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A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS TOWARD SUPERINTENDENTS' POLITICAL AND POLICY LEADERSHIP IN THIRD AND FOURTH CLASS SCHOOL DISTRICTS

by

Jon Bradley Johnson

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 1986

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The question of whether the school board or the superintendent really governs public schools continues to appear in the literature. An issue related to this question is the amount of political and policy leadership exercised by superintendents.

The purpose of this study was to make a beginning inquiry into current expectations for superintendent political and policy leadership by school board presidents.

Five hypotheses were identified involving variables of political and policy leadership, intraboard cohesion, and size of the district.

The research included requesting data from school board presidents of 513 third and fourth class school districts in Michigan. Eventually 396 questionnaires were returned for a 77.2% response rate. Data were analyzed using chi square, $z$ test of population proportions, $t$ test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and population percentages. Major conclusions are: (a) the largest percentage of school boards (48%) display consensual intraboard cohesion followed by factional (32.2%) and pluralistic (19.8%); (b) school board presidents in fourth class districts report a greater proportion of consensual boards than do presidents in third class
districts; (c) there were no findings to support the research hypothesis that selected political and policy leadership expectations differ for school board presidents serving on consensual, pluralistic, or factional boards; (d) school superintendents perceive they should exercise stronger political and policy leadership than board presidents indicate they should; and (e) school board presidents' attitudes differ greatly in regard to the amount of policy leadership and political leadership the superintendent should exercise. Political leadership expectations are low and policy leadership expectations are high.

This study supports the conclusion that school board presidents are comfortable with the superintendent playing a strong leadership role in the initiation and development of policy. The most serious area for conflict is superintendent involvement with school board elections.
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I wish to extend my deepest thanks to Dr. Larry Schlack, my committee chair and advisor, for his continuing support, sensible input, and guidance which brought this project to a conclusion.

I am indebted to Dr. James Sanders and Dr. Howard Farris, members of my committee, for their analytical and helpful suggestions.

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Jon Bradley Johnson
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In Michigan each of the 567 public school districts is legally controlled by a school board. These boards are normally composed of seven trustees elected at-large without political affiliation. Nationwide approximately 15,000 school boards exist. Almost all boards of education hire professional experts—superintendents and other administrators—to carry out the policies established by the board. Some writers conclude, however, that these administrators, especially the superintendent, have assumed power and that boards are just a facade and have ceased to govern (Peak, 1972; Peterson, 1974; Zeigler, Jennings, & Peak, 1974). Other investigators such as Lutz (1980) suggest that local school boards, as a "fundamental grass roots unit of democracy" (p. 452), have largely retained effective control of public education.

Boards of education are elected to represent the people while superintendents are hired to administer; hence, superintendents, as professional educators, have been thought to be apolitical. Recent research findings suggest, however, that superintendents are more political than many have thought (Zeigler, Kehoe, & Reisman, 1985). There is little knowledge, however, about the attitudes of school board members toward political behaviors of the superintendent. Attitudes of the school board president should be studied as a
beginning inquiry into the ways school boards react to political and policy influencing behaviors on the part of their superintendents.

Statement of the Problem

The problem to be addressed in this study is, "What are the board president's attitudes toward political and policy activities in which the superintendent engages to influence and control the board of education, and how does this attitude relate to selected school district characteristics?"

Definitions

**Michigan school superintendent:** An individual licensed by the state of Michigan as a teacher who has been hired by a public school district board of education to be its chief executive officer. Superintendents are ex officio nonvoting participants who make recommendations to the elected board and are tasked with administering policies established by the board.

**Michigan school board president:** An individual eligible to vote in a school district who has been elected through a nonpartisan process to serve as one of seven board trustees and subsequently is selected by the board to preside at meetings, countersign orders, and perform other duties in the management of the schools. Michigan laws require that each board have a president.

**Attitudes:** Responses of the school board president toward superintendent policy and political activities as measured by a 4-point summative attitude scale which measured leadership from a low
of 1 to a high of 4.

**Political and policy leadership:** These include propaganda and persuasion activities in which the superintendent initiates or influences policy change, takes a stand on controversial policy issues confronting the school district, or influences school board elections.

**Influence and control the board:** Only those political and policy activities which are devoted toward persuading board members to take a stance desired by the superintendent were studied. This excluded political and policy activities such as involvement with the Michigan State Department of Education or Legislature, United States Department of Education, collective bargaining process with employee groups, or involvement with other agencies or organizations which seek to influence school district policies and governance. This included political and policy activities on the part of the superintendent such as encouraging certain people to run for the board, offering unsolicited opinions to the board, advocating major change in school policies, and taking a stand on controversial issues or policies confronting the board. These activities are directed at causing the board to support or affirm the superintendent's desires or recommendations.

**Consensual intraboard cohesion:** School boards for which the school board president reported little or no disagreement on the best course of action when problems or issues first arise.

**Pluralistic intraboard cohesion:** School boards for which the school board president reported relatively frequent initial
disagreement on the best course of action when a problem or issue first arose but with no consistent splits on the board from issue to issue.

**Factional intraboard cohesion:** School boards for which the school board president reported relatively frequent initial disagreement on the best course of action when a problem or issue first arose with more or less the same division on the board from issue to issue.

**Importance of the Study**

The superintendent-board relationship is very delicate with some considering it the most important single relationship in a school district (Campbell, Cunningham, Nystrand, & Usdan, 1980; Chand, 1984). It is expected that tension between boards of education and superintendents will remain high in the coming years (Cunningham & Hentges, 1982). This tension may be accentuated by an increase in pluralistic school boards which tend to expect lower levels of superintendent leadership than either factional or consensual boards and are "more likely to dominate in making public educational policy" (Peak, 1972, p. 70). Some writers are suggesting that the politics of education will in fact "likely lead to a revolutionary change in the character of educational governance" (Cistone & Iannaccone, 1980, p. 419). This study, at the minimum, will serve to expand and improve the knowledge base of the relationship between boards of education and superintendents. Potentially the study could lead to a better understanding of present and future educational governance. For instance, if the study determines that board presidents desire
strong superintendent leadership in political and policy areas, deference by the board to the expertise of the superintendent, as stated by Zeigler et al. (1974), will continue to dominate educational governance. On the other hand, Lutz's (1980) hypothesis that "education in our pluralistic culture requires culturally pluralistic values and these are best served by arena council behavior" (p. 465) could not be rejected if low amounts of political and policy leadership are desired of the superintendent. In such a scenario school board trustees, who would represent the people as delegates, would present the desires of specific groups in public debate during board meetings.

Besides adding new knowledge, the study will serve several audiences. The first would be those preparing to be school superintendents (Weinheimer, 1985). Knowledge of the expectations of school boards regarding policy and political leadership activities of superintendents will serve to place in perspective the role orientation of aspiring superintendents. The study might demonstrate, for example, that future superintendents will need to temper their political and policy leadership role if board and public confidence in educational governance is to be maintained. Possible indicators of this need are research findings which already show that there is a significant increase in the release of Michigan school superintendents with the dominant underlying reason for the release being a poor relationship with the board of education (Fultz, 1976).

Practicing superintendents are another audience who would have interest in the findings of this study. Realizing that a great deal of conflict can occur between a board and superintendent while also
knowing that public confidence is related to a positive board-superintendent relationship and good policies and decision making, superintendents may desire to adapt the instruments used in this study to assess schoolboards' policy and political leadership expectations. The study may set the stage for the incorporation of acceptable and expected policy and political leadership activities into superintendents' contracts which might result in clearer expectations and more positive relationships between boards and superintendents. The net effect can be a fulfillment of the primary responsibility of both superintendents and boards; that being the development of "board policy which will give direction, endorsement, and support to the process of change necessary for the development of more effective school programs" (Michigan Association of School Boards [MASB], no date, p. iv).

Conceptual Model

A visual representation of the school board-superintendent decision-making relationship can be depicted as a social system. Boles (1980) defined a social system as "any group of persons who share a goal and who interact so that actions of one affect the actions or reactions of others" (p. 299).

The Getzels-Guba model (Getzels & Guba, 1957) has been applied over the years to study and understand the social system schools represent. Getzels and Guba coined the terms nomothetic and idio- graphie to represent the normative or organizational goals on one
hand and the personal or individual needs on the other. Figure 1 depicts this interaction within a social system (p. 429).

**Normative (Nomothetic) Dimension**

![Diagram: Social System Analysis Model]

**Personal (Idiographic) Dimension**

Figure 1. Social Systems Analysis Model.

Lutz (1980) cited a political anthropological model of decision making (p. 460) whereby councils fall along a continuum of behaviors that were classified from elite to arena. Elite councils think of themselves as "trustees" whereas arena councils consider themselves "delegates" of specific groups who have elected them. Thus elite boards would make decisions based more on nomothetic considerations while arena behavior would be more personal or idiographic. Lutz (1980) posits that the majority of the 15,000 local school boards are basically elite councils (p. 460).

The intraboard cohesion terms of consensual and factional can be associated with elite and arena council behaviors respectively. Research findings associate stronger superintendent leadership with these types of boards while pluralistic boards were associated with the lowest levels of superintendent leadership (Peak, 1972).
Using the Getzels-Guba model (Getzels & Guba, 1957) and incorporating the variables in this study produces the model depicted in Figure 2.

**Normative (Nomothetic) Dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Cohesion</th>
<th>Superintendent Leadership</th>
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<tr>
<td>CONSENSUAL</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Elite)</td>
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<td>SCHOOL</td>
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<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>PLURALISTIC</td>
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<td>SYSTEM</td>
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<td>Behavior)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTIONAL</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Arena)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Personal (Idiographic) Dimension**

Circumstances differ from decision to decision causing boards and superintendents to vary their decision-making behavior. As Lutz (1975) stated, "researchers using the Getzels-Guba model have found that most administrators are neither nomothetic nor idiographic, but rather are transactional" (p. 69). School boards may also demonstrate such transactional decision-making behavior, but for the purposes of this study each school board president's perception of the intraboard cohesion of their board will be used to classify school boards, as Lutz (1980) suggested, "according to their dominant decision-making behavior" (p. 460).
School boards and superintendents will vary their decision-making behavior because "all educational decisions are either political decisions or have political implications" (Lutz, 1975, p. 72). The model depicted in Figure 2 allows for a transactional process.

Research Objectives

This study attempted to determine if school board president attitudes toward certain political and policy leadership activities of school superintendents differ by virtue of school district size, urbanism, or intraboard cohesion. The following objectives were set for the study:

1. To describe the leadership role which Michigan school board presidents expect of superintendents in selected political and policy areas.

2. To determine whether there is a difference in selected political and policy leadership expectations for superintendents by Michigan school board presidents of third and fourth class school districts.

3. To determine the percentage of school boards in Michigan third and fourth class districts which are consensual, pluralistic, or factional according to school board presidents' perceptions.

4. To determine whether there is a difference in selected political and policy leadership expectations for superintendents by school board presidents who perceive themselves serving on consensual, pluralistic, or factional boards.
5. To determine whether there is a difference in selected policy leadership role and political leadership role of school superintendents as measured by school board president attitudes toward these roles.

6. To determine whether selected leadership expectations of superintendents by school board presidents differ for small towns, suburbs, and city school districts.

Limitations of the Study

The subject of inquiry is public school board presidents in Michigan. Eventually this line of inquiry should be extended to public school boards in the United States. The study was limited to one aspect of the population of interest.

In this cross-sectional study the intraboard consensus variable was measured as a perception of school board presidents at one specific point in time. School boards fluctuate in cohesion dependent upon the types of internal routine problems or external political issues faced. In addition the membership of the board at any one time may affect the board president's perception of the intraboard cohesion. The point in time the measurement is taken might not reflect the dominant decision-making behavior of the board if recent unusual or conflictual events or changes in board membership have occurred which could bias the perception of the board president. Additionally the researcher found in a pilot test that not all board members perceive intraboard cohesion similarly. The trustees of four school boards were surveyed with the results demonstrating that only
one board had all of its members perceiving the same intraboard cohesion. The other three boards had one to three trustees dissenting from the majority view. Importantly, however, all four board presidents responded with the majority which is consistent with Tippet's (1981/1982) findings that board presidents' perceptions were in agreement with perceptions held by the board as a whole.

Finally, the researcher was looking at only selected political and policy activities of the superintendent.

Summary

The introduction to this study emphasized the paradox of school boards having legal control of the schools but school superintendents actually governing. The statement of the problem was then developed and its significance to the future of educational governance explained. A conceptual model was depicted which provided a visual representation of leadership and board cohesion variables studied. Research objectives which explored various aspects of these variables were identified. The chapter concluded with a discussion of limitations of the study.

Chapter II will provide a background for the study by reviewing related literature. The problem will be delineated further and a research basis for the stated hypotheses will conclude the chapter. Chapter III will discuss the design and methodology to test the hypotheses. The data gathered will be reported and analyzed in the fourth chapter and the findings will be summarized and discussed in the final chapter.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this review is to summarize literature on school governance related to school boards, public school superintendents, and the leadership relationship which exists between the two. The review is divided into six sections.

