the district staff to solicit their input and opinions on key issues?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
 - ☐ 2) Occasionally
 - ☐ 3) Usually
 - ☐ 4) Consistently
- (26) Has your school district maintained a student advisory council at the secondary level to allow student involvement in the activities of their school district?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
 - ☐ 2) Occasionally
 - ☐ 3) Usually
 - ☐ 4) Consistently
- (27) Does your school district require a communications component in all major programs which shows goals, objectives, and activities to both internal and external publics?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
 - ☐ 2) Occasionally
 - ☐ 3) Usually
 - ☐ 4) Consistently

SECTION C - External Community Information/Relations Program Review

- (28) Does your school district issue on a regular basis a community newsletter to all households in the district?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently
- (29) Has your school district maintained an organized program to get news about the district to radio, television, and print media?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently
- (30) Does your school district have an adult/community education program which provides programs and services to residents of all ages?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently
- (31) Does your school district operate a speakers bureau to address community and parent groups on topics related to education and your school system?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently
- (32) Does your school district conduct business leader luncheons/breakfasts to familiarize community leaders and non-parents with your schools and programs?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently
- (33) Has your school district developed program brochures that can be distributed to staff, parents, and community members which explain different district programs and operations?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently
- (34) Does your school district have a newcomers kit which provides information about your district to newcomers?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently

- (35) Does your school district maintain a discount/"gold card" program for senior citizens, allowing them to get free or reduced price admissions to school activities?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently
- (36) Does your school district make use of citizen advisory committees to study and make recommendations regarding issues and concerns of the district?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently
- (37) Does your school district conduct regular community opinion surveys to find out what citizens are thinking and what they want from their schools?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently
- (38) Does your school district have written policy supporting the operation of a community information/relations program?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently

SECTION D - Millage Program Review

- (39) Does your school district's full-time community information/relations program administrator direct school millage campaigns for the district?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently
- (40) Has the operation of a full-time community information/relations system in your district affected positively district millage election results?
- ☐ 1) Not at all
☐ 2) Occasionally
☐ 3) Usually
☐ 4) Consistently

(41)

School District: _____

Please record all elections conducted by the school district during the school years listed in the far left column. Include all operational and bonded indebtedness issues, whether they were renewal or for additional millage elections.

Period requested from July 1, 1970 to June 30, 1982

Date and Year	Operational or Bonded Indebtedness	Renewal or Additional Millage	Amount of Millage Issue	Passed or Failed
1981-82				
1980-81				
1979-80				
1978-79				
1977-78				
1976-77				
1975-76				
1974-75				
1973-74				
1972-73				
1971-72				
1970-71				

Thank you. Your time and effort are very much appreciated!

If you would like a summary of the results of this study mailed to you, please indicate so by placing a check mark (✓) in the space provided. ()

APPENDIX D

Secondary Listing of Questions Asked to Administrators of Successful Community Information/Relations Programs

SECONDARY LISTING OF QUESTIONS ASKED
TO ADMINISTRATORS OF
SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY INFORMATION/RELATIONS PROGRAMS

- Section A -

- 1) What was the reason this school district developed a full-time community information/relations program?
- 2) Describe your training and experience and how your background relates to the operation of the community information/relations program.
- 3) In regard to community support and millage passage success:
 - a) Would your district be as successful millage-wise without the operation of a full-time community information/relations program?
 - b) To what extent do you feel the operation of a program contributes to financial support stability in this district?
 - c) Is your school district so atypical that millage passage is a foregone conclusion?
 - d) Michigan Department of Education records show that less than 40 percent of registered voters participate in local school district millage elections. Do you think that if a majority of those registered actually voted in your district, you would be as successful as you are in passage of millage issues?
 - e) Is everything done in the operation of this program millage related?

- Section B -

- 4) In regard to the community information/relations program of this local school district:
 - a) Name and describe the most important and effective community information/relations program components which ultimately influence voter support in your district.
 - b) If only 10 percent of the money you currently have available for your program were provided, what current program components would you operate to maintain the highest levels of community support?

- c) Regarding the internal and external components of your community information/relations program, what are more important and should receive greater emphasis?
- d) Describe the relationship between your program and the millage election process in this district.
- e) What future trends will change the composition and direction of your program?