The first section gives an overview of policy boards. The second section provides an historical background to public school governance. The third section reviews literature on the role of the school board and school board membership. A fourth section reviews the characteristics and role of public school superintendents. The fifth section explores contemporary literature on political and policy leadership exercised by superintendents with school boards. The final section will enunciate the research hypotheses derived as a result of the previous sections.

Policy Boards

The corporate model of a board of directors having formal and legal responsibility for the effectiveness and continuity of an organization through making policy decisions has been applied to many types of organizations including businesses, welfare associations, private schools, public school systems, hospitals, and government
agencies such as city councils (Zald, 1969, pp. 97-98). Policy boards employ a full-time manager, superintendent, or administrator to serve as the chief executive officer (CEO) for the organization with an important job responsibility being to provide the board with information and recommendations for policy decisions. Some believe boards are at the mercy of the CEOs because they control information and the agenda of decision making (Drucker, 1974; Zald, 1969). Political scientists like Peak (1972) have suggested that in political subsystems "the leader establishes policy, it is legitimized by formal authority, and subsequently sold to the public" (p. 4). Others note that since boards have the ultimate decision to hire and fire, executives will modify their behaviors to keep in the good graces of the board (Heffernan, 1964; Hunter, 1963). Thus the issue of who really governs or controls, the board or the CEO, is as real an issue in the private sector as with public school districts or other political units.

Drucker (1974), in discussing the decline of the board as a phenomenon of this century, said all boards have one thing in common: "They do not function" (p. 628). Berle and Means (1968) supported this view with their finding that in large corporations control rests with management rather than with shareholders or their elected board of directors. Mintzberg (1973) explained this control in terms of the informational role of the manager. As a monitor, disseminator, and spokesman for the organization, "the chief executive simply knows more than anyone else. . . . Hence his knowledge cannot be matched by shareholders or directors, and he assumes great power" (p. 76). In
addition, Groobey (1974) reported that CEOs of corporations have been unwilling or reluctant to share information or authority with their boards of directors.

Future trends may change the importance of policy boards in organizations, as Drucker (1974) suggested, it is shortsighted for top management to be content with this decline of the board. Expectations are for an increase in committee structure, less reliance on the leadership of the CEO, greater emphasis on management appraisal, and more effective use of boards by CEOs (Hodgetts & Wortman, 1980). The researcher has experienced these trends as a public school administrator during the past decade.

Background of Public School Governance

The roots of local control of the public schools go back to the first colonies established in New England. Laws were passed requiring all towns of certain sizes to establish and maintain schools. Decisions regarding local schools, such as hiring teachers, were initially made at town meetings. As populations increased town meetings became unwieldy so local committees were delegated the responsibilities for operating the schools. Eventually officials were elected and designated as "school boards" or "school committees." The intent of these groups was to remain free of local government politics with the sole responsibility of "running the schools" (Callahan, 1975).

The Declaration of Independence in 1776 was followed by a period of struggle which eventually saw the emergence of a new
representative form of government which provided the people with a set of freedoms and rights contained in a Constitution. The Constitution, however, made no mention of education. The Tenth Amendment to the Constitution did reserve to the states those powers not expressly or implicitly conferred on the federal government (Knezevich, 1975). Therefore, the states were given the responsibility for providing public education. In turn, the states, for the most part, initiated legislation which required towns to support public schools. Local control and representation were thus established with elected or appointed boards given de jure authority over the schools with the states retaining overall legal responsibility. Thus the control of public education is a state responsibility which is delegated to local school districts.

In the truest sense of democratic theory school boards were to represent the community sending children to the public schools. Initially, this responsibility also included "running the schools" by raising money, selecting teachers and textbooks, and even interviewing prospective students (Callahan, 1975). A major turning point in school governance took place in 1837 when Buffalo and Louisville established the position of superintendent of schools (Knezevich, 1975). Controversy regarding the proper role of the school board and superintendent ensued. Boards of education were concerned with the time and expertise required to manage the schools and wanted to relieve themselves of some responsibilities. On the other hand, superintendents believed they should have "the power, the prestige, the salary, and the security which they thought they needed and
deserved" (Callahan, 1975, p. 25). School boards had not expected to
give up quite so much. With the end of the Civil War a large in-
crease in urban populations resulted in a corresponding increase in
the need for public schools and superintendents with most cities over
8,000 having schools and a superintendent. Greater numbers of super-
intendents resulted in greater pressure for power. Callahan (1975)
identified the following noteworthy factors in the superintendents'
quest for more control:

1. Superintendents were convinced that schools were
being corrupted by evil politicians who used their posi-
tions on school boards for personal advantage. (p. 26)

2. In 1895 the Draper Report, containing written
recommendations for strident changes in school governance,
was published by a committee of the National Education
Association. The report recommended superintendents have
administrative authority and that school boards be smaller
with legislative authority only. Up to this point boards
had retained most of the authority being unwilling to give
the educational expert any real administrative power.
(p. 29)

3. The power of superintendents increased dramati-
cally in the late 1800s with school boards being faced with
a loss of control as superintendents proposed almost total
independence from boards in running the schools. (p. 32)

4. Boards of education reaffirmed their de jure
authority to control the schools through the efforts of
William Bruce, founder of the American School Board Jour-
nal. Bruce waged a continuous campaign against the attacks
emanating from the Draper Report through the Journal. By
1897 circulation was around 44,000 copies. (p. 34)

Threats to public control of the schools continued during the
eyear 1900s. One who spent a great deal of effort sorting out the
role of educational administrators and school boards during this
period was Cubberly, who published in 1916 the classic work entitled,
Public School Administration. Cubberly recommended that school
boards be small, elected bodies of five to seven members and that they serve with no pay. If paid, he believed, they might be tempted to interfere with the professional staff. Significantly, Cubberly's recommendations have in fact been largely implemented in today's school boards.

The issue of whether local boards of education were to retain their power was settled by Strayer in 1938 (cited in Callahan, 1975). Strayer had been asked to prepare a statement on the structure of the educational system by the Educational Policies Commission, a body formed by the National Education Association and American Association of School Administrators. The resulting document entitled The Structure and Administration of Education in American Democracy, published in 1938, laid to rest the consideration of reducing the power or eliminating boards of education. In discussing the proper relationship between the lay board and the professionals he suggested that the board should be governed in its actions by the advice of the experts, but "the final authority must rest with the lay board. The schools belong to the people" (Strayer, cited in Callahan, 1975, p. 41).

The issue of the proper board of education-superintendent power relationship is far from being resolved. A crucial area of research, as suggested by a number of writers over the past 20 years, continues to be the interaction between boards of education and superintendents (Bidwell, 1965; Boyd, 1975; Cunningham & Hentges, 1982; Iannaccone, 1975; Peak, 1972; Zeigler et al., 1974; Zeigler et al., 1985). The topic does evoke strong sentiments as evidenced by former school
board member Smith's (1982) statement: "superintendents run schools, but school boards should" (p. 27). Zeigler et al. (1974), in a plea for democracy in education, concluded: "School boards should govern or be abolished" (p. 254). Yet, today, the superintendent remains the dominant figure in providing leadership internally within the school district and externally through the controlling board of education.

The Public School Board Today

By virtue of not addressing public education in the Constitution, the legal authority of school boards has continued to be determined by the states. Thus, today, local boards of education are a political subdivision of the state. However, unlike members of Congress, the state legislatures, or many city councils, school board trustees are normally elected at-large without political affiliation. The intent is to keep public education depoliticized, yet we know that "schools are political entities" (Zeigler et al., 1974, p. 1).

School boards are governing bodies yet they do not represent "commonweal associations." That is, the public at-large is not the prime beneficiary. Rather schools are service organizations because they are concerned with the interests of their clients.

Zeigler et al. (1974) believed two points should be stressed regarding school boards. One point is that they represent the democratic symbol of the value of local control of education; and the second point is that boards are the actual representative body through which the local control is exercised (p. 13).
Peak (1972) expressed frustration with what democratic theory would suggest should be happening with the control of public education by school boards and what in reality is happening. Kerr (1964) stated it this way: "School boards chiefly perform the function of legitimizing the policies of the school system to the community rather than representing the various requests of the community to the school administration, especially with regard to the educational program" (p. 35).

The symbolic importance of school boards remains, and of course, their legal power is consistent with our democratic values. Since boards are elected bodies, for the most part the public will seek input on crucial issues through these elected members. For the main, however, day-to-day rule making and administration is in the hands of professional educators.

Selection to the Board

One of the objectives of this study is to determine school board president attitudes toward the amount of influence the superintendent should exercise in encouraging "good" people to run for the board? Who are these "good" people?

Gross's (1958) milestone study of school boards and superintendents reported that motives of people to seek school board membership were largely out of a felt civic duty. This he called "good" motivation. Interestingly Gross accepted the opinions of superintendents vis-a-vis school board members' opinions when validating what percentage of board members had "good" motivation for seeking election.
to the board. Table 1 depicts his findings.

Reasons which were deemed "bad" motivation by Gross (1958) included "a desire to represent a particular group" and "interested in getting some experience in politics." Note that 80% of board members in the 508 person sample stated as one of their motives they felt it to be their civic duty while superintendents said 64% fit that category. In making further comparisons with using the "good" and "bad" motivation variable Gross stated: "We will use the superintendent's description of board member motivation because, we have argued, the superintendent is more objective, and also because he is more likely to describe motives which he sees related to board members' behavior" (pp. 75-76). Research has not been identified which identifies the degree to which board members feel the superintendent should assume leadership in the encouragement of "good" members to run for the school board. Of course the variable of what "good" motivation is subject to differing perspectives. Nonetheless Zeigler et al. (1974) reported that 14% of board members were encouraged by professional school personnel. From Table 2 Zeigler et al. (1974, p. 34) concluded that recruitment efforts by organized political type groups is not very common in educational governance.

There is an absence of competition in board elections and, as Kerr (1964) characterized school politics, an absence of clear-cut constituencies along with a lack of familiarity on the part of candidates with school activities and the educational program. Possibly this explains why board members themselves were the largest source of encouragement to candidates. Thus, the lack of informed
Table 1
Percentage of Board Members (N = 508) Who Gave Listed Reasons for Seeking Election to the Board and Percentage of Board Members Motivated by These Reasons According to Their Superintendents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons given</th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>Superintendents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Felt that someone had to see that school expenditures were increased.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Wanted certain friends to get in or advance in the school system.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Felt that the school superintendent should be removed.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A certain group in the community felt that they should be represented on the school board.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Felt that someone had to see that school expenditures were decreased.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Felt it to be my (his or her) civic duty.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Did not like the way my (his or her) children were being educated.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Disapproved of the way the schools were being run.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Was interested in getting some experience in politics.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Other.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2
Source of Encouragement to Run for Board
(N = 444)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage of board members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board members</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal citizens groups</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and neighbors</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional school personnel</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental and political figures</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>98^a</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


^aTotal percentage less than 100 because some responses did not fit these categories.

Constituencies may cause incumbent board members to seek out those who have similar backgrounds and interests. These potential board candidates may surface through previous civic, educational, or occupational organization involvement (Cistone, 1974). Incumbent board members will instigate an individual's candidacy if they see through these previous activities that continuity of policy and practice is likely to be maintained. Cistone (1975) maintained that this type of active sponsorship allows for reduced uncertainty, risk, and discontinuity which might result if a more random selection of candidates were to occur. The net effect is "oligarchic self-perpetuation"
Imagine for a moment the political overtones in a school district where the superintendent was actively encouraging a particular candidate and the school board was sponsoring another!

**School Board Role Orientation and Responsibilities**

Researchers have attempted to classify school boards systematically and relate these classifications to the role of the superintendent (Dykes, 1965; Gross, 1958; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Peak, 1972; Zeigler et al., 1974). One orientation identified in the literature is for school boards to see themselves as the mechanism whereby the community can participate in the formulation of educational policy. Such boards, called fiduciary, will display much different behaviors than a board which sees itself as a protective buffer between the professionals running the district and the public. This latter type board has been labeled as one with a professional role orientation. Thus, the professionally oriented board will tend to place greater emphasis on the technical expertise of the superintendent and other professional educators when resolving issues or setting policy especially of an internal nature. In 1982, for example, 76% of superintendents reported that, as a source, they were given very great weight in providing information for their boards (Cunningham & Hentges, 1982). Surprisingly there was a lack of weight given to information from teacher organizations, other employees, special interest groups, the local power structure, and school board organizations by school boards as perceived by the superintendents. A fiduciary role orientation on the part of the
board suggests the need by the board for public support to be a key ingredient in decisions of a more external or public nature. The superintendent's recommendation may be a secondary factor in the decision-making process.

Within the framework of a fiduciary role orientation come the classic concepts of trustee and delegate. In representing constituents the trustee will make his or her own judgment keeping the welfare of the electors in mind. The delegate, on the other hand, feels bound by the wishes of the constituents.

The majority of American local school boards tend to be professionally oriented (Peak, 1972). Interestingly this professional orientation on the part of school boards is not related to socioeconomic status (Gross, 1958; Peak, 1972). As Gross (1958) stated:

As far as the actual behavior of the school board is concerned, it does not matter if it is made up of bus drivers and electricians or of lawyers and business executives. Both kinds of boards are just as likely to adhere to professional standards for school board behavior. (p. 98)

However, Gross did determine that more highly educated board members are more likely to adhere to professional standards than board members less well educated. Thus, if income and occupation are not related to a professional orientation, and if, in fact, professional orientation is good for public education, then Gross (1958) suggested that professionalism can be reduced to the issue of motivation for seeking school board membership. Good motivation will cause professional behavior and bad motivation will result in unprofessional behavior.
School Board Responsibilities

Enck and Raab (1985) discussed why school boards are necessary. They reflected some of the earlier premises discussed in this study. These included the fact that local school boards keep the public schools in the possession of the public rather than government or professional educators; that "school boards are a check on a propriety interest of the professionals and thus carry out the American precept of checks and balances" (p. 8); and that boards are a vehicle for input by the people into public education and, therefore, should make decisions in the best interest of the community (trustee orientation).

The chief responsibilities of the school boards as stated by Enck and Raab (1985) are as follows:

Through the staff, to develop and constantly improve the education program.

   To provide adequate and effective personnel for staffing the school program.

   To provide and maintain educationally efficient school facilities.

   To secure adequate financial resources.

   To maintain two-way communications between the board and students, employees, parents, taxpayers and the community at large.

   To select the chief executive officer and work harmoniously and honestly with him. (p. 9)
School Board Typologies and Intraboard Cohesion

Writers suggest that the board typologies and cohesion are variables in superintendent policy and political leadership. Therefore, McCarty and Ramsey's (1971) work is of interest. The researchers, both sociologists, identified community power structures, types of school boards associated with the various power structures and the role of the superintendent with such boards. Table 3 depicts the relationships identified by McCarty and Ramsey.

Table 3
Types of Community Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community power structure</th>
<th>School board</th>
<th>Role of the superintendent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominated</td>
<td>Dominated</td>
<td>Functionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factional</td>
<td>Factional</td>
<td>Political strategist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralistic</td>
<td>Status congruent</td>
<td>Professional advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inert</td>
<td>Sanctioning</td>
<td>Decision maker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the dominated setting (Table 3) the power-structure of the community is such that the superintendent must be a servant of the board. The likelihood of the superintendent making substantial changes in the philosophy of the board is remote unless the power structure also happens to adhere to such changes. An example of a dominated community might be a town with a single principal employer.
where dominant community figures control the economic life of the school district. Those controlling don't state that they control things but those being controlled admit to such influence. The superintendent "implements policy, services the organization, anticipates trouble and quells it when it arises" (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971, p. 25).

In a factional community with a factional board the superintendent is faced with differing views on major issues. Issues such as busing, neighborhood schools, or sex education might generate such factions. The net effect is that strong views are held by board members, therefore, periodic changes in the majority factions on the board occur from election to election. The superintendent in this setting is thus a "political strategist." He or she takes direction from the group exercising power and is well advised to find the middle ground on controversial issues. Salmon (1982, p. 31) reported that factional boards are on the increase. The superintendent must cooperate with the majority but if this cooperation is too demonstrative he might lose his job after the next election.

In a pluralistic community there is a dispersion of power and often a high interest in education. The superintendent works with a status congruent or internally motivated board and thus can exercise educational leadership. The board, then, looks upon the superintendent as a professional adviser or expert.

Lastly, McCarty and Ramsey (1971) described a type of power structure often seen in rural communities whereby power is basically inert or latent and the status quo dominates. In this setting the
board sanctions or rubber stamps actions by the superintendent thus allowing the "chief" to be a decision maker.

The four basic types of boards described above are characterizations and no doubt do not reflect predictable behavior patterns on the part of boards. More significant, however, is that the bulk of the research findings differ from McCarty and Ramsey's (1971) thesis in that educational policymaking is not controlled by the most powerful group or groups of citizens but is dominated by the influence of top school administrators (Boyd, 1976; Peterson, 1974).

Peak (1972) studied a number of variables associated with policy leadership by the superintendent. School board member status related to income, occupation, or education was found to have no direct association with superintendent policy leadership. Intraboard consensus, on the other hand, produced significant findings in terms of superintendent leadership. This leadership relationship will be amplified in the fifth section of this chapter. This section will describe the intraboard cohesion variable in more detail.

In their study of a nationwide sample of 82 school districts researchers identified boards according to whether they were consensual, pluralistic, or factional (Peak, 1972; Zeigler et al., 1974). Consensual boards reported little or no disagreement regarding the question: "When a problem first arises, members of a board often find that they disagree about the best course of action. How true is this of your board?" (Peak, 1972, p. 61).

Boards reporting relatively frequent initial disagreement were classified as pluralistic or factional based on their response to the
question: "When the school board disagrees on issues would you say there is more or less the same division on the board? I mean do some members seem to stick together from one issue to the next?" (Peak, 1972, p. 62).

If the majority on the board indicated that there was "more or less the same division on the board," they were classified as factional. No consistent splits on boards reporting initial disagreement resulted in a pluralistic classification. Peak (1972) critiqued consensual and factional cohesion with the following caveat:

High degrees of initial consensus tend to stifle debate and result in a decision based on less than a full understanding of alternatives. Extreme factionalism, on the other hand, can be equally debilitating, for decision-makers tend to dissipate their time and resources in inter factional strife to the detriment of rational deliberation on the merits of pending issues. (p. 61)

Writers such as Salisbury (1967) contend that it is the strong desire of educators to maintain consensus with the board in order to maintain their professional expert reputation and to avoid external political controlling of the district by the board.

Table 4 depicts Peak's (1972) findings of school board consensus. It should be noted that the sample of 86 American school boards was weighted to reflect differing sizes of districts. This was done in order to avoid skewedness through placing inordinate weight on the smaller districts.

The Public School Superintendent

The superintendency was created to manage the ever increasing complexities of public education. Nonetheless there was an early
Table 4

Distribution of School Boards According to Consensus Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of board</th>
<th>Number of boards</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensual</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralistic</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factional</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. From "Policy Leadership in the Governance of Public School Systems" (p. 64) by G. W. Peak, 1972, Dissertation Abstracts International, 32, 6514A. (University Microfilms No. 72-14,747)

reluctance on the part of school boards to delegate executive and managerial functions. The so-called "educational expert" was not, as it were, considered that much of an expert. Some have analyzed this reluctance to give the superintendent key managerial functions as an antiexecutive feeling originating in the colonial period (Blumberg, 1985). Apparently Americans were much less willing to delegate executive powers to appointed officials than to elected ones. Even today in some locales superintendents are elected rather than appointed. Superintendents have exerted a great deal of policy and political leadership to arrive at this juncture in history where now they are considered to have vast influence and power.

Since 1865 the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has existed to promote the status of the school administration
profession. Among the various school administrative positions AASA concentrates its efforts towards the position of superintendent of schools. Therefore, a special research report on the status of the superintendent has been published every decade (excluding the 1940s) since 1923. The most recent report (1982) was based on a sample stratified by student enrollment of 2,533 public school superintendents from all United States school systems, including intermediate school districts.

Personal Characteristics

AASA (Cunningham & Hentges, 1982) reported that the average superintendent is a married, white male 44 years of age. Superintendents are highly educated with over 30% having attained a doctorate with the remainder between a master's and the doctorate. Unlike many other professionals who follow in their parents' footsteps, school superintendents have a much higher educational attainment than their parents. In fact only slightly more than 10% of superintendents' parents had graduated from college. Among superintendents' fathers, over 50% had not completed high school. The lower middle-class background of American educators reflects the value placed on education as a means to higher socioeconomic status. Superintendents clearly reflect this orientation with 87% reporting a higher standard of living than their parents'.

In a study of career patterns of Michigan public school superintendents in the 77 school districts enrolling 5,000 or more students, Craig (1982) reported that superintendents were between the ages of
46 and 55, beginning their careers in a public high school around age 24. The first administrative position of these superintendents was the elementary principalship, central office administration, or a high school principalship. The first superintendency in a district of 5,000 or more students was entered between the ages of 36 and 45. The majority of these superintendents held a doctorate. Thus, Michigan school superintendents of larger districts exceeded the average age and education of the national sample. This is to be expected as the first superintendency is generally in a smaller district. AASA (Cunningham & Hentges, 1982), as an example, reported that the first superintendency of the national sample was entered at a median age of 36.

Other information of importance reported in the AASA (Cunningham & Hentges, 1982) study included the fact that over 66% of superintendents believed they were selected for their position because of their personal characteristics and qualifications. The Michigan superintendents (Craig, 1982) echoed these same sentiments by indicating that human relations skills, a good background in school finance, and experience were necessary attributes in getting the job. Of superintendents in the national sample, 21% felt they were hired as a person to solve specific problems or achieve specific program improvements (Cunningham & Hentges, 1982).

The job of superintendent is not for the unmotivated if the AASA (Cunningham & Hentges, 1982) report is any indication. Local district superintendents spend an average of 54.8 hours on the job weekly including 1.6 evenings per week, plus 1.7 Saturdays and 0.9
Sundays per month. With such a rigorous work schedule it is not surprising that only 54.6% would choose the superintendency again as a career choice. No doubt there are other reasons for this low "I'd do it again" response as shall be seen later in this study. Yet 10 years earlier in the 1971 AASA study 71.4% reported they would choose the superintendency over again as a career choice. Is the job getting tougher and less rewarding? AASA reported that fully 25% of superintendents feel the status and prestige of the position is decreasing. Contrarily in 1971, 50% of superintendents felt the position was increasing in importance and influence rather than the 23% who had this perception in 1982.

Job Responsibilities and Role of the Superintendent

To discern current superintendent involvement in the political and policy dynamics of school districts a review of accepted responsibilities and roles of superintendents is useful. Numerous job descriptions exist for superintendents of schools. A review of superintendents' responsibilities can be highlighted by reference to Knezevich's (1975) description of the superintendent's role:

1. The superintendent is the chief executive officer of the board.

2. He is responsible for carrying out all policies, rules, and regulations established by the board. In matters not specifically covered by board policy, he is to take appropriate action and report the same to the board not later than the next regular meeting.

3. All individuals employed by the board are responsible directly or indirectly to the superintendent of schools.
4. The superintendent has the authority to prepare regulations and to give such instruction to school employees as may be necessary to make the policies of the board effective. He may delegate responsibilities and assign duties. Such delegation and assignment do not relieve the superintendent of responsibility for actions of subordinates.

5. Except when matters pertaining to his reemployment are being considered, the superintendent is to be present at all meetings of the board and its special committees. He may be held responsible for preparing the agendas for board meetings.

6. He is responsible for preparing and submitting the budget to cover school operations.

7. The superintendent has the authority, within limits of major appropriations approved by the board, to authorize and direct all purchases and expenditures.

8. He recommends all candidates for employment. The board has the authority to reject specific candidates recommended, but personnel finally accepted should be employed only upon the recommendation of the superintendent.

9. The superintendent formulates and recommends personnel policies necessary to the functioning of the school.

10. The superintendent provides professional leadership for the educational program of the schools and is responsible for developing a system of regular reporting to the board on all aspects of that program.

11. The superintendent is responsible for keeping the school board informed on all vital matters pertaining to the school system.

12. He is responsible for the development of a program of maintenance and improvement or expansion of the buildings and the site. This includes recommendation for employment and supervision of all building custodians.

13. He is responsible for formulating and administering a program for supervision for all schools.

14. The superintendent is responsible for submitting an annual report on the operation of the school system. (pp. 344-345)
Although this description of superintendent responsibilities appears to reflect mostly internal school district functions, an analysis of the role description yields several areas which can serve as board co-optation vehicles for the superintendent. Co-optation tactics have been mentioned by Kerr (1964) and Zeigler et al. (1974) as methods which both superintendents and incumbent school board members use to neutralize any threats to the status quo by new members to the board. Co-optation of the board by the superintendent is ongoing and informal. That is it "involves the de facto sharing of power" (Zeigler et al., 1974, p. 188). Persuasion, gatekeeping, and propaganda are forms of informal co-optation.

Earlier in the review it was mentioned that boards look to superintendents as a main source of information. Knezevich's (1975) description of the superintendent's role provides a foundation for this communication channel and associated co-optation techniques of propaganda, persuasion, and gatekeeping. Gatekeeping, as Zeigler et al. (1974) described, "is the exercise of control over the information received by the board" (p. 189). In two-thirds of school districts studied the superintendent was solely responsible for agenda setting, a primary gatekeeping vehicle (Role Statement 5). Role Statements 9, 10, and 11 also facilitate gatekeeping tactics. With co-optation and gatekeeping opportunities readily available to the superintendent the following remark is not surprising: "Although there is general agreement that the board of education should be the legislative or policymaking body, and the superintendent should serve as the executive officer and the board's professional advisor this is
easier said than done" (Knezevich, 1975, p. 344).