- Section C -

- 5) Do you feel all local school districts should employ an individual to specifically coordinate a community information/relations program?
- 6) According to most sources, only 14 of 530 local school districts in Michigan operate full-time community information/relations programs. Why is this so?
- 7) Do you feel that if one is assigned to coordinate a community information/relations program in a local school district the staff will assume the program is the responsibility of the administrator and will participate less in the program themselves?
- 8) In this study, I matched millage election issue records of districts which operated full-time community information/relations programs to the records of like districts which did not. Which set of districts would you speculate had the better millage issue passage rate?
- 9) If I told you that the set of districts which did not operate full-time community information/relations programs exhibited a slightly better millage election issue success record than that of the districts which operated programs, how would you respond? What do you think are the reasons for this finding?

APPENDIX E

Community Information/Relations and Traditional School District Financial Issue Results Comparisons

Community Information/Relations
and Traditional School District Financial
Issue Results Comparisons
Renewal and Additional Millage and Bond Issue Results of
Community Information/Relations Districts
(M.D.E. School Services Division - 1977-82)

Span 1977-82 (5 Yrs.)	Issues Attempted			Issues Passed by Frequency and Percent						Overall Issue Pass (%) (R+A)			Statewide Ave. (%)			
	R	A	B	R	(%)	A	(%)	B	(%)	Att	P	(%)	O	R	A	B
Benton Harbor	3	6	0	3	(100%)	2	(33%)	0	(0%)	9	5	(56%)	(56%)	(91%)	(29%)	(27%)
Birmingham	1	0	0	1	(100%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	1	1	(100%)				
Brighton	3	1	1	2	(67%)	1	(100%)	1	(100%)	4	3	(75%)				
Dearborn	3	4	0	1	(33%)	1	(25%)	0	(0%)	7	2	(29%)				
East Lansing	4	1	0	4	(100%)	1	(100%)	0	(0%)	5	5	(100%)				
Flint	4	3	0	3	(75%)	2	(67%)	0	(0%)	7	5	(71%)				
Livonia	0	1	0	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	1	0	(0%)				
Plymouth-Canton	5	6	3	4	(80%)	1	(17%)	0	(0%)	11	5	(45%)				
Utica	1	1	0	1	(100%)	1	(100%)	0	(0%)	2	2	(100%)				
Warren Consolidated	2	3	0	2	(100%)	1	(33%)	0	(0%)	5	3	(60%)				
Wyoming	2	2	0	2	(100%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	4	2	(50%)				
Group Totals	28	28	4	23	(82%)	10	(35%)	1	(25%)	56	33	(59%)	(56%)	(91%)	(29%)	(27%)

Renewal and Additional Millage and Bond Issue Results of
Traditional School Districts
(M.D.E. School Services Division - 1977-82)

Span 1977-82 (5 Yrs.)	Issues Attempted			Issues Passed by Frequency and Percent						Overall Issue Pass (%) (R+A)			Statewide Ave. (%)			
	R	A	B	R	(%)	A	(%)	B	(%)	Att	P	(%)	O	R	A	B
Muskegon	1	6	0	1	(100%)	4	(67%)	0	(0%)	7	5	(71%)	(56%)	(91%)	(29%)	(27%)
Avondale	2	4	0	2	(100%)	3	(75%)	0	(0%)	6	5	(83%)				
Bloomfield Hills	2	0	1	2	(100%)	0	(0%)	1	(100%)	2	2	(100%)				
Clarkston	1	2	1	1	(100%)	2	(100%)	0	(0%)	3	3	(100%)				
Farmington	2	0	0	2	(100%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	2	2	(100%)				
Lake Orion	2	9	0	2	(100%)	2	(22%)	0	(0%)	11	4	(36%)				
Milford-Huron Valley	2	3	4	2	(100%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	5	2	(40%)				
Royal Oak	1	0	0	1	(100%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	1	1	(100%)				
Walled Lake	1	5	0	1	(100%)	1	(20%)	0	(0%)	6	2	(33%)				
Saginaw	7	5	3	6	(86%)	2	(40%)	1	(33%)	12	8	(67%)				
Grosse Ile	2	1	1	2	(100%)	1	(100%)	0	(0%)	3	3	(100%)				
Group Totals	23	35	10	22	(96%)	15	(43%)	2	(20%)	58	37	(64%)	(56%)	(91%)	(29%)	(27%)

- Comparative Totals -

Span 1977-82	Issues Attempted			Issues Passed by Frequency and Percent						Overall Issue Pass (%) (R+A)			Statewide Ave. (%)			
	R	A	B	R	(%)	A	(%)	B	(%)	Att	P	(%)	O	R	A	B
CI/R Districts	28	28	4	23	(82%)	10	(35%)	1	(25%)	56	33	(59%)	(56%)	(91%)	(29%)	(27%)
Traditional Districts	23	35	10	22	(96%)	15	(43%)	2	(20%)	58	37	(64%)	(56%)	(91%)	(29%)	(27%)

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