Superintendents perform a number of administrative functions for school districts. Perkins (1981/1982) utilized 16 major administrative functions (see Table 5) identified by Knezevich (1975, pp. 37-38) and reported that the majority of superintendents and board presidents agreed with each other as to responsibility for 11 of 16 functions. Responsibility for 5 of the functions (orienting, staffing, changing, diagnosing-analyzing, and deciding-resolving) were perceived differently. Of interest to the researcher was that politicking, Knezevich's (1975) slang term for administrators' need to function with various internal and external power configurations, was deemed by board presidents to be largely the superintendent's responsibility and one of the least important functions. In 1974 Zeigler et al. reported that active politicking by superintendents would be counterproductive; however, earlier in this study it was reported that superintendents are much more involved politically than had been previously realized (Zeigler et al., 1985). The following statement from a candidate for a superintendency to the board interview committee expresses a current thought:

I think our bread and butter in education depends on politics. We as educators have dropped the ball in that area by not being as forceful and involved as we ought to be. When you become a superintendent, you enter politics. (Robinson, 1985, p. B3)

In a study of Michigan school superintendents' political participation with the state legislature, Allen (1985) concluded that metropolitan superintendents had a higher degree of political participation than nonmetropolitan superintendents. Also he indicated
that more highly educated superintendents, those with specialists or doctorates, felt that "campaign participation" was their most effective type of participation.

**Table 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating</td>
<td>Changing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orienting</td>
<td>Diagnosing-analyzing conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>Deciding-resolving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td>Coordinating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>Communicating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resourcing</td>
<td>Politicking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading</td>
<td>Controlling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executing (operating)</td>
<td>Appraising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In a study by Tippett (1981/1982) board members and superintendents in both small and large school districts basically concurred on the importance of personal characteristics superintendents should bring to the job.

In order of importance from most to least they were: (a) leadership skills, (b) organization skills, (c) fairness, (d) communication skills, (e) good listener, (f) loyalty, and (g) political ability. (Superintendents ranked communication skills third and fairness...
fourth.) As reported earlier, Tippett (1981/1982) also determined that board presidents' perceptions of the role of the superintendent were consistent with the perceptions held by the regular board. Thus, he suggested, future researchers need not be concerned whether their sample is of board presidents or members.

Role Conflict and the Superintendent

Superintendents and board members often have confusion as to the proper role of both parties. This confusion is especially prevalent in the area of educational policy making. The literature tends to represent a polarized view of the situation by virtue of on one end of the continuum depicting the superintendent as an educational expert who typically dominates educational policy making and on the other end promoting a "beleagured superintendent" image of the professional struggling vainly against threats from all sides.

Prior to 1960 superintendents were largely unquestioned in their authority. One writer called this the "good old days" (Boyd, 1976, p. 545). During the 1960s and into the 1970s issues seem to have caused politicization of education and seriously complicated the superintendent's job as reflected by the following quote:

The American school superintendent, long the benevolent ruler whose word was law, has become a harried embattled figure of waning authority for whom the ledger book has grown as vital as the textbook. Squeezed by financial constraints, facing directives from courts and legislatures, browbeaten by once-subservient boards of education, teachers associations and parents, the superintendent can scarcely be blamed if he feels he has lost control of his destiny--much less the destiny of the schools. (Boyd, 1976, p. 545).
Conflict, to use Zeigler, Kehoe, and Reisman's (1983) definition, "consists of situations in which persons with perceived mutually incompatible goals simultaneously perceive an opportunity to achieve these goals (at least partially) by blocking those of their adversaries" (p. 32).

As might be expected, conflict has a negative connotation for the professional educator. A paradox of sorts is created by virtue of the amount of training a superintendent has received. That is, conflict is not the accepted or expected process to decision making but rather consensus is the accepted basis for making a decision. Interestingly, those most ideologically committed superintendents who have trained to the completion of a doctorate, and who have little on-the-job experience, may be less skillful in managing conflict than those without this degree (cited in Zeigler et al., 1983). When the superintendent's power base of expertise is declared null and void and a turn to traditional political maneuvering is required a lack of experience in such endeavors proves a handicap to the new and idealistic.

Bott (1982), in his study of role conflict among superintendents, determined that the amount of role conflict in the board-superintendent relationship was relatively low. Where high amounts of conflict were present, performance ratings and job satisfaction were significantly lower for superintendents. Thus, superintendents benefited from low role conflict in their relationship with board members. Bacharach and Mitchell's (1983) study of the sources of dissatisfaction in educational administration supported the
hypothesis that the more negative a supervisor's (school board) attitudes and behavior toward the employee (superintendent) the greater the level of dissatisfaction.

In Zeigler et al.'s (1985) study of city managers and school superintendents, 79% of the superintendents reported that they were rarely or never disagreed with by the board. City managers, on the other hand, reported that 44% of the time they were sometimes or often disagreed with by the council. Public defeat is very rare for the superintendent because of behind the scenes interaction and agenda setting. Losing is done in private as Boyd (1976) purports. It is apparent, then, that conflict between a board and superintendent does not become visible to the public. In reference to earlier times, Zeigler et al. (1985) stated, "Stability, one essential public image to be created and maintained, is well served by the structure put in place at the turn of the century" (p. 89).

Conflict and Decision Making

McCarty and Ramsey's (1971) study of 51 communities in the northeastern and midwestern United States discussed previously is helpful in understanding the kind of decision-making role the school superintendent might play based on power structures in the community. (See Table 4.) Earlier it was stated that the bulk of the research suggests that instead of a power group or powerful elites the control of educational policy making is largely dominated by the influence of the superintendent or other top administrators (Boyd, 1976; Peterson, 1974). Certain types of issues result in exceptions to this
generalization. There are situations and issues when the *de jure* check and balance function of the school board is brought to bear. This is especially true when predominant community values and expectations are threatened. A certain latitude is granted school administrators, but when this "zone of tolerance" (Boyd, 1976, p. 551) is exceeded conflict results. Community sizes and types have impact on the size of this zone of tolerance as do public relations efforts on the part of the educators.

Zald (1969) suggested the proposition that at strategic decision points board power is most likely to be assembled. These points would be distinguished from the more routine type decisions that are made in the day-to-day life of the school organization. Conflict between the superintendent and board is likely to become more pronounced during these strategic decision periods. Three problem areas seem to fall into Zald's strategic points. One is called a lifecycle problem which relates to organizational genesis, character crisis and transformation, and identity crisis. Two is the problem of choosing a successor for the chief executive; and three are fundraising and facilities expansion problems. It is during these times of strategic decision that community power is likely to be mobilized in the case of school districts. If the decision of the board goes against predominant community feeling or there is a socioeconomic change in the community, board turnover is likely at reelection time. If the superintendent is associated with the outgoing board members, his tenure in the district is tenuous (Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970). Thus it has been observed that although it appears boards and
superintendents operate autonomously over time, a school system may be responsive to the wants and aspirations of the community.

While stating that a great deal more research is needed concerning involvement of citizens in school decision making, Boyd (1976) reported a study that ranked public schools higher on measures of responsiveness and innovation than other public agencies studied.

Internal and external policy issues are relevant to this study. Internal issues include such dimensions as school curriculum decisions, personnel policies, and other types of issues largely confined to the internal workings of the school district. In these matters the board and community usually defer to the influence of educational experts. This is bureaucratic leadership and will be discussed in the next section.

External policy issues, on the other hand, relate to matters which the lay board and general public have a much greater interest in. New school construction, finances, and busing are some of the issues which fall in the external policy area. The expertise of the professionals is not as valued in the decision-making process for such issues. Influencing behaviors on the part of the professionals would come into the definition of political leadership as opposed to bureaucratic leadership. A warning is in order, however, about the use of labels to describe internal or external issues. Issues should be defined as to "how the school board perceives it and not the intrinsic content of the issue itself" (Zeigler et al., 1974, p. 157).
It does seem obvious, while also being substantiated by studies of school politics, that external, rather than internal issues, generate citizen concern and involvement with school affairs. Boyd (1976) summarized the type of policy issues and school districts as follows:

The local citizenry and the board will tend to have more influence in external, redistributive, and strategic policy decisions, and in smaller and more homogeneous communities where the professionals tend to anticipate or reflect (especially in middle and upper class communities) community demands. The professionals, on the other hand, will tend to have more influence in internal and routine policy decisions, and in large and more heterogeneous communities. (p. 573)

Thus, the influence of school administrators is definitely limited by certain constraints placed on them by the board, community, and type of policy being faced. If dissatisfaction occurs boards can remove administrators in states like Michigan where no administrative tenure exists.

Teachers' unions, on the other hand, are a big factor in the shaping of school districts' policies. They, however, cannot be dealt with as effectively as school administrators. The number of strikes called by the teacher unions, as a result of the collective bargaining process, attests to the monumental struggle over the control of school policy being waged between boards of education and this group of employees.

Political and Policy Leadership

Providing leadership for the school district is an accepted function of the school superintendent. Normally it is supposed that
the superintendent's leadership function is internally directed at the implementation of policies and programs established by the controlling board of education. Few, it seems, would contest the fact that school boards have retained the de jure authority to set policy and control local educational agencies within the limits established by the state. However, it has been established earlier in this study that the superintendent has emerged as the dominant figure in determining policies within school districts. Fundamental principles of democratic theory are being jeopardized according to political scientists such as Peak (1972). He suggested that the scenario is one where the superintendent establishes policy, it is legitimized by the board, and subsequently "sold" to the public. This reverses the process of democratic control whereby the flow is from the public to its elected representatives. Thus, a political dimension has been established within the superintendency. Kimbrough (1964) stated: "If the educational leader and his staff have any opinions about educational policies and take action accordingly, public education in that school district is involved in politics" (p. 275).

Iannaccone (1971) operationally defined "political" as "that segment of social life involving the activities and relationships of individuals, groups, and associations resulting in, or intended to result in, decisions by any governmental policy making body" (p. 4). Thus, political leadership exceeds rational bureaucratic leadership where technical expertise and formal lines of authority are the norm. Strategies such as bargaining, negotiating, compromising, and lobbying represent an extension of the bureaucratic leadership role played
by superintendents.

Burns (1978) provided a definition of political leadership which suggests such strategies: "When persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, or satisfy the motives of followers" (p. 18). Of course, superintendents are not expected to be neutral; in fact, boards expect them to initiate policy recommendations.

Three areas of responsibility are generally associated with the superintendent in terms of policy initiation. First, as reported earlier, the agenda for board meetings is set by the superintendent. In fact, Tucker and Zeigler (1980, p. 134) found that about 75% of agenda items are placed there by the superintendent or a member of the central office staff. Second, the superintendent makes recommendations on agenda items needing action. These agenda items, around two-thirds of the total according to Tucker and Zeigler (p. 144), are generally disposed of through adopting the superintendent's recommendation 99% of the time. It might be argued that the superintendent does not make a recommendation on "controversial" issues. In Tucker and Zeigler's (1980) sample this argument was only substantiated in 2 of the 11 districts in the sample. The third responsibility of the superintendent is the expected one, implementing and evaluating policy. Interestingly, this responsibility causes boards to accept the first two responsibilities as reasonable functions of the superintendent. It should be noted that respect for the superintendent's expertise makes executive recommendations a time-honored expectation.
with rejection by the board to a small number of recommendations serving as notice that the superintendent should probably seek employment elsewhere (Tucker & Zeigler, 1980).

The Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) promotes through workshops and published materials the importance of school district policies. MASB (no date) suggested that "the most effective means available to a board of education in exercising leadership for better schools is development of policy that expresses the board's goals or desires for school improvement" (p. 7). Policies are guides to action which state a purpose or goal, express what the board desires to achieve or wants to see happen and provides a rationale and framework for specific requirements. The superintendent will establish regulations which will put the policy into effect according to MASB. In urging boards to be more proactive in implementing current knowledge about teaching and learning MASB (no date) stated, "boards of education are in a position to provide leadership momentum for school improvement" (p. 3). In fact, because of the part-time, amateur, and volunteer status of board members this statement could be directed at superintendents to use their professional expertise and political influence to have the board move in the direction MASB is encouraging.

**Intraboard-Cohesion and Superintendent Leadership**

In the 1950s Gross and his associates at Harvard University undertook an investigation of school boards and superintendents. Prior to this a great amount of research had been done on the
demographic and structural characteristics of boards of education. However, the question of who actually governs American education received little attention. As described earlier Gross (1958) changed all that with his investigation of the behaviors and practices of boards of education and superintendents in Massachusetts. Other sociologists and political scientists took up the drum beat: Iannaccone and Lutz (1970), McCarty and Ramsey (1971), Peak (1972), Zeigler et al. (1974), Tucker and Zeigler (1980), Reisman (1982), Zeigler et al. (1985). Reference has been made to all of these studies in earlier sections of this paper.

A key variable in this study was the types of school boards for which superintendents work. McCarty and Ramsey (1971) identified four types (see Table 4), while Peak (1972) and Zeigler et al. (1974) reduced these to three (see Table 5).

For the purposes of this study, boards were classified as factional, pluralistic, or consensual as discussed earlier.

Another key variable in this study is policy and political leadership by the superintendent. In their study Peak (1972) and Zeigler et al. (1974) used educational program as a determinant of policy leadership by the superintendent. It was reasoned that educational program is the main purpose for a school district and, therefore, should be the primary concern of the governing body. The school board should exercise general leadership if it is to represent the public in this important dimension of school life. Other writers such as Boyd (1976) have subsequently questioned this choice since it is clear that boards of education usually defer to the technical
expertise of the superintendent in such matters involving educational program. Nonetheless, Peak's (1972) and Zeigler et al.'s (1974) findings have value for the variables to be tested in this study.

In order to determine the amount of superintendent policy leadership or contrarily whether or not the school board asserts authority Peak (1972) posed two questions to the nationwide sample of board members. One, does the board ever "disagree with the superintendent about the content of the educational program" (p. 23); and two, "if the superintendent wanted to change the educational program and the board disagreed . . . the board would eventually approve the change anyway" (p. 24). It was determined that of the 107 districts in the sample the majority would tend to fall on the superintendent dominant end of the continuum.

An examination of the effects of intraboard consensus on superintendent leadership was conducted through an analysis of variance test. Table 6 (Peak, 1972, p. 63) depicts the results. The lowest levels of superintendent leadership occurred where the school board was pluralistic. Consensual and factional boards, on the other hand, produced high levels of superintendent leadership.

Consistent with earlier depiction consensual boards are more likely to assume a professional role orientation and be dominated by the superintendent, as opposed to pluralistic boards which are capable of distinguishing between their responsibility to the public and the school administration (see Table 7).
Table 6
School Board Consensus and Superintendent Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of school boards</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensual</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralistic</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factional</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $F = 4.3089 \ p < .05$. Eta = .28.

From "Policy Leadership in the Governance of Public School Systems" (p. 63) by G. W. Peak, 1972, Dissertation Abstracts International, 32, 6514A. (University Microfilms No. 72-14,747)

Table 7
School Board Consensus and Professional Role Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of school boards</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensual</td>
<td>70.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralistic</td>
<td>55.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factional</td>
<td>61.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $F = 4.3736 \ p < .05$. Eta = .28.

From "Policy Leadership in the Governance of Public School Systems" (p. 64) by G. W. Peak, 1972, Dissertation Abstracts International, 32, 6514A. (University Microfilms No. 72-14,747)
In the introduction to this study reference was made to Zeigler et al.'s (1985) most recent book which addressed from a superintendent and city manager perspective the amount of professionalism and political leadership these two public figures feel they should exercise.

As indicated, the findings for superintendents are especially germane to this study. Fifty-one superintendents from the Chicago and San Francisco areas were included in the sample and administered a measure of professionalism and leadership along with semi-structured interviews.

The professionalism index was a modified version of Hall's (1968) Professional Attitude Scale which emphasized such characteristics as perception of work importance, self-regulation (autonomy), and importance of professional organizations. The results for the sample, after dichotomization, indicated that 61% of the superintendents had a high level of professional commitment, while 35% reported a low level of such commitment (Zeigler et al., 1985, p. 51). City managers, on the other hand, reported almost the reverse with the greater percentage reporting a low-level of professional commitment.

Of special interest to the researcher was the measurement of leadership role through the use of an 8-item scale. This scale, developed by Zeigler, was used by Reisman (1982) in a study of school superintendents and city managers, the results of which are largely reported in Zeigler et al.'s (1985) most recent volume. A
standardized Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .64 was derived for this scale after five waves of pretesting. The standard error of measurement was not reported by Zeigler et al. The scale leans toward the political rather than bureaucratic end of the leadership spectrum in measuring superintendents' self-perception of their leadership role. The eight items on the scale address the superintendent's initiative in advocating policy changes, the degree to which they take a stand on controversial issues and their involvement with school board elections.

Sixty-three percent of the school superintendents favored a strong leadership role. For city managers given a similar instrument 37% favored a strong leadership role. Zeigler et al. (1985) reported: "Superintendents believe they should be leaders; city managers see themselves more as neutral experts" (p. 59).

This is a paradox of sorts. On one hand superintendents report a strong professional orientation and thus should be apolitical; yet about two-thirds of the superintendents reporting either low or high professional attitudes were classified high on political leadership (see Table 8). Thus, school leadership is perceived to be political, albeit not as political as Burns (1978) might prefer, with superintendents willing to wheel and deal to shape the educational program. As Blumberg (1985) suggested, superintendents want to have some impact on their districts and that impact comes primarily through their ability to influence the board. Importantly, Zeigler et al. (1985) reported superintendents are very active in school board elections. Aren't superintendents taking a big chance with such
activities? Zeigler et al. (1985) suggested that superintendents can influence board elections without getting dirty because such elections are generally low key with incumbents not challenged and a low voter turnout. Weinheimer (1985) indicated that superintendents use subrosa influence.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional attitude</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership role</th>
<th>Superintendent</th>
<th>City manager</th>
<th>Superintendent</th>
<th>City manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101%(^a)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. From City Managers and School Superintendents (p. 64) by H. L. Zeigler, E. Kehoe, and J. Reisman, 1985, New York: Praeger.

\(^a\)Exceeds 100% due to rounding.

The recent literature reflects that superintendents are professionals who are leaders. "They do not necessarily sacrifice professionalism by becoming political leaders. Obviously, superintendents'
preferences cause us to wonder about traditional assumptions about their purely apolitical behavior. They are more political than we, and most others have thought" (Zeigler et al., 1985, p. 65).

In a summation of a trilogy of research on school governance, Zeigler et al. (1985) stated: "Government is a contest between experts and lay persons. The tension is unavoidable, and its resolution does not rest with yet more rational technologies of conflict management but rather with common sense" (p. xv).

Operational Hypotheses

The researcher identified five hypotheses which reflect research findings discussed in this chapter. The hypotheses will be stated with a brief reference made to related literature.

**Hypothesis 1**

**Hypothesis 1** states: A greater proportion of Michigan board presidents will perceive their boards as pluralistic than either consensual or factional as measured by Questions 16 and 17 on the survey form.

Research cited in Chapter II indicates that 53.6% of school boards were pluralistic (Peak, 1972, p. 63).

**Hypothesis 2**

**Hypothesis 2** states: Michigan School board presidents in fourth class districts will perceive a greater proportion of consensual boards than presidents in third class districts as measured by
Section C, Questions 16 and 17.

Small towns produce a higher proportion of consensual school boards than do either city or suburban districts. Peak (1972) reported the hallmark of a small district as, "(1) homogeneity of public interests and values, (2) generalized political leadership exercised by a single elite group, and (3) the general salience of educational government" (p. 81). Fourth class districts in Michigan enroll up to 2,400 students. The population of small towns in Michigan is thus contained in this classification along with some smaller suburban districts.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 states: There is a difference in the attitudes of school board presidents who perceive their board to be factional, consensual, or pluralistic, as identified by Section C, Questions 16 and 17, toward the amount of selected political and policy leadership expected of school superintendents as measured by Section B, Questions 8-15.

It has been determined by Zeigler et al. (1974) that stronger superintendent policy leadership is associated with factional and consensual school boards. This finding was in relationship to policy leadership associated with influencing the educational program. The focus of this study is on leadership variables of influencing school board elections and policy issues which are more external in nature.
Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 states: The mean score of Michigan school board presidents' attitudes towards the degree of selected political and policy leadership they perceive should be exercised by school superintendents is less than 3.0 as measured by Section B, Questions 8-15 of the survey instrument.

The leadership scale used in this study was previously used by Reisman (1982) to determine superintendent and city manager perceptions of their leadership role. The scale leans toward political and policy leadership rather than bureaucratic leadership. Eight items with a 4-scale rank of 1 for low leadership through 4 for high leadership yielded a mean score of 2.75 for the superintendent and city manager sample. Reisman (1986) reported that the mean score for the superintendent sample exceeded 3.0 on the scale. Therefore, superintendents favor stronger leadership in political and policy areas than their city manager counterparts. It was hypothesized that school board presidents' perceptions of the superintendent's leadership role will be less than the perceptions of superintendents in this study.

Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 states: The mean score of Michigan school board presidents' responses to questions related to a certain type of political leadership (Section B, 9 and 13) on the survey instrument will be less than the mean score on questions related to aspects of
policy leadership (Section B, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15).

School superintendents are expected to be involved in some policy formation by their boards of education. However, involvement in school board elections may be questioned by board presidents as interference with the electoral processes of the community and a self-serving behavior.

Summary

School boards are governmental agencies controlled by the state. School board members are elected at-large in nonpolitical party elections. A good deal of local autonomy and de jure authority exists for local school boards to set local policy and run the schools. Because of the complexities of operating the schools, boards of education started hiring professional experts around the mid 1800s. This expert—the superintendent of schools—has gradually assumed control of the educational program through almost total support by the board for recommendations emanating from this professional. High status boards (occupation, income, education) exert more opposition over the educational program than lower status boards but the superintendent will be the eventual victor. External policy decisions regarding funding, building additions, and controversial subjects like busing evoke more public debate and school board involvement.

School board member role orientation can be identified as professional or fiduciary. Superintendents prefer a professional orientation because the board will vote based on the recommendations of
educational experts and act as a buffer between citizens and the school administration. A fiduciary board, on the other hand, will represent the public to the administration.

Intraboard cohesion has impact on superintendent leadership. Consensual boards report little or no initial disagreement on a course of action. Boards disagreeing initially but with no consistent splits are termed pluralistic. Boards reporting initial disagreement with more or less the same division are identified as factional. Consensual and factional boards are associated with stronger superintendent leadership. Interestingly, Fiedler's (1967) contingency theory of leadership posits that task oriented leaders will be successful in very favorable (consensual) or unfavorable (factional) situations.

Superintendents come from lower to middle class backgrounds and are highly educated. The leadership styles of Michigan superintendents are related to birth order, family size, marital status, or number of years of teaching service (Lohr, 1982). Superintendents dominate educational decision making with a certain "zone of tolerance." Boles (1980) stated: "Most role expectations are predetermined and a particular incumbent can modify them only within certain limits" (p. 42). The amount of leeway correlates with the amount of effort or talent that is perceived to be given to the system (Boles, 1980).

Research suggests that superintendents perceive themselves as highly professional while also exercising strong political leadership. This dichotomy has political scientists questioning the
apolitical label formerly attached to professional educators. Superintendent influence today transcends bureaucratic leadership and has moved into the realm of political leadership.
CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study used a cross-sectional survey to gather data. This approach has several advantages, one of which is the capability of gathering information from a large accessible population of school board presidents. Also, data gathered can be quantified and as Babbie (1973) suggested "become a permanent source of information" (p. 49). Of course, survey research has disadvantages such as the inability to go very deeply beneath the surface of the research question (Kerlinger, 1973). Therefore, more breadth than depth is realized in the survey approach.

Population

The target population were school board presidents of public K-12 schools. The accessible population were school board presidents in third and fourth class school districts in Michigan. Of 525 board presidents in the accessible population, 513 could be identified by name from a listing provided by the Michigan Association of School Boards. All 513 presidents were sent a survey form.

The ability of the researcher to generalize findings from the accessible population to target population deserves mention. As Kerlinger (1973) has indicated this is the "most complex and
difficult question that can be asked of research data" (p. 324). He suggested that the larger issue is whether or not the research is basic or applied. This study, as stipulated in Chapter I, is a beginning inquiry into school board members' reactions to political and policy behaviors on the part of the superintendent. As such, the study could be considered to represent more basic than applied research. Kerlinger suggested that generalizability is of more concern to applied research because of the desire to apply the results to other persons and situations. For the present, the researcher is mainly concerned with the relationships among the variables as they pertain to the Michigan accessible population. Yet, an aspect of applied research is desired in that relevance to other settings than Michigan is entirely appropriate. As Borg and Gall (1983) stated: "Applied research has a direct and quick impact on practice. Basic research is likely to have a more indirect, slow influence on practice, but the eventual impact may be much more profound" (p. 10). The researcher would hope for both eventualities.

Third Class School Districts

Third class districts studied represent 133 K-12 local education agencies with a student population from 2,400 to 30,000. The majority of these districts represent city and suburban settings. Not included among these districts are the one first class district, Detroit, or the three second class districts of Flint, Lansing, and Grand Rapids. Some third class districts may have less than 2,400
students if student enrollment has declined since the district received its classification.

Fourth Class School Districts

Fourth class districts studied numbered 380 and represented the largest category of K-12 public school districts in Michigan. They have a student enrollment of from several hundred up to 2,400. Fourth class districts represent largely small towns and rural settings. Some smaller suburban districts are also included. Not included in the population are some 20 small K-8 school districts. Some fourth class districts may have more than 2,400 students because of recent population increases.

Instrumentation

The survey questionnaire administered to school board presidents in this study had four components (see Appendix A). The first component was an accounting code which designated the classification of the school district and school board president identity.

The second component, Section A, consisted of questions which provided background data. Subjects were asked to indicate the size of their district in student enrollment, years they have served on the board and as board president, length of tenure of the superintendent and why the last superintendent left, and size of the community and if it is a suburb. This information was used for descriptive purposes.
The third component, Section B, consisted of eight questions which measured school board president attitudes toward superintendent leadership activities associated with influencing school policies, school board elections, and controversial issues. Four questions were oriented toward policies, two toward elections and two involving controversial issues. These questions were used by Reisman (1982), and later discussed by Zeigler et al. (1985), to measure superintendent self-perceptions towards these leadership activities.

A fourth component, Section C, consisted of two questions, reported earlier in the study (Peak, 1972; Zeigler et al., 1974), which assessed school board president perceptions of intraboard cohesion and placed in one of three categories: consensual, pluralistic, or factional.

Response Scale

A 4-point Likert scale was used in measuring the leadership variables found in Sections B and C. Allen (1985) used a 4-point scale in his study of Michigan superintendent involvement with the state legislature. He cited Milbrath's (1968) use of such a scale in his Inputs to the Political System instrument wherein a 1-to-4-point value for responses was identified. Yankelovich, Skelly, and White (cited in Allen, 1985) are of the opinion that respondents would lean towards indecision if given the chance. Presser and Schuman (1980) reported findings which showed that explicitly offering a middle position in an interview attitude survey significantly increases the size of that category as opposed to not offering such a response but
accepting a middle response if offered. Payne (1951), in differentiating between the idea of gathering information from those with definite convictions and those who are leaning in a particular direction, suggests it is better to not suggest the middle-ground with people who are leaning on an issue.

It was the researcher's judgment that school board presidents would tend to lean directionally on the leadership variable identified in this study; and therefore, it was not desirable to offer an "undecided" or "no response" choice in Section B. Measurement of the intraboard cohesion variable would also present categorization problems if neutral response options were offered. However, for pilot test purposes a fifth response option, "don't know," was included as a validity check in Section C.

Therefore, the eight leadership questions in Section B had response categories as follows: (a) strongly agree, (b) tend to agree, (c) tend to disagree, and (d) strongly disagree. Response options for the two intraboard cohesion questions in Section C were: (a) frequently true, (b) tends to be true, (c) tends not to be true, and (d) usually never true, with a fifth response—(e) don't know—offered on the pilot test.

Content Validity

An important characteristic of a measuring instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it intends to measure. Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1972) suggested that experts be used in developing content validity. Wiersma (1980) stated "content validity
is established through logical analysis" (p. 216). The questions used in the survey to measure intraboard cohesion and political and policy leadership have been adapted from extensive research reported by Zeigler and et al. (1974, 1983, 1985). Thus the researcher believes both precepts have been satisfied to some degree. Nonetheless, content validation remains a judgmental process in research (Kerlinger, 1973).

Regarding the intraboard cohesion variable, a pilot test was used to check uniformity of response between board members to determine if a valid perception of intraboard cohesion had been measured among school board members. An interview was also conducted with each of the four superintendents in the pilot test districts to assess the validity of the board member responses as determined by the superintendent. From the results of this process it was concluded that the perceptions of the school board presidents were similar to the perceptions of the majority of the board in all four districts. However, in only one district did all responding board members have the same perceptions. Three of the four superintendents interviewed concurred with the view of the majority and the board president.

Reliability of Instrument

One aspect of reliability, according to Kerlinger (1973), is the "accuracy or precision of a measuring instrument" (p. 443). This cross-sectional study used a survey questionnaire to collect data at one point in time. There were four components to the instrument
which represented varying reliability concerns.

The first component consisted of code on the questionnaire which indicated the identity of the school board president and classification of the school district. A listing of all school districts had been obtained from the Michigan State Department of Education and was considered completely reliable for this purpose. The class of the school district was a variable to be used in the testing of one of the research hypothesis.

The demographic data collected in Section A of the instrument was used to describe school district size in more detail, urbanism, school board president and superintendent longevity, and why the last superintendent left the district. This type of data, for which reliability coefficients are not normally obtained, was expected to be accurate since the response group, school board presidents, represent normal, mature adults of average or better intelligence who would not knowingly deceive the researcher.

The attitudes of school board presidents toward superintendent leadership, measured by Section B of the questionnaire, represents a construct which required a more formal estimate of reliability. Borg and Gall (1983) suggest several methods to estimate reliability. For an instrument with an attitude scale their choice of method is Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Previous research using this leadership scale derived a reliability coefficient of .64 with the Cronbach alpha (Reisman, 1982, p. 48). Wiersma (1980) reported reliability coefficients for tests of attitude to be from .51 to .80. Helmstadler (cited in Borg & Gall, 1983) identified a reliability
range of .47 to .98 for attitude scales. Pilot-test findings by the researcher yielded a Cronbach coefficient alpha of .77 with a sample of 22 school board trustees. Borg and Gall (1983) suggested that reliability is useful in comparing different tests, but for interpreting test scores the standard error of measurement is more useful. In the pilot test the mean leadership score was 21.14 out of a possible 32. The .77 reliability coefficient yielded a standard error of measurement of 2.3 with the standard deviation being 4.79 for the sample.

In Section C two questions tapped the intraboard consensus variable. Although Section C was used in previous research (Peak, 1972) to measure this variable, one of the limitations of this study is that the researcher only considers this a perception on the part of school board presidents and not the measurement of a specific attribute possessed by the school board. Reliability might be affected in the measurement of intraboard cohesion by perception shifts due to a change in school board voting patterns caused by recent issues before the board.

Pilot Test

Three fourth class and one third class school boards were identified to participate in a pilot test. Borg and Gall (1983) suggested that the number of cases in a pretest sample need not be large with as few as 20 needed in a well-defined group. Out of a possible 28 board trustees 26 participated with 4 being board presidents. This group, as Wiersma (1980) suggested, need not be a random sample.
of prospective respondents (school board presidents) but should be familiar with the variables under study.

The pilot test served several purposes. One, because the entire board of the pilot test districts were surveyed a validity check was made on the intraboard cohesion variable. Two, a reliability coefficient was obtained on the leadership questions in Section B. And third, a trial run of the data collection and analysis procedures was accomplished.

Borg and Gall (1983) indicated that a researcher who has an emotional stake in the research outcomes may be susceptible to bias even nondeliberately. To minimize such an eventuality the researcher did not come into contact with the pilot test subjects. The board response form was sent to the board members prior to their January meeting. Trustees were asked to complete the form individually and bring in a provided envelope to their next meeting. This process helped to assure participation of the trustees. Any board trustee failing to complete the instrument were asked to do so either before or after the meeting. The collected envelopes were picked up or sent to the researcher. Included with the survey instrument was a short evaluation form which enabled the subjects to provide feedback on the survey instrument.

Data Collection

A mail questionnaire was used to collect data. The main advantages of using the questionnaire method is the ability of the researcher to survey the entire target population of board presidents
in third and fourth class districts. Kerlinger (1973) noted the popularity of mail questionnaires in education but mentioned two defects, "possible lack of response and the inability to check the responses given" (p. 414). The researcher minimized such drawbacks by gaining the endorsement of the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB). It was thought that a cover letter from this association encouraging board president support of the study would increase the likelihood of this population responding (see Appendix B). A mail follow-up was conducted to stimulate returns (see Appendix C).

The mail questionnaire was designed to be attractive and brief. Other suggestions recommended by Demaline and Quinn (1979) and Berdie and Anderson (1974) were incorporated. Some of these included: grouping of items, brief directions for each part of the questionnaire, professional printing on good paper, and a format which allowed for ease of coding. The questionnaire was labeled a "response form" to avoid certain unpleasant associations with the word questionnaire.

Procedures

The response form, cover letter, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope were mailed to the home address of 513 school board presidents. Of the total 380 represented fourth class school districts and 133 represented third class districts. The cover letter was written on Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) stationary and was signed by the executive secretary of this organization and the researcher.
The response form was coded with a four place numeral in the upper left hand corner. The class of school district was in the one's place with the remaining three digits representing a numerical designator for each board president. Presidents of fourth class districts were thus assigned a number ranging from 0014-3804, while third class presidents ranged from 0013-1333. Information at the top of the response form assured the respondents that the code was for accounting purposes only. The researcher maintained the roster of presidents to assure confidentiality. As response forms were received, the board president was checked off the roster.

Excellent returns were received from the first mailing. After 10 days over 325 returns had been received. At this point a second mailing of a follow-up postcard was sent to the nonrespondents. Subsequently another 70 returns were received during the next 16 days. At this point the researcher was approaching an 80% return rate.

Data Analysis

A code book was developed for the questionnaire. When received the questionnaires were coded and delivered to the Computer Center at Western Michigan University where the responses were keytaped and the raw data eventually placed in the university's DEC 10 computer.

In the case of missing data the researcher recorded a 0 or 00 and the data were not calculated for hypotheses testing purposes. Rekeytaping procedures were used to verify the accuracy of this process.
Once all of the returns to be used in the study had been received the researcher used, through the Center for Statistical Services at Western Michigan University, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975) to analyze the data.

Appropriate statistical tests for retaining or rejecting the null hypothesis associated with each research hypothesis discussed in Chapter II were utilized. The following is a brief description of hypotheses and the statistical methods to test each hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 1:** It was hypothesized that a greater percentage of Michigan school board presidents will report their board as pluralistic rather than either consensual or factional. Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (1979) stated that the chi-square test for a one-sample case, called the "goodness-of-fit" test, can be used to test whether or not the observed frequencies fit the expected frequencies. These data were obtained from the responses to Questions 16 and 17—Section C of the survey instrument. In Question 16, board presidents reporting that the board initially usually never disagrees or tends to not disagree were categorized as consensual. Question 17 served to identify pluralistic and factional boards by determining if some members stick together from one issue to the next.

**Hypothesis 2:** This hypothesis projected that fourth class school districts, which represent smaller towns, will have a greater proportion of consensual boards than the larger third class school districts. Again, Questions 16 and 17 of the survey provided the necessary data. The \( z \) test of two population proportions, as
identified by Hinkle, Jurs, and Wiersma (1979), was used to test the null hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 3:** Research findings (Zeigler et al., 1974) suggested that stronger superintendent leadership was associated with factional and consensual school boards. This finding was based on whether or not school boards thought the superintendent would eventually "win" in the event of opposition to a recommendation. The hypothesis in this study tested whether or not school board presidents want the superintendent to exercise the leadership necessary to win. The research hypothesis states that there will be a difference in the attitudes of school board presidents serving on consensual, pluralistic, or factional boards toward the amount of leadership expected of school superintendents in selected political and policy areas. The independent variable of school board cohesion was determined by responses to Questions 16 and 17. The dependent variable of leadership role was measured by Questions 8-15 found in Section B of the response form.

The statistical technique of analysis of variance (ANOVA) is described by Hopkins and Glass (1978) as a powerful technique that can evaluate "systematic differences among a set of means" (p. 334). This technique was used to test this hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 4:** This hypothesis involved comparing the mean leadership role score of Michigan school board presidents with a mean score already obtained for a sample of school superintendents and city managers (Reisman, 1982; Zeigler et al., 1985). Again, Questions 8-15 in Section B were used to gather the necessary data.
Means were calculated and a \( t \) test used to test the null hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 5:** Questions 9 and 13, Section B, pertained to leadership associated with influencing school board elections. It was hypothesized that the mean score for these questions will be less than the mean score for the other questions in Section B which relate to aspects of policy leadership. Again, this hypothesis was tested by a \( t \) test.

**Summary**

In this chapter the design and methodology of the study was examined in detail. The instrument used for collecting data was analyzed in detail. The accessible population surveyed, pilot testing, data collection, and analysis procedures were discussed.

The statistical tests used included:

1. School board president perception of intraboard cohesion--chi square.
2. Intraboard cohesion by school district classification--\( z \) test of two population proportions.
3. Superintendent leadership by intraboard cohesion--one-way ANOVA.
4. Mean leadership score for Michigan school superintendents--\( t \) test.
5. Mean score for policy leadership compared to mean score for political leadership--\( t \) test.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Introduction

This chapter presents data organized around the research objectives and hypotheses. An analysis of the sample and description of the respondents and their districts is also included to help the reader understand the characteristics of the sample.

Inferential techniques were used to test all of the hypotheses. These techniques included the nonparametric chi-square test, $z$ test of two population proportions, $t$ test, and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)). All data were tested using the .05 probability for committing a Type I error. Descriptive data were used to provide supplemental analyses of the findings.

Analysis of the Sample

Response forms were sent to 513 Michigan school board presidents on February 16, 1986. The initial mailing and a follow-up postcard yielded 396 responses. This amounted to a return rate of 77.2%. Borg and Gall (1983) suggested that a random sample of 20 non-respondents could be used to determine if the nonresponding group represents a biased sample. The researcher selected a stratified random sample from the 117 nonrespondents proportionally allocating 15 from fourth class districts and 5 from third class districts for a
telephone follow-up. The results of this procedure did not yield a trend in the nonresponding group which differed from the respondents.

Description of Respondents and Their Districts

Classification of School Districts in Study

The school district classification was obtained from the Michigan State Department of Education. Table 9 depicts the number of questionnaires sent and return rate. The roster of school board presidents obtained from the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) did not yield all possible 525 presidents. It is possible that the 12 missing board presidents may not be members of MASB or that a recent change in board membership had occurred.

Table 9
Classification of Michigan School Districts Studied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. sent</th>
<th>No. returned</th>
<th>% of total sent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third class</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth class</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Experience on the Board and as President

The mean number of years served on the board by the respondents was 8.2. The greatest number (54) had served for 4 years. Over 75% of the board presidents indicated they had served 10 years or less. The mean number of years as president was 3.3, with the greatest number of respondents (114) being in their first years. The vast majority, or 277, were in their first 3 years as board president.

Data Analysis Procedures

As mentioned in the "Introduction" to this chapter, inferential techniques using the .05 probability for committing a Type I error were used to test the hypotheses. In this section the researcher will restate the hypotheses, report the findings, and make any relevant interpretation of those findings. Descriptive data will be presented which may amplify the findings. Missing data are not calculated.

School Board President Perceptions of Intraboard Cohesion

H₁: A greater proportion of Michigan board presidents will perceive their boards to be pluralistic than either consensual or factional (as measured by Questions 16 and 17).

The results of the chi-square test are presented in Table 10. The null hypothesis of no difference between the population proportions was rejected with a p value less than .001. However, the research hypothesis that a greater proportion would be pluralistic
cannot be supported as the greatest proportion of board presidents (48%) perceived their boards as consensual with the least proportion of presidents (19.8%) indicating pluralistic cohesion.

Table 10
Chi-Square Test Results for Proportions of Michigan School Board Presidents Who Perceive Their Intraboard Cohesion to be Consensual, Pluralistic, or Factional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School board cohesion</th>
<th>No. of board presidents</th>
<th>% of column totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensual</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralistic</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factional</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Chi square = 47.123 with 2 degrees of freedom. \( p < .001. \) \( \alpha = .05. \)

This finding suggests that for the most part most Michigan school boards are either consensual or factional as perceived by school board presidents. The reader may recall that in Peak's (1972) study, as reported in Chapter II, of a nationwide sample, 53.6% of the boards were identified as pluralistic. The next hypothesis will test whether or not classification of the school district affects the proportions of consensual, pluralistic, or factional boards in Michigan.
Intraboard Cohesion by Classification of School District

H₂: Michigan school board presidents serving in fourth class districts will perceive a greater proportion of consensual boards than presidents serving in third class districts (as measured by Questions 16 and 17).

The reader will recall from Chapter III that third class districts have been identified by the state of Michigan as having student enrollments from 2,400 to 30,000. Fourth class districts range from several hundred to 2,400 students. In a few instances, actual student enrollments of some third class districts may be slightly less than 2,400 and fourth class districts slightly more than 2,400 because of population shifts since the original classification was received.

To determine if the research hypothesis could be supported a null hypothesis of no difference was tested against a directional alternate hypothesis that board presidents of fourth class districts will perceive a greater proportion of consensual boards. A Z test of the equality of two population proportions using a one-tailed test produced a Z value of 1.86 which exceeded the critical value of 1.645. The null hypothesis of no difference was rejected with a p value less than .05.

The researcher concluded that it could be supported that school board presidents of fourth class districts perceived more consensual board cohesion than board presidents of third class districts. In addition, perceptions of pluralistic board cohesion by school board
presidents appear to be in the distinct minority. Factional board cohesion, on the other hand, is perceived to account for over 30% in each class of district according to the presidents. Table 11 displays these data.

Further analysis of the data was made. Peak (1972) had indicated that suburban districts displayed more pluralistic cohesion in his sample; therefore, the Michigan board presidents were asked if they considered their district to be a suburb of a city of 100,000 or more. These data were then compared to the results for nonsuburban districts. Table 12 totals indicate that 110 board presidents considered their district setting to be suburban with 57 coming from third class and 53 from fourth class. The results show that in terms of intraboard cohesion presidents of third class suburban districts perceived a much greater proportion of factional boards than did their nonsuburban counterparts. Furthermore, within third class suburban districts, factional boards exceeded consensual boards by 7%. The other proportions differ only slightly when comparing the suburban and nonsuburban variables.

An interpretation of this finding might be that suburban communities produce more factions on the board because of the diverse background of the people living in such settings.

Political and Policy Leadership Expectations and Intraboard Cohesion

H₃: There is a difference in the attitudes of school board presidents who perceive their boards to be consensual, pluralistic, or factional (as identified by Questions 16 and 17) towards selected
| School district | Type of intraboard cohesion | Consensual | | Pluralistic | | Factional | | Total row |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
|                 | No. of pres. | % of row total | No. of pres. | % of row total | No. of pres. | % of row total | No. | % |
| Third class     | 45 | 40.5 | 28 | 25.2 | 38 | 34.2 | 111 | 99.9<sup>a</sup> |
| Fourth class    | 144 | 50.9 | 50 | 17.7 | 89 | 31.4 | 283 | 100.0 |
| Total           | 189 | 48.0 | 78 | 19.8 | 127 | 32.2 | 394 | 100.0 |

<sup>a</sup>Percent is less than 100% due to rounding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Consensual</th>
<th>Pluralistic</th>
<th>Factional</th>
<th>Total (row)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Row %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonsuburb</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonsuburb</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aExceeds 100% due to rounding.*
aspects of political and policy leadership expected of school superintendents (as measured by Questions 8-15).

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that the leadership expected of school superintendents in political and policy areas did not differ among board presidents based upon their perceptions of intraboard cohesion. Values on Table 13 reflect that the null hypothesis of no difference was retained since the p value of .4929 was significantly greater than .05.

Table 13

One-Way Analysis of Variance of the School Board Presidents' Perceptions of Intraboard Cohesion With Regard to the Amount of Leadership Expected of School Superintendents in Political and Policy Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1397</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>.4929*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>0.1972</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intraboard cohesion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensual</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralistic</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factional</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p > .05.
The researcher considered other characteristics such as size of the community and suburbanism. Mean scores obtained for size ranged from a low of 2.71 for cities over 50,000 and a high of 2.81 for towns of 2,500-9,999. Board presidents who considered their communities as suburban averaged 2.75, while nonsuburban presidents averaged 2.77.

The researcher concluded that intraboard cohesion, size of community, or suburbanism do not appear to be important factors related to perceptions of board presidents regarding the amount of political and policy leadership expected of school superintendents.

School Board President Perceptions of Political and Policy Leadership by Superintendents

H4: The mean score of Michigan school board presidents' attitudes towards the degree of selected political and policy leadership they perceive should be exercised by school superintendents is less than 3.0 (as measured by Questions 8-15).

A directional hypothesis was tested against the null hypothesis of no difference to determine if the mean leadership score of Michigan school board presidents was less than 3.0. A t test at the .05 probability of making a Type I error produced a t value of -10.727. This value exceeded the critical value of -1.645 for a one-tailed test. The researcher accepted the alternate directional hypothesis that the mean score was less than 3.0. A 95% confidence interval was developed around the sample mean score of 2.764. Thus, the researcher is 95% confident that the interval of 2.728-2.800 contains
the population mean.

The researcher concluded that school board presidents in the responding group expected slightly less political and policy leadership than did a sample of school superintendents responding to the same scale (Reisman, 1986).

A supplemental analysis was conducted. The researcher dichotomized the respondents' leadership scores from the scale into low and high leadership for each class of school districts. Respondents deriving a mean score of 2.5 or lower were categorized as expecting low superintendent leadership while those respondents scoring above 2.5 placed into the high leadership cell, as shown in Table 14.

Table 14
Leadership Role and Michigan Superintendents by Class of School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership role</th>
<th>School district classification</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>101.1^a</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aExceeds 100% due to rounding.
Michigan school board presidents expect a high leadership role from school superintendents in political and in policy areas. Although the percentage of third class presidents was slightly less than that of fourth class presidents, it is clear that, on the average, 70% are in the high leadership category.

Policy Leadership Expectations for School Superintendents by School Board Presidents Compared to Political Leadership Expectations

H5: The mean score of Michigan school board presidents' responses to questions related to an aspect of political leadership (Questions 9 and 13) will be less than the mean score on questions related to types of policy leadership (Questions 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15).

The mean score of the respondents on the two political questions was 2.323. The six policy questions (including two pertaining to controversial issues) yielded a mean score of 2.911. Although at face value the research hypothesis appeared to be accepted, a t test of two independent samples was conducted at the .05 probability of making a Type I error. A t value of -12.78 was obtained thus causing the researcher to reject the null hypothesis of no difference between the two scores and accepting the research hypothesis.

Clearly school board presidents' attitudes differ with regard to some political leadership expectations (as determined by Questions 9 and 13) and policy leadership expectations (as determined by Questions 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15). To further amplify this difference, a subsequent analysis was made by dichotomizing into high and


low leadership expectations controlling for political and policy leadership. Table 15 depicts the results by class of school district.

Table 15
Leadership Expectations of Michigan School Superintendents by Class of School Districts Controlling for Type of Leadership

| Leadership role | Political |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------|----------|  |  |  |  |  |
|                 | Third    | Fourth | Third | Fourth |  |
|                 | Class    | Class  | Class | Class  |  |
|                 | %        | %      | %     | %      |  |
| Low             | 75.0     | 63.4   | 22.3  | 22.9   |  |
| High            | 25.0     | 36.6   | 77.7  | 77.1   |  |
|                 | 100.0    | 100.0  | 100.0 | 100.0  |  |
|                 | (112)    | (284)  | (112) | (284)  |  |

The researcher concluded that involvement with school board elections by the superintendent, at least in an overt fashion, was not expected or desired by approximately 70% of school board presidents.
Summary

This chapter began by describing the number and longevity of school board presidents responding to the questionnaire. Selection bias regarding the nonrespondents was also mentioned. The remaining sections focused upon presentation of the data results for each of the five hypotheses investigated by the researcher.

Chapter V is a summary which focuses upon the interpretations and implications of the findings.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter is divided into three sections to discuss the findings of this study. The first section is devoted to interpreting the findings within the context of previous research and limitations of the study. The second section discusses implications of the study, with the final section providing a brief summary of the study.

Conclusions

In the introduction to this study it was indicated that the study would attempt to answer the question of what are Michigan school board president attitudes toward political and policy leadership activities in which superintendents might engage to influence and control the board of education. Research objectives were also identified which related school board president attitudes to selected school district characteristics. The first area of inquiry was directed at the variable of intraboard cohesion. The second area was comparing intraboard cohesion among third and fourth class school districts. A third area of investigation was relating intraboard cohesion by class of school district to school board president attitudes toward a certain type of political and policy leadership. The fourth area focused on in the study was comparing Michigan school board president attitudes toward selected aspects of political and policy leadership with school superintendent self-perceptions, and
the last area of inquiry compared and contrasted policy with certain political leadership expectations of the school board president sample.

The first research hypothesis posited that a greater proportion of Michigan school board presidents would perceive their boards to be pluralistic as opposed to either factional or consensual. Wherein earlier it was reported that pluralistic boards are on the rise, such does not seem to be the case in Michigan. Recall that Peak (1972) found 53.6% of his national sample to be pluralistic, while the Michigan sample of school board president perceptions was recorded as a mere 19.8%. Aside from the limitations of the survey instrument one explanation for this discrepancy may be the proportion of census categories in Peak's sample. Allowing for weighting procedures used by Peak, 54% of school districts in his sample were located in either a large metropolitan area or a suburb of one of these areas. Contrarily, only 7.8% or 31 cities of over 50,000 were reported in the 396 Michigan board president sample. Totally, about 28% of board presidents reported their districts to be suburban. The majority of the Michigan sample, or 72.7%, as reported by board presidents, were towns under 10,000 (including some smaller suburbs). As mentioned previously, the first class city of Detroit and second class cities of Flint, Grand Rapids, and Lansing were not included in the study. The second hypothesis was directed at size and intraboard cohesion.

Analysis of the data gathered for testing the second hypothesis is helpful in interpreting the disparity in pluralistic intraboard cohesion between Peak's (1972) sample and the results of this
research. In accepting the research hypothesis that board presidents of fourth class districts would perceive a greater proportion of consensual boards than presidents in third class districts supports the conclusion that smaller towns produce more consensual school boards. This is consistent with Peak's (1972) and McCarty and Ramsey's (1971) findings that smaller towns tend to have a status quo or homogeneity of public interest and values which result in sanctioning or consensual types of board behavior. Therefore, the 50% large city and/or suburban districts in Peak's sample can at least partially account for the smaller percentage of consensual boards.

Further conclusions can be drawn using Iannaccone and Lutz's (1978) explanatory model of elite-arena school board behavior. Elite behavior, considered synonymous with consensual by the researcher, occurs in a community with a high degree of homogeneity of values. Arena behavior is on the other end of the continuum. This behavior, which the researcher would call factional or possibly pluralistic, occurs where there are heterogeneous values and conflict within the community (p. 117). Data displayed on Table 12 support Iannaccone and Lutz's model in that the largest proportion of factional boards occurred in large suburban communities of the third class. Such communities are thought to be more diverse with respect to value structures and interests.

In all cases pluralistic boards were the distinct minority except in the case of nonsuburban third class districts where, according to school board presidents' perceptions, the proportion of pluralistic boards exceeded that of factional boards.
Invoking the caveat discussed under the limitations to this study in Chapter I concerning the measurement of the intraboard cohesion variable does not preclude the researcher from concluding that Michigan school boards tend to be either consensual or factional as perceived by school board presidents. Pluralistic boards--those whose members initially held opposing views on issues but did not have a factional clique--were in the distinct minority.

Previous research (Zeigler et al., 1974) indicated that consensual and factional boards are more likely to defer to the superintendent for leadership, while pluralistic boards were less likely to do so. Nonetheless, Hypothesis 3, which posited their would be a difference in the amount of certain kinds of political and policy leadership expected of superintendents by board presidents of pluralistic, factional, and consensual boards, could not be accepted.

Several conclusions regarding this finding can be made. One conclusion is that Michigan school boards, whether displaying consensual, pluralistic, or factional intraboard cohesion, have a professional, as opposed to fiduciary, role orientation. As discussed in Chapter II, professionally oriented boards are more inclined to rely upon the technical expertise of the superintendent and less inclined to perceive the extent of popular values and community goals in the resolution of any particular issue. Fiduciary boards, on the other hand, feel various segments of the community should be represented in the formulation of policy with board members serving as delegates or trustees for the community. Such boards discriminate between responsibility to the public and allegiance to the superintendent.
Ostensibly Michigan school boards can display any of the three types of intraboard cohesion and still be professionally oriented.

A second conclusion is that a distinction exists between school board president attitudes toward some kinds of superintendent political and policy leadership and the measurement of superintendent leadership as reported by Peak (1972) and Zeigler et al. (1974). In the latter research leadership was determined by the de facto dominance of the superintendent as measured by board members' affirmative response to the questions, "the board rarely or never 'disagrees with the superintendent about the content of the educational program' and 'if the superintendent wanted to change the educational program and the board disagreed ... the board would eventually approve the change anyway' " (Peak, 1972, pp. 23-24). Pluralistic boards felt the superintendent wouldn't win as often as factional and consensual boards. The present research measured the leadership role desired rather than whether or not the superintendent would actually dominate.

Hypothesis 4 tested the degree of a certain type of political and policy leadership expected by school board presidents as compared to superintendents' self-perceptions. Reisman's (1986) statement that a sample of school superintendents exceeded a mean score of 3.00 on the leadership scale while the Michigan school board president sample mean score was 2.76 supports the conclusion that school superintendents feel they should exert stronger leadership in selected political and policy areas than do board presidents. Interestingly, Alvey and Underwood (1985) reported that out of 27 issues studied
board members wanted a bigger share of the authority in all of them. Yet, in Michigan, 70% of board presidents as shown in Table 14 expect strong leadership from the superintendent in policy areas. In the AASA survey reported by Cunningham and Hentges (1982), slightly more than three-fourths of the superintendents surveyed reported they took the lead in the development of policy. Some congruence exists, therefore, between what superintendents do in the policy area and what board presidents want them to do.

While, overall, school board presidents desired high superintendent leadership, data obtained for Hypothesis 5 clearly shows that when it comes to influencing school board elections superintendents are not expected to have a major leadership role. Table 15 proportions show that the lowest expectations for leadership occurred in third class districts where three-fourths of the board presidents disagreed with superintendents encouraging "good" people to run for the board or helping incumbent board members coming up for re-election.

This finding represents a significant discrepancy between policy and political expectations of board presidents. Superintendents, on the other hand, desire to have professionally oriented boards, and thus, as Reisman (1982) stated, "It is not completely surprising to learn about superintendents' active role in obtaining school boards which reflect their particular preference" (p. 75). This study clearly demonstrates that board presidents do not concur with such efforts. The researcher concludes that superintendent involvement
with influencing school board elections can be the focal point for serious conflict in school board-superintendent relationships.

Suggestions for Further Study

This study was concerned with an assessment of school board president expectations for superintendent leadership in areas of controversial policy issues, policy initiation, and school board membership as related to selected independent variables such as intraboard cohesion and size of district. Michigan school board presidents in third and fourth class districts were used as the accessible population for the study. Future inquiry might be expanded to other states and regions using these same variables. Other investigations might involve additional variables described in the following questions:

1. Do political and policy leadership expectations for superintendents vary among states by virtue of superintendents' tenure rights? (Michigan superintendents gain tenure only as teachers.)

2. Are superintendents expected to exert stronger leadership by school boards in states where licensing requirements are more rigid? (Michigan administrators only have to be licensed as teachers where in states like Minnesota a specialist degree is required for licensure as an administrator.)

3. Are superintendents with higher educational qualifications, such as an earned doctorate, given more latitude by school boards in policy development than lesser trained superintendents?
4. Are school districts more effective educationally, as measured by student achievement, when boards expect higher or lower policy leadership from the superintendent?

5. Should the cultural background and values of school district residents be more adequately represented on the school board during the policy-making process?

6. What are the external political and policy leadership expectations for superintendents with state boards of education, legislatures, U.S. Department of Education, Congress, etc.?

Implications

School district governance is somewhat unique among political subdivisions in that the central governing figure, the superintendent, is not an elected official in most locales. This study lends support to the conclusion that school board presidents are comfortable with an administrative model which allows the superintendent a strong role in the initiation and development of policy. As one board president, who will remain anonymous, exclaimed to the researcher during a telephone interview, "that's why we hire them!" The question remains, however, is there a responsive linkage between the public and school boards so that adequate representation occurs? Or is this even necessary? Witmer (1976) reported that 70% of school board members in his study stated they voted their own judgment regardless of what the public thought. Such behavior gives strength to superintendent leadership as previously discussed. The public, on the other hand, desired more arena style behavior than the board
typically exhibited Witmer found. In Chapter I of this study reference was made to Lutz's (1980) hypothesis that in a pluralistic culture education is best served by arena council behavior. School boards exhibit a variety of council behavior but the vast majority lie near the elite end of the continuum (Lutz & Iannaccone, 1978).

Contrary to Lutz's hypothesis Witmer's (1976) study found that boards rejected the notion of individual board members representing segments of the community. Board members see themselves as trustees of all the people and representatives of none. This philosophical approach to school governance appears well intact and will continue to facilitate strong superintendent policy leadership as demonstrated in this study.

Nonetheless, it is clear that school boards have retained overall control through the "pro forma" requirement for them to legitimize and ratify policy and hire and fire the superintendent. The researcher noted, for example, that in the Michigan sample 109 board presidents reported that their last superintendent left or resigned under pressure. The implication is that every fourth person hired to a Michigan superintendency will leave the position under less than favorable circumstances. One potential area of conflict arising from the study is the involvement of superintendents in the school board election process. Whether or not the demise of any of the 109 departing superintendents can be traced to specifically such involvement remains unanswered. Clearly, however, 70% of board presidents do not expect or desire a superintendent to exert strong leadership in the acquisition or maintenance of "good" school board members.
whether subrosa or overtly.

The implications of this knowledge for superintendents creates an intriguing dilemma. As an example, a superintendent identified with supporting losing board members will have a long way to go to develop any kind of trusting relationship with the new board. On the other hand, superintendents, as the educational expert, want board members who will support their views. Inaction by the superintendent in school board elections could result in the same abbreviated tenure as was suggested for being involved. An example of such an occurrence was relayed to the researcher by a superintendent who indicated that if he had personally called a number of his friends and acquaintances and asked them to not vote for a particular school board candidate, who he considered troublesome, those few votes would have swung the election. He didn't. The candidate won. Subsequently, within several years, he left the district after a number of conflicts with the board member. It is clear, as reported by Zeigler et al. (1985), that school board elections are hardly of the "rough and tumble" variety with a small turnout of voters. Therefore, as in this case, the swaying of a few votes might have major impact for the superintendent. No doubt, superintendents will continue to become involved, at least behind the scenes, in school board elections.

It was learned early in this study that the job description of superintendents facilitates their control of the board. An implication of this research is that no matter what the size of the district or the intraboard cohesion, strong leadership is expected of superintendents. Yet, strong leadership is not expected in all areas. The
key for any superintendent is to develop with the board a job description which includes an understanding of the superintendent's role in decision making and policy development with special emphasis on controversial issues. Such issues call for lower superintendent leadership according to the Michigan sample. Some board presidents said, "Let the board take the heat." Of course the chances for conflict are great but addressing these major leadership issues will serve to head off deep-seated disagreements over the balance of power in school districts.

Summary

This investigation was conducted to determine if school board presidents' attitudes toward superintendent political and policy leadership was similar to that identified by superintendents. Selected characteristics of school boards and districts were also measured to see if differences in leadership expectations occurred. The researcher was also interested in identifying any trends which might suggest that school boards in Michigan are moving toward a more pluralistic or arena type model suggested by some theorists as being more responsive to the preferences of constituents. Such a model would call for less superintendent political and policy leadership. A review of related literature presented relevant findings which were then developed into five hypotheses.

An assessable population of Michigan school board presidents were surveyed as described in Chapter III.
This chapter presented conclusions and implications based on previous research and the data analysis described in Chapter IV. Suggestions for further study were also made.
Appendix A

Response Form
MICHIGAN SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT RESPONSE FORM

Well, here it is, your chance for input into a study of superintendents' political and policy leadership. It should be emphasized that this is not an evaluation of your present superintendent. Rather, this response form is for you to express your opinions regarding certain aspects of the superintendency. Rest assured that your responses will be treated confidentially and that your district will not be identified by name. A numerical code is only for accounting purposes. Others who have filled out the response form indicate it should take only about 5 to 10 minutes of your time. Your responses are important. Thank you for your efforts.

SECTION A—BACKGROUND
Directions: Please complete the following background information to the best of your knowledge. Research is not required. Please respond as indicated.

1. Number of students in your district
   _____ less than 1000
   _____ 1000-2400
   _____ 2401-5000
   _____ 5001-10000
   _____ over 10,000

2. Number of years you have served on the board

3. Number of years you have served as board president

4. Number of years the present superintendent has been with the district

5. Why last superintendent left
   _____ Retired
   _____ Resigned under pressure/contract not renewed
   _____ Resigned for new superintendency
   _____ Left education
   _____ Went back to teaching/principalship
   _____ Don’t know
   _____ Other

6. Setting of your district
   _____ Town under 2,500
   _____ Town 2,500-9,999 population
   _____ City 10,000-49,999
   _____ City over 50,000

7. Do you consider your community to be a suburb of a larger city or metropolitan area of 100,000 or larger.
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

SECTION B—ABOUT THE SUPERINTENDENCY
Directions: These questions involve your opinions regarding political and policy activities that superintendents engage in. We know that policies are "guides to action" which are set by the board but often with help from the superintendent. Also, political and controversial issues confront school boards with the board looking to the superintendent for help in resolving them. Please respond as to how you agree with the following statements in terms of any superintendent—not just your present one.

8. A school superintendent should advocate major change in school policies.
   _____ strongly agree
   _____ tend to agree
   _____ tend to disagree
   _____ strongly disagree

9. A school superintendent should give a helping hand to good school board trustees who are coming up for reelection.
   _____ strongly agree
   _____ tend to agree
   _____ tend to disagree
   _____ strongly disagree

10. A school superintendent should maintain a neutral stand on any issues on which the community is divided.
    _____ strongly agree
    _____ tend to agree
    _____ tend to disagree
    _____ strongly disagree
11. A school superintendent should offer the board an opinion only when his/her opinion is requested.

____ strongly agree ______ tend to agree ______ tend to disagree ______ strongly disagree

12. A school superintendent should assume leadership in shaping school district policies.

____ strongly agree ______ tend to agree ______ tend to disagree ______ strongly disagree

13. A school superintendent should encourage people whom he/she respects to run for the board.

____ strongly agree ______ tend to agree ______ tend to disagree ______ strongly disagree

14. A school superintendent should act as an administrator and leave policy matters to the board.

____ strongly agree ______ tend to agree ______ tend to disagree ______ strongly disagree

15. A school superintendent should advocate policies to which important parts of the community may be hostile.

____ strongly agree ______ tend to agree ______ tend to disagree ______ strongly disagree

SECTION C—ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL BOARD

Directions: Please respond to the following questions regarding issues or problems which may confront your board. Do not think of routine board business, but rather think in terms of more controversial or sensitive issues. (Examples might be school closings, bond referendums, busing, sex education, hiring a new superintendent, etc.)

16. When a problem first arises, members of a board often find they disagree about the best course of action. How true is this of your board?

____ frequently true ______ tends to be true ______ usually never true ______ tends to not be true

17. When the school board disagrees on issues would you say there is more or less the same division on the board? In other words, do some members seem to stick together from one issue to the next?

____ frequently true ______ tends to be true ______ usually never true ______ tends to not be true

Please return this form in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope this week.

Return to:
J. B. Johnson
3565 Fawn Cove #6
Portage, MI 49002

Your input is valuable. Thank you for participating.
Appendix B

Cover Letter
February 15, 1986

Dear School Board President:

Some writers have indicated that the superintendent-school board relationship is the single most important relationship in a school district. As president of a school board this statement probably comes as no surprise.

In order to better understand this relationship a study is being conducted to determine Michigan school board presidents' attitudes toward certain policy activities in which superintendents engage. Therefore, your input is extremely important.

The results of the study will help those involved with the superintendency better understand expectations for the position.

The study is endorsed by the Michigan Association of School Boards.

We appreciate you taking a few minutes of your time and thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please return the response form in the enclosed stamped envelope within the next several days.

Most sincerely,

J. Bradley Johnson
Assistant Professor
Western Michigan University

Norman P. Weinheimer
Executive Director
Michigan Association of School Boards

JBJ:NPW/sf
Appendix C

Follow-up Postcard
February 26, 1986

Dear School Board President:

NUTS! As of today I have not received the MICHIGAN SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT RESPONSE FORM I mailed to you recently. I am hoping you will choose to participate in the study of policy leadership expected of school superintendents. The 5-10 minutes required to complete the form are very important to the study.

Hope to hear from you in the next few days. Thanks for responding.

S. Johnson
Ass't Professor
WMU
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